



New NCCJS Director



The National Centre for Crime and Justice Statistics (NCCJS) will have a new Director from the middle of this year. Mr Chris Libreri will be transferring to the

position from within the Victorian office of the ABS.

Chris began working in the Corporate Services area of the Australian Bureau of Statistics in June 1980 after studying Mathematics at RMIT and working for a number of years in the hospitality industry. In the years since, Chris has worked in a range of ABS areas such as Population Surveys (including the 1983 Crime and Safety Survey), State and Local Government Finance Statistics, and Information and Marketing Services - including a posting in ABS' Central Office in Canberra.

In the early 1990s, Chris was responsible for the Social Analysis and Research section of the Victorian Office prior to his promotion to Director of Corporate Services and the Population Surveys Branch in 1994. For the past three years, Chris has headed the Business Frames Branch which is responsible for the maintenance of Frames and Registers for ABS business-based collections, including direct liaison with the Australian Taxation Office on administrative data sources.

Chris hopes to "extend and improve the well-established role of the National Centre for Crime and Justice Statistics, with a particular focus on the quality aspects of our work and the ABS' role of expanding the National Statistical Service". He adds that he "looks forward to the challenge of the Director's role, working in a fascinating field of statistics and meeting key clients so that already substantial relationships can be further developed".

Chris has recently completed postgraduate studies in Management (Canberra University) and Statistics (Victoria University). He was born and bred in Melbourne's northern suburbs of Maltese ancestry and still lives there with his wife Kerri and children Angela and Jessica. His interests include following sport of all kinds, reading science fiction, strolling and good food.

Publications

Corrective Services, Australia

The December quarter 2000 issue of *Corrective Services, Australia* (ABS Cat. No. 4512.0) was released on 29 March 2001. Some of the key findings are:

- In the December quarter, the average daily number of prisoners in Australia was 20,769, an increase of less than 1% on the September quarter 2000.
- Victoria and the Northern Territory made the greatest contributions to this increase, rising by 3% and 5% respectively.
- The highest rate of imprisonment for the Indigenous population was in Western Australia with a rate of 3,001 Indigenous prisoners per 100,000 adult Indigenous population.

Copies of *Corrective Services, Australia* (ABS Cat. No. 4512.0) are available from the ABS for \$21.00.

Community Based Corrections

Two tables containing statistics on persons in community-based corrections appeared for the first time in the September quarter 2000 issue of *Corrective Services, Australia*. Some of the key findings were:

- In the June quarter 2000 there were 59,190 persons in community-based corrections in Australia.
- Over 80% of persons in community-based corrections were males.

The highest rate of imprisonment for the Indigenous population was in Western Australia, with a rate of 3,001 Indigenous prisoners per 100,000 adult Indigenous population.

The statistics on community-based corrections have a financial year reference period and will be updated annually in the September quarter publication.

Prisoners in Australia

The NCCJS has been producing Prisoner Census statistics as annual reports to the Corrective Services Ministers' Council since 1994. For the first time this year the statistics are being presented in an official ABS publication. The results of the 2000 Prisoner Census will be published in *Prisoners in Australia 2000* (ABS Cat. No. 4517.0) in May and will have an emphasis on national data. State and Territory data will be available in supplementary tables.

Recorded Crime, Australia

The eighth in the series of *Recorded Crime, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 4510.0) for the 2000 calendar year will be released in late May. This publication will see a significant change in presentation with the emphasis on national figures for victims of selected offences and comparisons of victim characteristics at the national level across offence categories. State and Territory data will be available in supplementary tables.

Higher Criminal Courts

The fourth publication of *Higher Criminal Courts, Australia* (ABS Cat. no. 4513.0), presenting financial year data on the criminal workload of the Supreme and Intermediate courts in Australia, will be released in June.

This publication will contain similar information to that included in last year's release, though some of the statistics will be consolidated. This will improve the ease with which users can interpret the data and gain a more informative picture of the criminal workload of Australia's Higher Courts.

