



Statistical UPDATE

An Information Newsletter from the Queensland Office

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From Ian Marshall, Director, Client & Statistical Services

This issue of the Queensland *Statistical Update* is the first since moving to Director, Client and Statistical Services in the Queensland Office in January 2000.

My experience includes time in Agriculture, Manufacturing, Construction, Tourism, Business Register and corporate areas of the ABS as well as two years in Papua New Guinea. My most recent position was as Director of Corporate Services in the Queensland Office.



Ian Marshall

One of the key aims I have as I move to the client servicing area of the ABS is to ensure that we provide our clients with the best possible information service and remain accessible to clients to discuss and address their information needs.

Future directions in client servicing

The ABS is moving to an exciting stage in its delivery of information to clients.

- More and more data as well as main features of publications and information about the wider set of ABS products and services are available from the ABS website (www.abs.gov.au)
- Electronic copies of publications can now be sent to clients within minutes of release.
- Soon, complete publications and additional data will be able to be downloaded via the net through a subscriber service called AusStats.

I am keen to ensure clients have comprehensive knowledge of our capability to satisfy their information needs. The recently conducted Stats Expo has provided one opportunity in this regard. The EXPO was a great success due to the generous response from clients which was greatly appreciated.

Statistical Update is one means of continuing to provide you with information about our capabilities. I encourage you to read through this and future issues to be kept informed about the many developments, reviews and releases that are planned for the coming months.

— Ian Marshall

Review of Business Definition by Size

Although the Australian Bureau of Statistics has been providing statistics relating to size of business for some years, there has been no universal statistical definition adopted for the various size categories. The ABS Small Business Unit was recently charged with the task of reviewing the current definitions and bringing forward recommendations to be adopted as statistical standards for the ABS.

The process involved consultation with clients and other stakeholders to determine the business size categories of interest and what characteristics best identified each category. At the outset, it was agreed that the agriculture industry was too distinct to be included in a standard definition and would be excluded from this review.

It was concluded that small businesses were the major category of interest and these could be best defined qualitatively. It was also agreed that small businesses were those independently owned and operated; closely controlled by owners or managers who also contributed most, if not all of the operating capital; and finally, that principle decision making functions rested with the owner/manager.

As statistical data relating to these qualitative characteristics are not generally available, the next phase of the review involved an examination of the various quantitative data which are available and make recommendations on the optimum proxy definition for determining small business size boundaries. The aim was to find a definition that was both as pure and complete as possible. Once a statistical definition for small business was established, it was felt that definitions for other size categories should use the same variable and cut-offs could then be easily determined.

The quantitative variable to best define small business was Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employment. As well as allowing the best compromise between purity and completeness, FTE employment also has the advantage of being a straight forward concept that was readily understandable and easily visualised and it does not need to be adjusted for inflation.

The final report from this review will be released early next month.

For further information please contact Clem Tozer on 02 6252 6726 or clem.tozer@abs.gov.au

Environment Protection Expenditure, Australia: User Review

For the first time since the collection began, the ABS is undertaking a comprehensive user review for our publication *Environmental Protection Expenditure, Australia* (Cat. no. 4603.0).

This publication presents estimates of expenditure on environment protection by governments, the corporate sector and households. Information is collected on agriculture, manufacturing, mining, and services industries, and utilities providing electricity, gas or water treatment services. Estimates are also presented for all levels of government — Commonwealth, State/Territory and local.

Categories of environmental protection include waste management (hazardous and non-hazardous), waste water & water protection, air & climate, biodiversity & landscape, soil & groundwater, and other environmental protection.

These comprehensive estimates of environmental protection expenditures provide an indication of the response of various sectors to environment protection policies and regulation. They indicate the demands for environmental protection goods and services of the environment management industry, and form part of environmental 'satellite' accounts designed to augment the system of national accounts.

The Environment and Energy Statistics Section of the ABS is seeking internal and external user feedback in relation to the usefulness, scope and quality of the data, as well as presentation and ease of understanding of the publication.

