

## ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

The main aims of this newsletter are to facilitate your involvement in the development and review of ABS social and economic statistics, to provide information on current developments, and to promote discussion on emerging statistical issues.

## CONTACTS

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## PUBLICATION ORDERS

To obtain ABS publications,  
contact:

National Information Referral  
Service (NIRS)  
☎ 1300 135 070

Or visit the  
ABS Bookshop  
☎ (08) 9360 5307  
Level 15 Exchange Plaza,  
2 The Esplanade, Perth WA 6000

## 2004-05 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey

It is recognised that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians suffer greater ill health than other Australians. On 30 August 2004, the ABS commenced collecting data for the **National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (NATSIHS)**, an important survey on the health status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults and children. The survey is being conducted across urban, rural and remote areas of Australia and will be completed in early July 2005.

The **NATSIHS** will collect information on:

- ✓ health service use, such as availability and type of services and perceived barriers to their use;
- ✓ health risk factors, such as exercise, diet, and smoking; and
- ✓ health status indicators, such as asthma, cancer, diabetes etc.

The **NATSIHS** was developed with help and advice from the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation along with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and government agencies. The survey will be repeated every six years and is the largest nation-wide survey of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health ever conducted. Given the current limitations of the availability and quality of health data for Indigenous peoples, this survey is a key component in the process of developing and enhancing information already available. The data from the **NATSIHS** will be used by both the community controlled health sector and governments to target the improvement of the health of Indigenous Australians.

The ABS will release the first results from the survey in 2006 in a summary national publication. It is also intended that State and territory summary tables will be released around the same time as the national publication.

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Alan Hubbard  
Government Statistician and  
ABS Regional Director,  
Western Australia.

## New Strategic Directions

The recent review of the ABS strategic position and directions will have important implications for how the ABS operates in the future. Recommendations from the review include:

- ✓ giving greater priority to statistical leadership activities in relation to non-ABS statistics
- ✓ be more responsive to user needs
- ✓ improve the process of establishing national statistical priorities
- ✓ improve relationship management with users of ABS statistics

Consideration is now being given to how these recommendations will be implemented. Additional funds will be sought to support the changes.

## Regional Offices

Regional Offices play a key role in meeting and prioritising the statistical needs of State government, business and the community. They are at the forefront of statistical leadership activities, improving the quality and availability of statistics from all government bodies. The challenge to the local office is to continue to be innovative and to escalate current improvements.

## Regional Presentations

ABS staff are currently conducting meetings in regional centres focussing on the scope and availability of State data. Recent presentations in Kalgoorlie, Bunbury and Geraldton have been well received and visits to Albany and Esperance are planned for early next year.

## State Statistical Forum (SSF)

2005 State statistical priorities, including new and ongoing needs, have now been identified and will be considered by the SSF. The SSF is a special meeting of state representatives and ABS senior management convened by the Australian Statistician, and is the main avenue for developing ABS responses to state requirements. I would like to thank all state agencies for their input to this process.

## 2006 Population Census

The information to be collected from the 2006 Population Census has yet to be approved by government and consultation continues on the best means of disseminating the 2006 data. Regional offices are responsible for conducting the Census in their jurisdiction. In WA around 3500 temporary field staff will be recruited and trained for the 2006 Census.

## Indigenous Engagement Manager

I am pleased to announce the appointment of Ms Marissa Russ to the recently created position of Indigenous Engagement Manager. This position has been created in recognition of the need to provide feedback to the Indigenous community on the information collected from them by the ABS, to help Indigenous agencies make better use of statistics in their planning processes and to foster community support for the Population Census and other Indigenous related surveys. Marissa will support a range of activities including providing ABS awareness sessions and statistical training to the Indigenous community and agencies.

**Happy Christmas** from all of us at the ABS.  
See you in the **New Year**.

## ABS Capability

Following a request from the **Department of Treasury and Finance**, Chris Spencer and Wavne Ridders (ABS) delivered a presentation on ABS capability to Treasury staff from the Agency Resources Area.

