Down and loaded with ABS statistics

Welcome to the special edition of the **LEP Newsletter** for Library and Information Week 2004.

The theme for the 2004 Library and Information Week "Down and loaded: the right information @ the right time" focuses on the delivery of information via the online environment – it could have been written exactly with ABS information in mind.

Australian Library and Information Association poster

The ABS provides a plethora of the latest information to educate and inform all Australians. Connection to the electronic eLEP service provides full-text downloads of more than 700 ABS titles – every publication issued since 1998. AusStats provides even more information. Don't forget CLIB, the census product developed specifically for libraries eligible through the LEP. Release 3 has just been sent out.

The next step is ensuring that the public know that this information is available, so we are always delighted to hear about LEP libraries promoting ABS information to their clients. Our Library and Information Week centrespread on pages 4 and 5 of this issue, is packed with ideas about how libraries have staged events and information days.

To help libraries to promote ABS information in Library and Information Week, the LEP is putting together a kit of promotional materials. If you would like one to be sent to you, please email library@abs.gov.au

inside:

statistics across Australia   **www.abs.gov.au**

From the Editor

This special issue of the **LEP Newsletter** is coming to you early – well before its May cover date. We want to make sure that our ideas to help libraries celebrate Library and Information Week reach you in time to help with your library's preparations.

Pages 4 and 5 offer 10 ways you could promote ABS information in your library – all of these have already been used in the LEP over the last year or so so they should work well in your library too.

As I write, the ABS has announced plans to amend the ABS product numbering system. An Insert in the printed copy of the 2004 **ABS Catalogue of Publications and Products** (released March 29) includes information about this. The LEP will keep you up to date as more information becomes available.

Lastly, libraries have contacted the ABS about changes to the Search Engine on the ABS web site. The ABS' Director of Electronic Dissemination reports in NetNews on this page that the ABS is working on a new Advanced Search facility.

Kim Farley-Larmour
LEP National Manager

NetNews

In my last column, I referred to work on improving the search facilities on the ABS web site. The ABS has now released a new search engine, based on Lotus Discovery Server (LDS). We have received some very positive feedback, but also some negative feedback mostly from people missing the advanced search facility. After some deliberation, we will be adding advanced search facilities to the new search engine.

In the meantime, please refer to the 'Search Tips' Help page which is available from the Help menu on the home page – this will assist you in getting the most from our new web site search.

Librarians may also be interested to know that the ABS has recently upgraded our AGLS metadata to provide more depth and coverage across our web site. This will help provide more accuracy for our search engine and help people who harvest metadata from our web site.

Mano Georgopoulos

Another ABS initiative to make it easier to find information on the web site is the release of the **National Regional Profiles**, which are available free on the web site and allow you to download a spreadsheet containing a range of indicator information for a region of your choice.

The **National Regional Profile** (ABS cat. no. 1379.0.55.001) combines a range of ABS and non-ABS information including population, births and deaths, remoteness, unemployment, income support customer numbers, wage and salary earners, and building approvals. Information is available for Local Government Areas, Statistical Local Areas, Statistical Subdivisions, Statistical Divisions, States/Territories and for Australia as a whole.
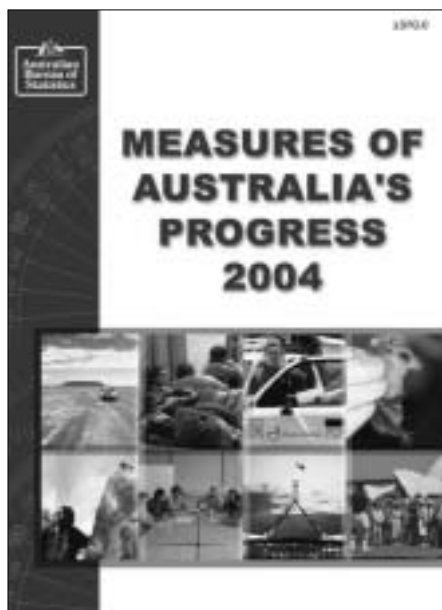
The **National Regional Profile** (NRP) does not, however, contain data from the 2001 Census of Population and Housing, but links to this census data on our web site, which is also of course available on CLIB.