Consultation with users will occur through the period of April to June 2000, and users' views will be sought through either mailed questionnaires or interviews. Interviews will be conducted with interested users from key organisations in government and industry across Australia. Those with an interest in the consultation process should contact the ABS personnel below. The information that is obtained is important as it will help us to identify ways of meeting client needs in the future.

For further information contact Barb Vernon on 02 6252 5613 or b.vernon@abs.gov.au or Stuart Peevor on 02 6252 7042 or stuart.peevor@abs.gov.au

New Functional Classification of Buildings

The ABS, as a result of a wide-ranging review of its Building Statistics program, has recently redeveloped its core classificatory basis — the Functional Classification of Building.

The 1999 review of Functional Classification of Buildings (FCB) had a significant focus upon retention and improvement of the distinctions within the classification, whilst taking into account new and emerging trends within the building industry. A major consideration in the 1999 FCB was to ensure, as far as possible, comparability of data before and after any changes to the 1986 classification

The FCB is a classification intended to classify buildings according to the stated predominant function or purpose of the building and is used by economic collections of the ABS, including Building Approvals and Building Activity.

The new classification will be applied to new buildings data as supplied monthly to the ABS through building approval administrative by-product. The scope of the data classified using this classification therefore is all new buildings in receipt of a building approval and subsequent building activity.

Data using this classification will be compiled in a range of ABS publications including:

- *Building Approvals, Australia* (Cat. no. 8731.0)
- *Building Activity, Australia: Dwelling Unit Commencements, Preliminary* (Cat. no. 8750.0)
- *Building Activity, Australia* (Cat. no. 8752.0)
- *Building Activity, Australia: Building Work Done, Preliminary* (Cat. no. 8755.0)

Data will be captured using the new classification from July 2000. The classification used in the publications

mentioned above, however, will remain unchanged for some while to ensure the impacts of the new classification can be fully assessed but data on the new basis may be available from the ABS.

One of the major changes in the new classification is the breakdown of the Other Business Premises category. Information will now be identified on the approval of Warehouses, Transport Buildings and Agricultural and Aquacultural Buildings. Other changes include the identification of apartment blocks being used as short-term accommodation and the number of dwellings associated with special dwellings eg. nurses' quarters, boarding houses and also the introduction of standard formal descriptions for all types of buildings.

A description of the classification can be found on the Statistical Concepts Library of the ABS, which is available on the ABS website (www.abs.gov.au) or on CD-ROM.

For further information contact Loucas Harous on 08 8237 7585 or loucas.harous@abs.gov.au

Household Use of Information Technology

A review of the Household Use of Information Technology Survey for 2000 was recently conducted with a focus on the Internet. The development of IT questions for inclusion in the April 2000 monthly Labour Force Survey program is also under way. The IT questions in this survey will focus on the use of computers and the Internet by children. The sample population in the monthly Labour Force Survey is large enough to provide an opportunity to present some regional IT statistics.

For further information contact Sheridan Roberts on 02 6252 5019 or sheridan.roberts@abs.gov.au



New ABS Web Library



In September 1999 the ABS launched a comprehensive statistical reference library on the ABS website.

The Statistical Concepts Library provides easy access to authoritative information about the concepts, sources, methods and classifications underlying Australian official statistics. Previously this has been available only on CD-ROM.

This new free service will prove invaluable to academics, business people and government agencies wanting to understand the classificatory systems underpinning ABS publications. It will also facilitate a greater knowledge of the methodology supporting major Australian economic and social indicators.

Some of the references in the Statistical Concepts Library include:

- Guide to the Consumer Price Index – 13th Series
- Standards for Social Labour and Demographic Statistics
- Australian Standard Classification of Occupations
- Australian Standard Geographical Classification, 1998
- Balance of Payments, Australia, Concepts, Sources & Methods

The Statistical Concepts Library is available at www.abs.gov.au by clicking on Statistics, then Statistical Concepts Library.

Review of Household Surveys Program

— Outcomes

Why the Household Surveys Program Review?

