

Census - The Big Picture

By now you will have all filled in your census form, and perhaps you are beginning to wonder what the Australian Bureau of Statistics plans to do with all of that information.

The Census aims to take a 'snapshot' of Australia every five years – collecting vital information on the social, economic and housing characteristics of Australian society.

The Census is compulsory in Australia, like voting or paying taxes. Just as voting gives Australians the chance to have a say about the running of the country, and taxes fund services to the community, so too does the Census provide an important means of addressing society needs and contributing to decisions made. So how does the Census achieve all of this?

Almost all decisions made by governments, businesses and local community groups depend on knowing how many men, women and children of different age groups are located in each part of Australia.

This helps in working out the need for services such as schools, retirement homes, health services, transport, shops and hospitals. Federal government also uses the Census to determine State



to determine State funding. On the local front, community groups use Census data to apply for grants. Want to start a new business? Census data can give you detailed small-area data to help determine potential customers.

And your privacy and confidentiality is 100% guaranteed by law at every stage of the Census process. Best of all, when the results are released in 2007, access will be available on-line and free!

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Editorial

August is such an exciting month for the ABS as all our hard work and preparation culminates in Census Night. The ABS has great plans for disseminating 2006 census data, and you can take a sneak peek at what is to come by visiting the Census link on the ABS web site. We have re-released some 2001 Census data in the new format, and LEP Coordinators are happy to visit your library and teach you how to use the new system. Call your state coordinator now to arrange for some training.

In this issue we focus on two of our most popular flagship publications - **Australian Social Trends** and **Measuring Australia's Progress**. Turn to pages 4 and 5 for a description and highlights of the most recent issues of these two publications.

And of course there is training news, reviews of the latest ABS publications, and the popular 'Shortcuts'.

P.S. Don't forget to return your completed '**LEP Newsletter**' survey form included in this month's issue. Your feedback will directly contribute to improving the format and delivery of this newsletter.

Michael Janssen-Gibson
National Manager



NetNews – Google Search

Regular readers of this column will be aware that the ABS has been progressively improving the site search on our web site. The most recent change has been the introduction of Google. This was facilitated by an agreement between the ABS and Google under which Google provides a site specific search facility without the advertising which is normally included with search results.

As the industry leader in web search most users of the ABS web site are familiar with the use of Google and the results it presents. This allows users to concentrate on finding the ABS resources they seek without needing to learn the behaviour of a new search engine.

This arrangement with Google provides improved reliability and relevance of search results on the ABS web site. This development, combined with the free access to ABS data from December last year and the new design of the ABS web site released in January, ensures users are enjoying an unprecedented ease of access to ABS data.

Since its introduction in late March this year users have performed in excess of 1.2 million searches of the ABS web site using Google Search. This is an impressive result by any standard and shows that people are comfortable with Google and the results it provides. This is reinforced by the overwhelmingly positive feedback received regarding Google Search and the improved ABS web site.

The ABS has always gathered information on the manner in which the ABS web site is used; with the implementation of Google the ABS continues to capture and analyse this important data so that it might better understand its users' needs and continue to make further improvements to meet them. This process has shown that even with Google the most popular search terms remain unchanged:

- CPI,
- Population,
- Unemployment,
- Census, and
- Inflation.

A positive improvement to the ABS web site, Google Search has increased the visibility of ABS statistics and made information easier for users to find.

If you would like to provide your feedback on the ABS web site or more information please contact me at mano.georgopoulos@abs.gov.au

Mano Georgopoulos
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Library and Information Week (LIW)

Feedback

One stat or two with your tea?