Collections

National Crime and Safety Survey

Testing is underway for the 2002 National Crime and Safety Survey. Most of the core items from the 1998 survey will be repeated in the 2002 survey and at this stage it is likely that this survey will include questions on sexual assault for adult males and females. A small number of other data items including fear of crime, offence seriousness, age and sex of offender and what happened after the incident was reported to the police are currently being tested for possible inclusion.

For the first time this year, statistics from the Prisoner Census are being presented in an official ABS publication. The results of the 2000 Prisoner Census will be published in May and will have an emphasis on national data.

Questions on sexual assault for adult males as well as females are likely to be included for the first time in the 2002 National Crime and Safety Survey.

ABS Population Census

A similar extract to the Prisoner Census will be provided for use in the 2001 Australian Census of Population and Housing. It is anticipated that the use of this extract will significantly reduce the cost for Corrective Services agencies of providing demographic data for the prisoner population to be used in the ABS Census.

Recorded Crime

Some of the key outcomes of the recent round of Police Practitioner and Advisory Group meetings were a commitment to further development of an Offender Based Statistics collection and an agreement to further expansion of the weapon use classification. A preliminary framework is almost completed for the Offender Based Statistics collection, and test data for this collection are anticipated for 2002.

The National Crime Statistics manual is also being revised. This version will have a new section relating to 'Outcome of Investigation' as well as a number of examples which will illustrate how the recorded crime classifications are to be applied.

Higher Criminal Courts

Development of offence information for the higher courts collection is continuing. Incorporating offence statistics into the national criminal courts collection is dependent on State/Territory agencies recording full offence information on their case management systems and providing this data in accordance with the Australian Standard Offence Classification (ASOC).

The NCCSU has received 1999/2000 offence data for five of the eight States and Territories and is continuing to liaise with courts agencies to resolve apparent comparability issues impacting on the data. These stem from a number of factors including the use of different recording practices. It is anticipated that once these comparability issues are satisfactorily resolved and the data are adjusted accordingly, a limited set of offence tables will be produced and disseminated as supplementary tables. Consideration will then be given to including some offence statistics in next year's publication.

ABS' Analysis Branch is currently conducting two projects modelling the 1998 National Crime and Safety Survey. These projects focus on small area estimates of crime victimisation and estimates of the propensity to report crime.

The NCCJS will release a report by the end of the year outlining the national statistical needs of the emergency management sector.

Analytical Projects

The ABS' Analysis Branch in Canberra is currently conducting two projects which model the 1998 National Crime and Safety Survey.

Small Area Estimates of Crime

This project is an attempt to derive estimates of crime victimisation at a geographic area smaller than the 1998 National Crime and Safety Survey will allow, using small area estimation techniques that have been proven effective in other areas. The estimates will only be released publicly if the ABS has confidence in the estimates. This confidence will come not only through statistical tests of the models, but also through reality checks provided by police and criminology experts.

Propensity to Report Crime

For this project, the Analysis Branch is working with the Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) on the proposal for a logistic regression model to estimate the propensity of different groups of people to report criminal incidents to the police. This method has been used in similar studies overseas and in Australia. The output from this project will be a model showing which victim/incident characteristics are associated with higher or lower reporting.

The planned completion date for both of these projects is late 2001. Analysis Branch is also currently collaborating with the AIC on a project studying repeat and multiple victimisation.

Other Activities

Statistical Framework

Work on the National Crime and Justice Statistical Framework (NCJSF) has progressed substantially over the last six months. Meetings of the Working Group in October 2000 and March this year have helped refine both the overall paper and the conceptual model in particular. Presentations of the paper to the Police Statisticians, the Council of Australian Government's (COAG) Corrections Working Group and the COAG Police Working Group have also elicited useful feedback that has been incorporated into the paper. Further work on the model is currently occurring via close consultation with some of the Working Group members.