- to assess the program's continued relevance.
- to reassess existing and continuing demands against emerging new demands and known gaps in the statistical program

Aims of the Household Survey Program

Household surveys are a crucial part of the ABS population statistics program which aims:

- to provide a range of statistics required to monitor the social and economic well-being of Australians with particular reference to important sub-groups of the population; and
- to support the development, implementation and evaluation of policies and programs of key Commonwealth and State government agencies.

Outcomes of the Household Programs Review

General Outcomes of the Overall Program

- An expanded program costing an additional \$5m to \$6m annually over the next 10 years
- A partnership with the Department of Health and Aged Care for funding support for an expanded program of health surveys.

- Program reflects the highest priority demands of users, their comments and advice
- A degree of program flexibility to respond to emerging demands
- To work closely with departments and user groups through both review implementation and determination of topics for program future years.
- Development of strategies for the production of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people statistics from both surveys and administrative collections.
- Proposal of a set of social indicators/statistics to describe and monitor well-being of population for areas of social concern to be developed and maintained with assistance from key users.

Key Elements of Future Program

- Monthly labour force and supplementary surveys
- Special social surveys
- General social survey
- Indigenous general social survey (for detail refer Page 11)
- Multi-purpose household survey

Note: The *Population Survey Monitor* will be discontinued at the end of 2000.

Population clock

With 550 people being added to the Australian population every day, and a baby born every 2 minutes and 8 seconds, our population is well past the 19 million it reached when the "population clock" was added to the ABS website recently.

On 21 March 2000 at 10:21:11 (Canberra time), the resident population of Australia was projected to be:

19,112,198

This projection is based on the estimated resident population at 30 June 1999 and assumes growth since then of:

- one birth every 2 minutes and 8 seconds,
- one death every 3 minutes and 52 seconds,
- a net gain of one international migrant every 5 minutes and 50 seconds leading to
- an overall total population increase of one person every 2 minutes and 37 seconds

These assumptions are consistent with those used for series K in *Population Projections, 1997 to 2051* (Cat. no. 3222.0).

Visit the ABS website at www.abs.gov.au for the immediate figure. From the ABS homepage click on the link Australia Now, then Population, followed by Population Clock for the up-to-the-moment estimate.

Review of Household Surveys Program — Outcomes *continued*

General Social Survey

General Social Survey (GSS) obtains broad information across all areas of social concern. It provides insight into the living standards and allows assessment of social advantage and disadvantage. It also enables the relationship between health status and health outcomes using various social and economic determinants to be explored.

The GSS broad content cannot provide the depth of detail needed for policy analysis - this is the function of Special Social Surveys (SSSs). However the GSS questions should overlap and be consistent with SSSs to enable statistical links to be made. The GSS survey:

- is conducted every 3 years
- content is largely fixed, but may change slowly over time
- has capacity for some items on contemporary or emerging issues, enabling monitoring of social changes over time
- will include an Indigenous sample supplement every 6 years to support State/Territory level estimates
- suggested content includes items relating to health, housing, family and social participation, education, work, income and financial circumstances, sport and leisure, transport and travel, and crime
- content subject to further user input as well as to testing and development.

Special Social Surveys

Special Social Surveys (SSS) aim to provide detailed in depth information about a specific subject area or group within the population. This program is expanded to include some additional surveys and increasing frequency of others.

Special feature of the survey include:

- standard survey involves an interview of around 45 minutes per household.
- other methods of data collection maybe used e.g. diaries or mailed questionnaires.
- special features may be included to suit survey objectives or the nature of the data.

Planned frequencies of the surveys:

- Three-yearly: Health(a); Income and Housing Costs; Crime and Safety(b)
- Four-yearly: Education and Training
- Six-yearly: Disability, Ageing and Carers; Indigenous Health; Household Expenditure; Retirement Provision and Superannuation
- Twelve-yearly: Time Use; Violence Against Persons

(a) Frequency supported by funding partnership with DHAC

(b) Mail back questionnaire using the outgoing rotation group from the monthly labour force survey over a 12 month period

Multi-Purpose Household Survey

Multi-Purpose Household Survey (MPHS) is a new, flexible, multi-topic survey vehicle to collect, by personal interview, small amounts of data in a number of subject fields rather than large amounts of data about a single topic. The MPHS can pick up a number of topics that require personal and/or face to face interviewing and are unsuited to the monthly supplementary survey program.