Access to the NRP is through the new 'Regional Statistics' icon on the ABS home page.

If you would like more information about any of these developments, please contact me at mano.georgopoulos@abs.gov.au

Mano Georgopoulos
ABS Statistical Publishing Development

Just Out! Measures of Australia's Progress

By now LEP libraries will have received their copy of the 2004 edition of **Measures of Australia's Progress** (ABS cat. no. 1370.0).

Measures of Australia's Progress (MAP) combines key aspects of economic, environmental and social progress to measure whether life is improving in Australia – and at what rate. MAP considers the interrelationships between Australia's economy, its society and its environment.

The information is designed to provide for more informed public debate and to encourage all Australians to assess the bigger picture when contemplating progress.

The Australian Statistician, Dennis Trewin, won an award in October last year for the ABS' ground breaking work in producing MAP which was recognised for "making a significant and positive contribution to Australian life". All LEP member libraries receive a print copy of MAP.

Promoting statistics to young people

LEP public and joint community and school libraries will be interested to know about materials developed by the ABS National Education Services Unit (NESU) to teach children about statistics in a fun and "hands-on" way.

"We're trying to encourage children to learn about statistics at a young age," says Julie Nankervis from the NESU that is based in Victoria. "After all, much of modern life involves statistics so it's important to help children develop an understanding of statistics."

Julie said barely a day goes by when there isn't some mention of statistics in the news, such as house prices, building approvals, car registrations, or the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

"Statistics is essential for so many areas of learning these days, even in subjects such as zoology or botany, where statistics is important for predicting population size and measuring the spread of disease."

The NESU has developed, with teacher input, 140 lesson plans for varying ages. The materials cater for each age group and are updated each school year so they stay current and relevant. And they are all available free on the ABS web site.

Student activity sheets for Years 4 to 7 are called "STATSERCISE" and involve activities such as a rolling-the-dice game which teaches the concept of probability. For the older age groups, "exSTATic" provides real examples of analysing ABS datasets.

With more than 25,000 hits a month, the pages have proven very popular. People may print out the lesson plans and activity sheets, together with tables from the relevant ABS publications from pdf files on the web site.
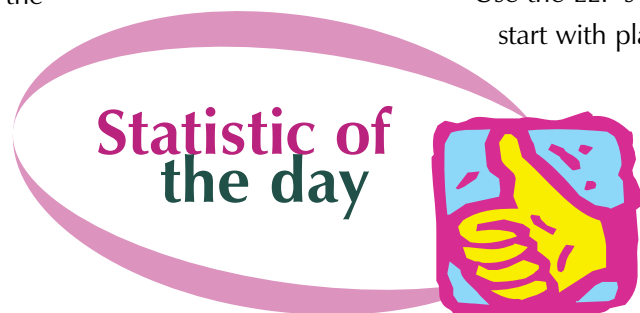
Students at Trinity College in SA are "exSTATic" using ABS statistics.

10 ways to use ABS statistics in Library and Information Week

Library and Information Week (LIW) provides the sector with the opportunity to promote the tremendous contribution libraries and information services make to educate, inform and entertain all Australians, says the Australian Library and Information Association. We at the LEP agree completely and have come up with some ideas that may appeal to your library to promote LIW, including ABS information. Here are our Top 10 ideas and we hope they inspire you to showcase your library's information services and the expertise and skills of the profession.

Information about your local area

1. Feature an **"All about our community"** display, incorporating information about your local area from the census – use **CLIB 2001** and the new free **National Regional Profile** to find interesting information about your local area.

2. Run a **"Statistic of the day"** event. What's topical in your community? Volunteering? Education? Agriculture? You will find that the ABS releases statistics on just about any topic. Use the ABS web site Theme pages, ABS web Search, or Year Book Australia to help you find interesting statistics to add to a quirky and interesting display. It needn't be a big display but with the right information it can be a real talking point in your library.

Statistic of the day

3. What about featuring a **"Web site of the day"** during Library and Information Week? Use the ABS web site as one of your featured web sites. Give guided tours of the site to your clients or feature a web site each day on your own library's web site. Develop your own guide to the web site or, to save time, use the ABS web guide prepared by the LEP. Contact your LEP Coordinator or email library@abs.gov.au for links to ABS web guides.