Agency Resources assess budget bids from agencies and make recommendations to State government. The aim of the presentation was to improve their analysis through greater use of third party data sources (such as ABS data) in assessing the hundreds of funding proposals submitted each year.

The ABS presentation covered a case study relating to Indigenous overcrowding, explanation of the various populations counts, and how to use and access key data sources such as the Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA), Census community profiles, Regional Profiles, Western Australian Statistical Indicators, and the Perth Social Atlas.

During question time, various other ABS initiatives were discussed including the proposed Inventory of State Government Data holdings (as part of the National Statistical Service strategy), and how government's statistical priorities are identified and used in framing the ABS forward work program.

**ABS would be keen to hear from other agencies who may be interested in similar presentations.**

**For further information contact Chris Spencer**  
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**<chris.spencer@abs.gov.au>**

### User Consultation

The **ABS** has commenced an extensive user consultation process as part of the development of the 2006 Census Output Program. The **ABS** is aiming to inform census users of the proposed broad strategies for the development and dissemination of 2006 products and services, and to seek user's views on them.

*The user consultation process will be a significant factor in the development of the 2006 Census product range. It is extremely important in ensuring that census products are relevant and responsive to the needs of users.*

Based on the results of this consultation, the **ABS** will develop specific proposals for the **2006 Census Output Program**, including the development of prototypes of 2006 products and services. **Details of these prototypes will be circulated for comment in mid 2005.**

Two publications will be produced to inform users about ABS views on the 2006 Census Output Program.

#### **ABS Views on Census Output Strategy (cat. no. 2009.0)**

Released in October 2004, this publication is an overview of the proposed strategic directions for 2006 Census products and services.

It provides information about the proposed pricing strategies, types of products, confidentiality and randomisation procedures, and major changes to concepts and classifications. It will also include a tentative release schedule.

**A questionnaire was distributed with ABS Views on Census Output Strategy to allow users to contribute their views, comments and ideas regarding the strategies and proposals outlined in the paper.**

#### **ABS Views on Census Products and Services (cat. No. 2011.0)**

This publication will provide more information about the full range of products and services that are proposed for the 2006 Census Output program.

Based on the feedback from ABS Views on Census Output Strategy, it will provide examples of products, indicative release dates and prices.

**A questionnaire will also be distributed with this publication to seek feedback on the design, content and functionality of 2006 Census Products and Services.**

For further information contact  
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<andy.separovic@abs.gov.au>



## Western Australian Statistical Indicators (cat. no. 1367.5)

### THE IMPACT OF RISING HOUSE PRICES ON THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY

The December 2004 issue of *Western Australian Statistical Indicators* (ABS cat. no. 1367.5), to be released on 12 January 2005, will include a feature article on the impact of rising house prices on the Western Australian economy.

The article shows that recent increases in house prices have largely been the result of: increased demand, driven by low interest rates and the attractiveness of housing as an investment; and constraints on the responsiveness of supply. However, comparisons with other states show that both the rise in residential property prices, and the associated economic impacts, have been more moderate in Western Australia than in the larger eastern states markets.

Highlights from the article include:

- ✓ Between 1999-2000 and 2003-04, the established house price index for Perth rose by an annual average of 10.5%, compared to 13.4% nationally. Over the same period, the CPI increased by an average of 3.1%;
- ✓ In the space of five years, the average home loan in Western Australia increased by \$32,000 to \$151,500 in 2003-04. During this period, household debt increased and savings declined, as consumers borrowed to purchase homes or drew on the increased value of their homes to finance household consumption;
- ✓ In the five years to 2003-04, borrowing for investment properties increased from 21.9% of total housing finance to 30.1%. However, this was well below the level of growth in New South Wales and Victoria; and
- ✓ Investment in housing and associated infrastructure has resulted in increased incomes and employment in the property and construction industries. Recent activity in the construction industry has not yet reached the levels experienced in 1999-2000 in the lead up to the GST.