The MPHS:

- will run two years in three - those years when the GSS is not in the field.
- will have shorter development and output times than the current special social surveys responding to user demands with flexibility.
- envisaged sample size of 17,000 persons favours the production of state/territory estimates over national estimates.
- topics will be repeated to allow for comparisons over time, with spare capacity in the survey to respond to new demands and priorities in a timely way.
- The first MPHS is planned for 2003.
- Priorities for topics to be included will be determined one year in advance. Topics likely to be considered include: Family, Voluntary work, Sport, Housing, IT in the Home, Asset/Wealth, Environment, Police and Justice.

(Given that it will be 4 years since the 1999 housing survey and no other housing survey is scheduled in the draft program a housing topic is proposed for the 2003 MPHS.)

Monthly Labour Force and Supplementary Surveys

Supplementary Surveys involve short interviews (about 3 minutes per household) conducted in conjunction with the main monthly labour force survey interview.

This supplementary survey vehicle:

- collects information from a responsible adult in the household
- is most suitable for relatively simple topics, particularly those related to the labour market
- is run in 10 months of the year
- sample sizes may vary by topic with distribution of response load
- has one Survey designated as a State Survey

For further information contact Debra McDonald on 07 3222 6497 or debra.mcdonald@abs.gov.au

Quarterly Economic Activity Statistics

The ABS is currently developing a more coordinated approach to the collection of quarterly data on Sales, Inventories, Wages and salaries, New capital expenditure and Company profits. The surveys mainly affected by this are:

- Survey of Company Profits
- Survey of Inventories, Sales and Services
- Survey of New Capital Expenditure
- Survey of Employment and Earnings.

While some components of these surveys will remain separate, the result will be a single survey called the Quarterly Economic Activity Survey (QEAS).

Why are we making these changes?

These changes will deliver significant benefits to users of economic statistics and businesses which provide the ABS with economic data. The changes will:

- improve the consistency and coherence of these statistics, particularly for the purposes of compiling the quarterly national accounts;
- enable more analysis and commentary of the reasons for changing patterns of economic activity; and,
- position the ABS to make optimal use of the relevant datasets that will become available from the Australian Taxation Office following the implementation of the new taxation system.

The changes are also in line with the preferred statistical reporting arrangements of most businesses.

State/Territory data available?

The proposed QEAS aims to include the following items by State/Territory: Sales of goods and services (initially for manufacturers and wholesalers sales and then for selected service industries); wages and salaries; and new capital expenditure. While the QEAS will collect national company profits data, collection of similar data at the State/Territory levels is not proposed because of the difficulty in obtaining State/Territory dissection of sufficient quality and reliability.

For more information contact Bernard Williams on 02 6252 5304 or bernard.williams@abs.gov.au

The Australian Classification Framework for Culture/Leisure Statistics

A three-year project to revise the current Culture Statistics Framework is nearing completion, with publication of a new ABS Framework expected mid-2000. The project is managed by the National Centre for Culture and Recreation Statistics of the ABS, based in Adelaide.

Most industry statistics are presented in accordance with a classification called the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC). Although this meets the needs of broad economic data across all industries, policy makers in the culture sector see the need for a framework which describes their industry in more detail than ANZSIC allows. For this reason, the National Culture/Leisure Industry Statistical Framework was created in the late 1980s for the Cultural Ministers Council Statistics Working Group. It is now time to update this Framework, to bring it in line with today's cultural environment and current user needs. The ABS is the agency responsible for setting statistical standards in Australia and it has therefore been asked to undertake this project on behalf of the culture and leisure community.

The new Framework contains three separate classifications, covering Industry, Occupations and Products and will be called the *Australian Classification Framework for Culture/Leisure Statistics*. It will provide a structure for collecting data for the culture and leisure sectors, which includes heritage, the arts, sport and recreation. Comprehensive consultation with peak industry bodies has taken place over the last 2 years and seminars were presented around the country during late 1999 to give interested parties a final opportunity to comment on the ABS proposals.