4. Mount a **Display** – the LEP can lend you a display stand (numbers of these are limited so book one now). Use posters, stickers, mousemats and copies of your ABS publications to give your library's clients a taste of what ABS information they can expect to find in your library.

5. Go for a big event – like an **eLEP Launch**! If you are a new eLEP subscriber launch your new service with a public event. The LEP can provide a display stand, posters, stickers and mouse mat give-aways. Use the LEP's Media Launch Kit to give you a head start with planning – it contains sample speeches, media release and ideas for the guest list – find it on the LEP pages of the web site or contact your LEP Coordinator for a Media Kit.

6. What about a **quiz**? The Education pages on the ABS web site have a range of activities for young people, including a "Don't be a drip – save a drop" water quiz. The STATSERCISE pages will give you some great ideas for activities for LIW.

7. Include the **eLEP** or **AusStats** services into your sessions for clients about online services offered in your library. As with other ideas, mouse mat give-aways, stickers and posters are available from your LEP Coordinator or by emailing library@abs.gov.au

eLEP Launch

8. Add a **link to the eLEP service** entry page to your library's web site. Or a **link to the AusStats home page** in university libraries. Core List libraries will find a **link to the ABS home page** at www.abs.gov.au to be useful.

Counting on Libraries

9. Promote the importance of your library using the facts and figures in the newly updated Beattie's Best **Counting on Libraries**. It's on the LEP web pages.

10. Finally, **take time out with a cup of coffee** to discover **what's new** on the LEP pages of the ABS web site. All LEP contacts will receive a coffee bag in the post with the compliments of the ABS.

ACT LEP Coordinator Kate Mason (left) and Promotions officer Kay Barney display LEP promotional materials for Library and Information Week.

QUT's User Guides to ABS data – helping clients help themselves

ABS products such as CLIB, CDATA and AusStats are used extensively by Queensland University of Technology (QUT) students and research staff. Users of ABS information receive support from QUT Library staff on the Information Desk and through the Faculty Liaison Librarians.

To help their clients make the best use of ABS information the library staff have prepared a series of User Guides. Queensland LEP Coordinator Tanya Lucas provided information to help QUT update the Guides which explain the role of CLIB, CDATA and AusStats and provide guidelines on how to access and use them.

QUT Library plans to make the User Guides available via QUT Library home page: http://www.library.qut.edu.au in the near future. Any member of the public can use them and perhaps your library can hotlink to them or adapt them to your needs.

Tanya visited QUT Carseldine Library in April to provide hands-on training in ABS products for the Information

Stephanie Bradbury, Brian Rice and Kate Harbison, QUT Library Carseldine Campus

Desk staff. She also trained staff and research students in two of the Research Centres based at Carseldine Campus, CARRS-Q (Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety – Queensland) and the Centre for Social Change Research. Following the training, QUT invited Tanya to address librarians from the Brisbane Northern Corridor Education Precinct Library Network.

All about SA – on the ABS web site

In this issue we continue our series on state Theme pages on the ABS web site.

Libraries in South Australia may like to promote the newly updated South Australian information on the ABS web site to their clients in Library and Information Week. A recent review of the pages in the Themes section of the ABS web site has seen a major revision to its content. The result is a set of pages with updated links, help pages and a vastly expanded list of statistical resources.

The Statistics page in particular has been completely re-written. A completely new page has been added – the South Australia Statistical Concepts page. It contains a short explanation of ABS classifications and why they are essential.

The South Australian LEP Coordinator, Pam Balfour, assisted by colleague Megan Desira, first reviewed what was best practice in the provision of regional

Pam Balfour, the SA LEP Coordinator

information, before putting many hours into producing the revised pages. The revamped South Australia pages have been edited to ensure that they all contain consistent and clear navigation elements to assist the user's progress through and between pages by reducing the need to use scrolling and the back button.