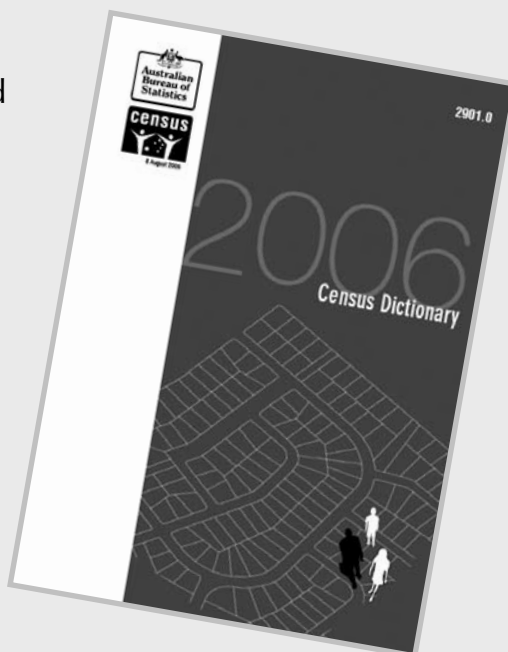
During LIW students at **TAFE NSW Albury campus** recently participated in classes organised by the library, where they learnt about navigating the ABS web site. Initially, students were sceptical about the ease of access to ABS statistics. However, with support and guidance from library staff the students were so inspired that they went on to ask questions about Census data. Students felt more comfortable in the library environment and decided to organise a World's Biggest Morning Tea in the library. "The aim was that these students would organise the event from beginning to end for staff, students and local media" said Library Manager, Noelene Williams. "They did brilliantly, raising over \$350, and are also far more comfortable with ABS information now."

The Time Capsule: Librarians and historians will be interested to know that this year Australians have again been given the opportunity to have their name-identified information retained securely by the National Archives of Australia for 99 years. Check out the Census web page at, www.abs.gov.au>Census>Time Capsule.

Census 2006 – What's in print?

The majority of Census 2006 data will be disseminated through our web site. However, there will be three exciting print publications that will be coming your way. You already would have received your **2006 Census Dictionary** (Cat. no 2901.0). This invaluable reference tool will prove useful with your census enquiries. What else is planned?

- **Social Atlas** (Cat. no 2030), yes we are still printing this wonderful resource
- The **Statisticians Report**, this is a new product that we will feature in a future issue...stay tuned!



MAP and AST – telling stories

Two useful publications

ABS releases latest Measures of Australia's Progress

Measures of Australia's Progress (MAP) presents 14 headline dimensions of Australian progress covering areas of life important to Australia and Australians.

MAP 2006 shows:

- ✓ **Health:** During the past decade, Australian's health improved!
- ✓ **Education and Training:** During the past 10 years, the Australian population became more educated!
- ✓ **National income:** Australia experienced significant real income growth during the past decade.
- ✓ **National wealth:** Real net worth per person increased by about 0.9% a year between 1995 and 2005
- ✓ **Crime:** Rates for personal crimes between 1998 and 2005 showed an increase from 4.8% to 5.3%, the same level as 2002.
- ✓ **The natural landscape:** The available data suggests some decline in Australia's biodiversity in the past decade, partly encapsulated in a rise in the numbers of threatened bird and mammal species.
- ✓ **The air and atmosphere:** The available indicators, such as the incidence of fine particle pollution in several cities, suggest that Australian air quality has improved during the past decade, despite increased motor vehicle use.

All this and much more in **Measures of Australia's Progress** (Cat. no 1370.0).



**...Also available free from the
ABS Web site...**

stories, not just statistics

sent to all LEP libraries:

Australian Social Trends 2006

The ever popular **Australian Social Trends** (Cat. no 4102.0) was released in July 2006. **Australian Social Trends** (AST) describes aspects of Australian society, and how these are changing over time.

AST opens a window to Australia's social conditions, blending statistics and commentary on a wide range of current social issues. These include:

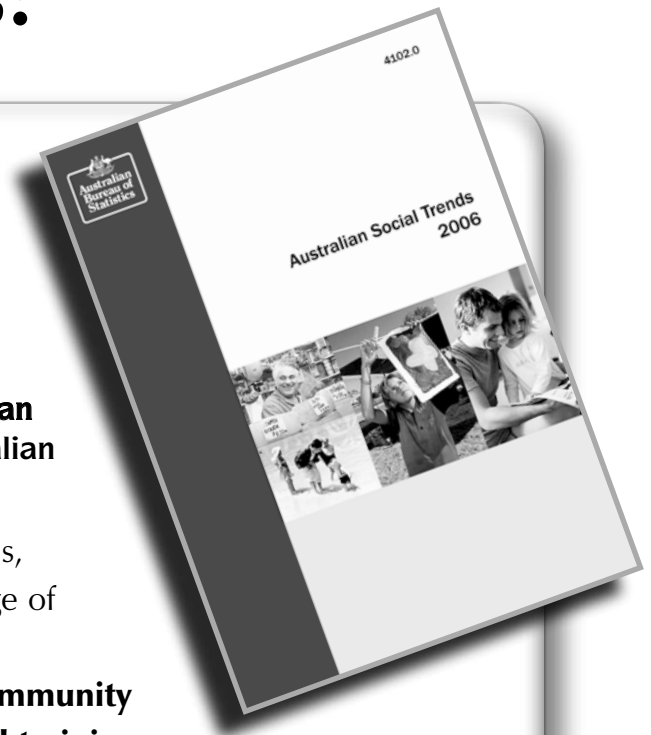
- ✓ **population**
- ✓ **health**
- ✓ **work**
- ✓ **environment**
- ✓ **family and community**
- ✓ **education and training**
- ✓ **housing**
- ✓ **crime and justice**