For further information, contact Sue Gredley on 08 8237 7403 or sue.gredley@abs.gov.au

The ABS encourages responses to articles in this newsletter and welcomes your suggestions for future issues

Contact:

Martin Smart

Telephone: (07) 3222 6232

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Email: martin.smart@abs.gov.au

Data Confidentiality for International Merchandise Trade Statistics

The ABS has recently released an Information Paper titled *International Merchandise Trade Statistics, Australia: Data Confidentiality* (Cat. no. 5487.0). It describes the data confidentiality restrictions applied to Australian international merchandise trade statistics, including the relevant provisions in ABS legislation, the types of restrictions applied and their impact on statistics, how to obtain a list of confidentialised

commodities, and how the ABS handles requests for confidentiality restrictions.

In addition, a feature article on data confidentiality was included in the December 1999 release of *International Merchandise Trade, Australia* (Cat. no. 5422.0). The article summarises the types of confidentiality restrictions applied to international merchandise trade statistics and their impact on the tables within that publication.

For further information contact Sharyn Sturgeon on 02 6252 5310 or sharyn.sturgeon@abs.gov.au

TAX REFORM

The Future of the Agricultural Statistics Program and the Impact of Tax Reform

Several areas within the ABS are looking to address the growing public and political interest in rural and regional statistics which cover more than the traditional agricultural statistics produced by the ABS. Agriculture Section is planning to provide data from a broader framework of statistics for rural Australia incorporating economic, social and environmental indicators. Rural statistics in the future will increasingly draw upon external and administrative sources of data, in addition to those collections undertaken by the ABS.

A future important administrative source will be the Australian Business Register (ABR). This new source, created as part of the Federal Government's tax reform program, is expected to provide a comprehensive list of agricultural units, enhanced by the inclusion of many small, and previously unregistered, non-employed

businesses. The ABS is currently in the process of investigating ways in which the new register can be used to improve the coverage of agriculture businesses in ABS collections, as well as being a source of regularly updated data about those businesses.

The ABS is updating and expanding the *Directory of Agricultural Statistics* (Cat. no. 7217.0). The new directory, due for release in January 2001, will contain an expanded list of organisations holding agricultural data as well as those who hold data on rural statistics.

The agricultural census, which goes to every farmer in Australia, will continue to be conducted on a five-yearly basis, with information for the intervening years being provided from a sample of farmers. The next census will relate to the year ending 30 June 2002.

For further information contact Jim Williamson on 02 6252 5830 or jim.williamson@abs.gov.au

Postcode to Statistical Local Area Concordances

The ABS has developed several concordance products which enable users to convert data for one type of geographic region to another. The Postal Area to Statistical Local Area (SLA) 1996 concordance shows the conversion of population data from Postal Areas to SLAs based on 1996 Population Census data (Cat. nos 1253.0.15.001 to 1253.8.15.001).

Postcode to SLA concordances are updated annually by the Small Area Population Unit, located in the Adelaide office of the ABS. These concordances are derived by updating the 1996 Census-based concordances using more recent information, and assist the ABS in estimating the populations of SLAs.

For further information, contact Andrew Howe on 08 8237 7370 or andrew.howe@abs.gov.au

Tax Reform and Regional Statistics

The Regional Statistics Unit in the ABS Adelaide Office is currently undertaking a research project in collaboration with the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). The research project is concerned with using income data for wage and salary earners, partnerships and trusts from the ATO Individual Taxpayer dataset, to derive measures of earned income which are useful indicators of regional economic activity. The attraction of using ATO datasets is that they are annual and therefore provide intercensal measures, a time series can be built from them and the data provides other useful variables such as occupation not obtainable for small area levels other than from census data.