Emergency Management

The NCCJS is currently reviewing the ABS' role in the provision of national emergency management statistics. Key stakeholders and users of national emergency management statistics are being consulted as the first stage of this review. The NCCJS will release a report by the end of the year outlining the national statistical needs of the emergency management sector and recommending how the ABS can assist the sector to meet these needs.

Indigenous Identification

The ABS is assisting organisations to include the ABS standard Indigenous identification question into their administrative systems in line with other community initiatives to improve the measurement and delivery of services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The NCCJS is also currently working to improve the quality of Indigenous data in its collections. A recent meeting with Janis Shaw, Director of the ABS' National Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics (NCATSIS), assisted in the development of a situation analysis of current NCCJS projects and activities in Indigenous identification, as well as a strategy document for further improving the quality and coverage of Indigenous identifiers in administrative data collections.

Recently a meeting was held at the ABS office in Brisbane with representatives from all ABS' State offices, NCCJS and NCATSIS to review and progress work on improving the Indigenous identifier in a broad range of administrative collections, including hospital admissions, school enrolments, and data collected by crime and justice organisations.

COAG

The NCCJS' involvement with statistical collections for COAG's Report on Government Services continues. Feedback was provided on collections for the Police and Court Administrators' Working Groups, which fed into the Report on Government Services 2001.

International Visitors

The NCCJS has further strengthened its international links with visits by overseas guests. Paul Wiles and Richard Harries, both from the British Home Office, visited the NCCJS on separate occasions. These visits provided excellent opportunities for the Centre to learn about issues facing the collection of crime statistics in the UK and to discuss the future of our own collections in Australia.

NCCJS Meetings

The following NCCJS meetings were held in February/March 2001:

- National Criminal Courts Statistics Unit Board of Management, 5 February
- Police Statisticians meeting, 14 and 15 February
- National Corrections Statistics Advisory Group, 28 February;
- National Crime Statistics Advisory Group, 15 March;
- National Criminal Courts Statistics Advisory Group, 16 March; and
- National Crime and Justice Statistical Framework Working Group, 16 March.

Upcoming meetings are:

- National Corrective Services Statistics Unit Board of Management, May 2001;
- National Crime Statistics Unit Board of Management, May 2001; and
- National Criminal Courts Statistics Unit Board of Management, November 2001.

Upcoming Publications

In late May:

- Recorded Crime, Australia
- Higher Criminal Courts, Australia
- Prisoners in Australia

In late June:

- Corrective Services, Australia

Papers Presented

ABS staff presented several papers at the 15th Annual Australia and New Zealand Society of Criminology (ANZSOC) conference in Melbourne in February.

- Catherine Andersson presented an analysis of assault data from Recorded Crime Statistics and the 1998 National Crime and Safety Survey.

- Dr Karen Gelb, manager of the National Crime and Justice Statistical Framework project, presented a paper on the Framework.
- Robert Tanton, from ABS' Central Office in Canberra, presented a paper on the current Analysis Branch projects using crime and safety data.

Staff News

There has been a significant amount of staff movement in the NCCJS over the last six months. The previous Director, Stuart Ross, left the ABS in December to take a consultancy position at Melbourne University. Carol Soloff has been acting in the position since January, and Chris Libreri will be starting as Director in the middle of the year. Other staff who have left the ABS include Feodora Fomin, Christine Holland, and Nick Chrisant. Adrian Serraglio has been outposted to , while Peter Winter and Shona Williamson have moved to other areas of the ABS.

The NCCJS has been fortunate to have Rhonda Harper, Tom Carrigg and Georgina Povey all transfer to the Centre last month from other Branches within the ABS Victoria, and Robert Letheby will be joining the NCCJS in May as an Assistant Director. David Cannington and Melissa Munce have also been recruited to the Centre.

Tables containing statistics on persons in community-based corrections in Australia appeared for the first time in the September quarter 2000 issue of Corrective Services, Australia.

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