Each chapter is supported by a set of summary tables including key social indicators. The tables provide an overview of social change over the past decade showing how social conditions differ across Australian states and territories. A ninth chapter provides comparisons of Australia with other nations.

What's new in this issue?

- ✓ **Household expenditure patterns:** In 2003–04, Australian households spent \$893 per week on average on goods and services, an increase from \$362 in 1984.
- ✓ **One parent families:** In 2003, 22% of children aged under 18 years of age lived with one parent and apart from their other natural parent.
- ✓ **Growing older:** People in their 50's are different from 20 years ago. We can now expect to live longer, with men living to 80.6 and women to 84.6 years. This is an additional 5.5 years for men and 3.9 for women.

**...Also available free from the
ABS Web site...**



Training news...

ABS web site training in NT

The new Northern Territory LEP Co-ordinator, Pia Loffley, delivered her first solo information session on 'The ABS web site' to staff of the **Palmerston Public Library** in mid-June. Palmerston City is an area with rapidly expanding growth and the Public Library has recently moved to a bigger and brighter location to help service this growth.

Staff were keen to learn of the Google search facility on the improved ABS web site and as with other regional libraries they were particularly interested in learning how to access Census data for their regional level. There was also much enthusiasm for submitting an entry to the annual LEP Excellence Award.

'Twas a cold, wintry morning in Canberra ...

They came to ABS House in Canberra from near and far – from public, university, TAFE and government libraries and from government departments. The occasion? An ABS Information Morning organised for clients from the ACT and NSW regions by LEP Coordinators Anne Freer (NSW) and Pat Stracey (ACT).

A guided tour through the ABS web site was followed by a quiz, with Census frisbees as prizes. Competition was fierce!



Other topics included:

- Census awareness raising.
- A preview of how Census data will be accessed on the web soon.
- Geography made simple, including a preview of a new small area called a 'Mesh block'.

On that cold, wintry morning in Canberra, participants left the ABS armed with a heightened awareness about ABS information. In the words of one participant: "Your web site will prove invaluable in my work."

Training on at Tuggeranong and Belconnen Libraries!

To keep staff updated in navigating ABS statistics, Dianne Walton-Sonda, ACT LEP Coordinator, delivered an information session on the ABS web site to the very enthusiastic staff of **Belconnen** and **Tuggeranong Public Libraries**. Well done to Belconnen library staff, who organised and eagerly participated throughout the session, despite being in the middle of major building renovations.

Pari Assadi, Reference Librarian at Tuggeranong Library and her staff understand the importance of ABS statistics in assisting their users to make informed decisions. "I have been pleased to see people who use statistics more successful when opening a hair salon, little boutique or even a coffee shop", Pari reports. "Students refer to the ABS resources for their assignments; while the general public may add to their knowledge by finding statistical data on subjects of interest to them. Statistical demography of Canberra has even been used as a deciding factor for our multicultural services like the placement of our foreign language collection".

Would your library like LEP training?

Contact your LEP Coordinator to find out when the next round of training is available.

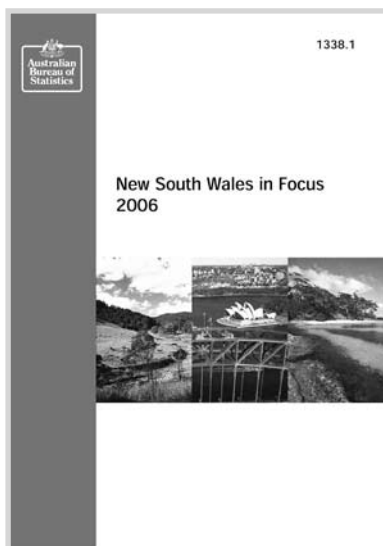
NSW in Focus

NSW in Focus is a contemporary record of activity within the State, providing a wide range of statistics from both ABS and non ABS sources. It contains ten chapters in all, each representing areas of social or economic importance: population, family and community, health, education and training, crime and justice, housing, economic activity, transport and environment.