Following a successful pilot project during 1998, an agreement was reached between the ABS and ATO for the continuation of research into the usefulness of the individual taxpayer data as an alternative source of regional economic information. The ATO subsequently provided aggregated data files by postcode for 1995–96 and 1996–97 from which a number of output tables have been derived. All tables are for Total Wage and Salary Earners aged 15 years and over and have been produced at the Statistical Local Area (SLA) level for Australia, for both 1995–96 and 1996–97. The tables produced to date are variants of median and average income and wage and salary income totals (total \$ and numbers of Wage and Salary Earners), by SLA by

- occupation (1 and 2 digit level of the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations)
- wage and salary income ranges
- age and sex.

These outputs have been validated against Census and Labour Force data. The validation indicates that, while allowing for some known weaknesses in the ATO dataset, these new outputs are generally consistent with ABS Census data and are of sufficient quality for release at SLA level. Negotiations are currently under way with the ATO to obtain agreement on a dissemination strategy whereby these outputs will be released by the ABS through inclusion in the Integrated Regional Data Base, regional statistics publications, profiles and consultancies. An ABS *Information Paper* will be released in May 2000 outlining the project methodology and results.

For further information please contact Mark Nowosilskyj on 08 8237 7358 or mark.now@abs.gov.au or Claire Conroy on 08 8237 7368 or claire.conroy@abs.gov.au

Regional Statistics Information Workshop

An information workshop is being planned by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to benefit organisations involved with regional statistics. Regional statistics are those statistics available for geographic areas that are smaller than State level.

This workshop is aimed at bringing together users of regional data to discuss regional statistics produced by the ABS. Statistics covered will include demography, labour force, transport, tourism and other economic and social data. There will also be discussion on initiatives for the use of administrative data being undertaken by the ABS and the workshop will offer the opportunity to discuss priorities and needs for regional data and build closer relationships between the ABS and users.

The workshop will be conducted:

When: Thursday 13 April 2000
Time: Starting at 9.00 am and finishing at approximately 1.00 pm.
Where: The venue is the main training room of the ABS offices, located on the 21st floor at 313 Adelaide Street, Brisbane.

If you would like to attend this workshop but are unable to come along on that day, please contact the ABS and we will be happy to discuss your needs.

The ABS is conducting the workshop free of charge. Morning tea will be provided.

For more information or if you wish to nominate, contact Terry Shaw on 07 3222 6285 or terry.shaw@abs.gov.au

Your Input Required — Directory of Utilities Statistics

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is undertaking the production of a Directory of Utilities Statistics which will draw together references to all sources of published and unpublished statistics related to electricity, gas, water and sewerage.

The directory should increase awareness of ABS and related data from other Government and non-government organisations. If there is sufficient interest, the Directory may be split into four separate publications, each covering one of the services. A release date of around April 2001 is envisaged.

The collection will be undertaken on a voluntary basis. During April and May of this year, a questionnaire will be sent to organisations which have collected or do collect data related to electricity, gas, water and sewerage.

Please contact the ABS if you would like your organisation to be considered as an entry in the Directory.

**For further information contact
Margaret Thomson on 07 3222 6367 or
margaret.thomson@abs.gov.au**

Young People Seminars

A half-day seminar on Young People statistics, held in Brisbane in November 1999 was well attended by representatives from a range of organisations. It

covered a wide range of issues and concluded with a lively discussion about research experiences and data needs. The seminar, held in most State capitals during the latter part of the year, was lead by Graham Little, project leader of the National Youth Statistics Unit which operates from the Perth Office of the ABS.

Seminar objectives were:

- To discuss sources of data about Youth which are available from the ABS and other agencies,
- To provide some training in the background, uses and interpretation of these data sources and
- To provide an opportunity for attendees to discuss the data needs of policy planners and service providers.

One of the key outcomes from the discussions was an investigation into the feasibility of a Directory of Youth Statistics. The investigation resulted in a decision to produce a Directory of ABS Youth Statistics sources, which will be available in June on CD-ROM and later on the ABS website. The Directory may be extended to non-ABS sources later, but this will depend on further investigations.

Another outcome was recognition of the need for agencies who are researching data about youth to coordinate their activities and involve the ABS more.

**For further information contact Graham Little
on 08 9360 5374 or graham.little@abs.gov.au**

Email Delivery Service — Now Available!