National Regional Profile on the web

Regional Qld

Previewed in the last LEP Newsletter, the **National Regional Profile** (NRP) is now available free on the ABS web site. If you are looking for data for your local government area, the NRP allows you to download a spreadsheet containing a range of indicator information for a standard area of your choice. It also enables easy comparison across regions of Australia. It combines a range of ABS and non-ABS information including population, births and deaths, remoteness, unemployment, income support customer numbers, wage and salary earners, new vehicle sales and building approvals. The NRP contains data more up-to-date than the 2001 Census of Population and Housing.

Access is through the new 'Regional Statistics' icon on the ABS Home page. At present, the NRP contains data for one year and it is anticipated that the next version, expected early in 2005, will contain a five-year time series for each region.

The March 2004 issue of the **Local Government and ABS Newsletter** includes:

- What is the CPI?

- Local Government Area changes – ASGC towards the Census 2006

- Where do I start – Conducting A Research Project

The full text is on the ABS web site. From the Home page choose 'News', then 'Newsletters'. Click on the 'Local Government and ABS' twistie to find the latest issue.

New and forthcoming releases

These titles are a selection of what the ABS is releasing this quarter. It is not a complete list of ABS releases. A full list is available from the 'Information on Releases' link on the ABS home page, or via the email notification system.

AusStats and eLEP subscribers may access these titles on the ABS web site as soon as they are released. Core list LEP libraries may request an electronic copy of any of these titles by emailing library@abs.gov.au

New issue: Asthma in Australia: a snapshot

Released in April, Asthma in Australia (ABS cat. no. 4819.0.80.001) provides a brief overview of the differentials in prevalence, asthma management and quality of life of people with current and long-term asthma, using data from the 2001 ABS National Health Survey. The article also draws on mortality rates from the 2002 ABS Causes of Deaths collection. Information from outside sources are used to provide information on predisposing, causal and contributing factors, protective factors and hospitalisations due to asthma.

Available in Electronic format only.

Regional Population Growth, Australia and New Zealand, 2002-03 (ABS cat. no. 3218.0)

The outer areas of capital cities and coastal Australia experienced the highest population growth in 2002-03, according to regional population figures in this publication. Australia's estimated resident population at June 2003 was 19.9 million people, an increase of 240,500 people over June 2002. Of the capital cities, Sydney's population was 4,201,500, up by 34,500 people, Melbourne's population of 3,559,700 rose by 46,600 people and Brisbane's population was 1,733,200, up by 42,700 people. Population estimates are also included for New Zealand. Libraries will have received a print copy of this title.

LIBRARY extension program

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shortcuts

What's free on the ABS web site?

There is a wealth of free information available on the ABS web site. The links are all available from the ABS web site home page at http://www.abs.gov.au

- **Theme pages** – these are subject guides to ABS statistics and are great when you know nothing about a subject or you don't know the name or catalogue number of the publication you need

- **Australia Now** – overview of economic and social conditions of contemporary Australia. Contains current and historical articles from Year Book Australia, Australian Social Trends, Measuring Australia's Progress and Measuring Australia's Economy

- **ABS Catalogue** – find the catalogue from the **Products and Services** link on the home page

- **Main features** of ABS publications – summary information for ABS publications, so you don't have to download the whole document to see what it's about (which may incur a cost)

- Selected **Census information** – the 2001 Basic Community Profile for 'Australia', 'States and Territories', 'Statistical Divisions' and 'Sub Divisions' and 'Statistical Local Area' is free as is the Indigenous Profile. Extensive 1996 Census data is also free

- **Key National Indicators** – a summary of Australia's key economic and social statistics, updated as soon as new information is available.

- **Library Extension Program** – click on **Products and Services** on the home page to find free training materials, information about the LEP's free services and your library's entry in a directory of LEP members

- **Release information** – subscribe free-of-charge to the Email notification service or look at **Week Ahead Release Information** from the home page. For previous releases click on the **AusStats** link and choose **Release Information**

- **ABS Newsletters** – use the **News** link on the home page for a range of electronic newsletters including Demography News, the LEP Newsletter, Health Statistics News and many State statistical newsletters

- **About Statistics** – includes links to **Information Papers** and pages that explain concepts and classifications important in understanding and interpreting ABS statistics.

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