Within each chapter, a summary table presents a time series of key indicators, followed by more detailed statistics relating to issues identified within each domain. **NSW in**

Focus is an easy to use reference for government agencies, universities, other education facilities, research organisations and the general community.

NSW in Focus (Cat. no 1338.1) is available from the ABS web site, www.abs.gov.au>statistics>catalogue number>1338.1



New and forthcoming releases

This title is selected from what the ABS is currently releasing this quarter. It is available free on the ABS web site. Keep up to date by subscribing to the free ABS

Email Notification Service.

Discover the Aspects of Social Capital, Australia 2006

The **Aspects of Social Capital, Australia 2006** (Cat. no 4911.0) was released in July as a PDF file on the ABS web site. This is the first time the ABS has brought together data and analysis relating to social capital in a consolidated way.

What does this issue offer?

This publication brings together information from the General Social Survey and many other surveys, presented in the one place, information the ABS has about the way people in Australia relate to family, friends, safety and the wider community. It provides a background to the new information on people's networks and community participation collected in the 2006 General Social Survey.

A very useful publication for general interest and a good reference guide to:

- Geographic and structural features of the Australian population
- Topics on feelings of safety, and aspects of community support and social participation, such as recent contact and time spent with family and friends, help given to others and expectations about support from others, voluntary work and giving, caring, social activities including attendance at cultural venues and events, participation in sport, attendance at sports events and religious involvement.

The short articles presented for each topic area include graphics and summary information which highlight differences for population sub-groups of concern. Information is also presented at state/territory and Remoteness Area levels

Want to know more? Check out the electronic version of the publication, www.abs.gov.au>Statistics>Cat. no>4911.0 or email library@abs.gov.au

The July 2006 issue of the **Local Government and ABS Newsletter** includes:

- How fast is the **sex and age population of your region** growing?
- Check out the ABS Publication, **Perspective on Regional Australia, Household Expenditure throughout Australia, 2003-04** (Cat no. 1380.0.55.003)
- What's happening in **Local Government Finance?**

To access the newsletter go to:

www.abs.gov.au>News& Media>Local Government & ABS>Issue 14, July 2006



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shortcuts

New look Census on the web

For the 2006 Census, a new, simplified web interface has been developed by the ABS. This interface guides the user through a series of steps which will enable access to a product(s) relevant to their needs. This has been an ongoing process, demonstrating that the ABS is committed towards making greater use of the Internet, catering for the broad range and experience of users, and providing better access to self-help services.

Two surveys and a series of face-to-face consultation sessions have been conducted annually with clients in every state and territory across Australia since the 2001 Census. This information has guided the development of the 2006 Census product range, ensuring they are relevant and reflective of the needs of our users. Further information sessions are planned for November 2006.

A taste of what is to come...

Sample Census statistics in their new format via the ABS web site. This is a valuable opportunity to familiarise yourself with the new, simplified interface before the 2006 data is available.

Access 2001 Census data for free via the following online options:

- **New Quickstats** - A quick and simple summary of key Census data relating to persons, families and dwellings.
- **New Census Tables** - A product that offers you the chance to obtain Census data in a single table for a specified geographic area.
- **Community Profiles** - A series of profiles providing key Census characteristics related to persons, families and dwellings, covering most topics on the Census form.

More new products will be available online in the future:

- **Quickmaps** - A range of thematic Census maps based on larger geographies depicting selected population, ethnicity, family, income, labour force and dwelling characteristics.
- **CDATA Online** - A sophisticated product aimed at offering expert clients freedom to select and combine geographic areas from a single Collection District (CD) through to an entire state/territory or Australia.
- **Table Builder** - Aimed at experienced users of Census data, this product will allow you to design and populate your own tables of Census data via an interactive web interface.

Further information about the products, the Census Dictionary and metadata information will be available through **The Census Guide** (Cat. no. 2914.0.30.00), released in September 2006, which will be freely available on the ABS web site and as a CD-ROM.

Bookmark **www.abs.gov.au** and follow the Census link to check out new Census developments as they happen.

The LEP Newsletter is published four times a year in February, May, August and November by the ABS Library Extension Program Locked Bag 10 Belconnen ACT 2616

www.abs.gov.au