ABS Subscription Services now offers email delivery of monthly and quarterly printed publications via the internet. Subscription to our email delivery service is being offered at the same price as printed format. Printed publications are converted into electronic files (.pdf format) using Adobe Acrobat software. The ABS dispatches these files to customers shortly after 11.30 am (EST) on the day of their release. Of course the time you receive the publication will depend on the Internet environment outside the ABS including the service provided by your own ISP and your computer environment.

If you are interested in:

- faster delivery of your monthly and/or quarterly publications;
 - delivery direct to your desktop;
 - storing electronic publications on your computer system;
 - networking electronic publications on your office network;
 - the ability to search by keyword and quickly find the data you want;
 - the ability to cut and paste from ABS publications into your own documents;
- then ABS electronic publications can meet your needs.

**For further information call 1300 366 323 or email
subscriptions@abs.gov.au or look on the ABS website www.abs.gov.au**



Website Encourages Student Research on Indigenous Australians

A new Internet resource, designed to introduce Australian school students to facts and figures about Indigenous Australians, has been launched by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

The facility is part of the ABS website at www.abs.gov.au and is called Website Indigenous Statistics Education (WISE).

WISE introduces Indigenous statistics into the classroom. The project has been designed as an interactive tutorial, showing why Indigenous statistics are important, how ABS defines the term Indigenous and identifies Indigenous people, how the Bureau estimates and collects data, and in-depth information on population statistics about Indigenous Australians.

It makes extensive use of coloured maps and other visual techniques to make comparisons between the Indigenous and total Australian populations, and to show the distribution of the Indigenous population across the country. WISE also suggests reasons for the

increase in the Indigenous population over the last 30 years as counted by the Population and Housing Census.

To encourage understanding and involvement in the material, an extensive Activities section is provided. This features multiple-choice questions, practical tasks, and research and discussion projects to stimulate further investigation and analysis. A comprehensive index helps the student find specific information and there is a reference and bibliography section.

How to find WISE:

1. Access the ABS website at www.abs.gov.au
2. Click the Themes button on the Navigator Bar
3. Click the Education Services link
4. Click the WISE link.

The ABS encourages media organisations with on-line news services to link to Wise.

For further information contact Soo Kong on 03 9615 7360 or email soo.kong@abs.gov.au

FREE Information Paper Available

'Directions in Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics'

This paper provides an overview of what the ABS is doing, and plans to do, to meet the need for statistics on the Indigenous population. It includes sections on Administrative Collections and on ABS Surveys, both recent and proposed.

Copies will be available through the Indigenous Theme Page on the ABS Website, due for release very soon, or can be obtained electronically or in hardcopy from National Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics (NCATSIS).

For further information phone free call number 1800 633 216 or email ncatsis@abs.gov.au

Learn About Using Census Data on the Net

The ABS has recently placed on the Internet spreadsheet exercises for students and others interested in learning more about how Census data can be used. The exercises use 1996 Census of Population and Housing data and contain the option of producing maps using the mapping function in Microsoft Excel 7. A free Basic Community Profile for Australia can also be obtained by emailing a request to the ABS.

The spreadsheet activities can be accessed by following the steps below.

- Log on to the Internet and connect to the ABS website at www.abs.gov.au
- Select the Themes button on the menu bar
- On the Themes page, select Education Services; this will take you to the Education Services Home Page
- Select Teacher Tools and Classroom Activities
- Select Spreadsheet Exercises for Students
- This will take you into Activity 1

Indigenous General Social Surveys (IGSS)

The ABS is aware of the priority for information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across all areas of social statistics. The enhanced household survey program addresses the highest priority areas.

The following table outlines current ABS activity and plans for Indigenous data collections. In addition, as part of its annual planning process and as ABS firms up plans for its program beyond 2003–04, it will assess user priority for Indigenous data on other topics and possibly incorporate them into this program.

Year	Collection	Indigenous sample
1999	Housing Survey(a)	850–900 households(c)
1999	Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey (possibly to be repeated in 2001)(b)	All communities and Indigenous housing organisations (about 1300)
2001	Health Survey	2,800 persons(c)
2001	Population Census	All persons
2002	Indigenous General Social Survey	11,000 persons(d)
2004/5	Health Survey	11,000 persons(d)
2006	Population Census	All persons
2008	Indigenous General Social Survey	11,000 persons(d)
2010/11	Health Survey	11,000 persons(d)
2011	Population Census	All persons

- (a) With funding from the Department of Family and Community Services
- (b) With funding from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
- (c) Sufficient to support national level estimates
- (d) Sufficient to support state/NT level estimates

Some features of the IGSS:

- Due to the likely inappropriateness of some concepts and questions, data content in remote areas is expected to be a subset of that collected in non-remote areas.
- The ABS will be examining the most appropriate methodologies for collecting data in remote areas, and it is likely these will differ from those employed in non-remote areas. The ABS is researching tailored collection methods to improve data quality and allow the remote area data set to be extended over time.
- The ABS is also researching issues associated with the relatively high respondent load being placed on the Indigenous population. Further development of the Indigenous community frame used in the Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey is currently being undertaken to allow its use in sample selection of future Indigenous surveys. This should allow the respondent burden to be better managed and spread across the Indigenous population.

For further information contact Trevor Imhoff on 02 6252 7769 or email trevor.imhoff@abs.gov.au



Information Servicing Expanded to the Net

An email information service is now provided by the ABS. From the ABS website www.abs.gov.au, questions can be emailed to the ABS. Each message is automatically routed to the appropriate State office for answering. There is no fee where the information is straightforward and can be emailed back within a short time frame.

www.abs.gov.au

Statistical Consultancy Services and Training Courses

The Australian Bureau of Statistics maintains a high quality Statistical Consultancy service to clients on a fee-for-service basis. The ABS is ideally positioned to provide professional advice and assistance on many statistical methods issues.

Types of services available include:

- Advice to clients on questionnaire and survey design - how to design questionnaires, select samples, create output ; how to make the most efficient use of your available funds in running surveys.
- Evaluation of tender proposals for statistical work - Statistical Consultancy can assist clients in the drafting of tender proposals and evaluation of tender applications.
- Analysis of ABS and non-ABS quantitative data for clients - Statistical Consultancy can draw on the expertise of other ABS sections in both the economic and social fields.
- Advice to clients on using statistical classifications and other frameworks that support statistics.
- Review of statistical output from client's administrative systems.
- Development of tailored statistical training courses for clients - Statistical Consultancy can evaluate a client's training needs and develop 'once off' or ongoing training programmes that can be delivered at your workplace or at the ABS.

ABS Statistical Consultancy also presents a standard series of two-day Statistical training courses at a cost per course of \$490 per person, including course notes, morning and afternoon tea and a light lunch. Courses currently included in the programme are:

Course	Date
Introduction to Statistics	26 and 27 July 2000
Basic Survey Design	23 and 24 August 2000
Basic Statistical Analysis	25 and 26 October 2000
Turning Data into Information	22 and 23 November 2000

For further information contact Adrian Seabrook on 07 3222 6218 or adrian.seabrook@abs.gov.au

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Please update any amendments to your details and tick the appropriate box below:

- indicating any change in your details
- adding an additional recipient for *Statistical Update*
- indicating if you require *Statistical Update* by email only
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- informing us you no longer require *Statistical Update*

Please notify us by contacting:

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 G.P.O. Box 9817
 Brisbane Qld 4001
 Phone: 07 3222 6232
 Fax : 07 3222 6104
 Email: martin.smart@abs.gov.au

ABS QLD CONTACT POINTS



National Inquiry Service

Telephone 1300 135 070 or for Deaf Clients TTY 3222 6325
 Consultants will assist with your statistical inquiries.



Internet Site

www.abs.gov.au
 email client.services@abs.gov.au



Bookshop

Current copies of ABS publications and floppy disks for sale. Visit us on the 18th floor at 313 Adelaide St; open 8.30am–4.30 pm



Library

The Library is situated alongside our bookshop and provides a complete range of ABS current and historical publications.

Contacts for Queensland State Government Departments

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or

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