**For further information contact Mike Thomas**

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<michael.thomas@abs.gov.au>

## New Parliamentary Secretary

The Prime Minister announced his new Ministry on 22 October.

The **Hon. Chris Pearce MP** has been appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer and will have responsibility for the ABS.

Mr Pearce is the Member for the Victorian seat of Aston and entered Parliament in 2001. He is 41 years of age and has a Bachelor of Business degree from Monash University.

## National Statistical Service



Andy Separovic  
NSS Coordinator

NSS initiatives are being progressed through the NSS Strategic Plan 2004-05 which outlines a number of strategies aimed at implementing the NSS in WA.

The newly expanded Statistical Policy Committee has endorsed this plan and agreed to take a proactive role in NSS activities. An important strategy to be undertaken is the development of an **Inventory of State Government Data Holdings** which aims to identify the range and quality of data available in State government. Agencies invited to commence the project include the Department for Planning and Infrastructure, the Department of Health, the Department of Education and Training, WA Police Service and Main Roads WA. Initial work has focussed on developing a suitable metadata template, and on an appropriate method to store and access this meta data.

**The first version of the Inventory is expected to be released in June 2005.**

**For further information contact Andy Separovic**

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## Let the games begin!

## Statistical Policy Committee



**The Executives:** L to R: Mike Mahoney, Dave Roarty, Alan Hubbard, Tom Joseph, Mike Scott, Chris Spencer, Nev Cooney, Lane Masterton and Mark Bingley.

Members of the victorious WA, ABS **Executives** soccer team were counting their blessings following a 3 - 1 winning score line against the challenging Bureau **Bombshells**. After considering the risk to pride and the capacity to survive, the WA Executive accepted a six a side soccer match challenge issued by the Bureau **Bombshells**, our all female soccer team.

In front of a largely pro **Bombshells** crowd, the tight game brought a scoreless first half. "The extensive and regular use of substitutes meant **The Executives** were able to survive the first half in relatively good condition," said Chris. "Without substitutes the **Bombshells** were tiring and that opened the game for Tom Joseph to make driving runs from the back to score twice," Chris continued

After a great passage of play, the **Bombshells** Fay Agathangelou scored a goal late in the second half, but this was not good enough for the win as **The Executives** Chris Spencer sealed the match with their third goal.

"The score line was not a good reflection of how tough the contest really was," Chris said modestly. "I'm sure we'll think twice before taking on the challenge again."



**The Bureau Bombshells:** L to R: Julie Bergin, Joanne Pereira-Gale, Yiota Galante, Anne Goodall, Fay Agathangelou and Joanne Bien.

A two-tiered committee structure facilitates statistical coordination in Western Australia. It consists of a **Statistical Policy Committee (SPC)** and two consultative groups. These groups are the Economic Statistics Consultative Group and Social Statistics Consultative Group.

The SPC meets approximately four times a year and the role of the SPC is to:

- Provide the State representative on the Australian Statistical Advisory Committee (ASAC) and the Regional Director, Western Australia, ABS, with information on the State Government's overall policy priority areas and resulting statistical priorities;
- Ensure processes are in place to assess the State Government's statistical needs and priorities;
- Improve the statistical basis of informed decision making by the State Government in a cost effective way;
- Identify and develop the State's own statistical data sources; and
- Recommend priorities for the allocation of ABS resources that are specifically available to meet State Government statistical needs and identify capacity to meet these needs.

Each year the ABS WA completes the **Western Australian Statistical Priorities Paper** which outlines the major unmet, current and new statistical needs. This paper was drafted in November. The issues were identified via a program of visits to WA agencies throughout 2004. The statistical needs of agencies continues to be focussed on sustainable development, with improvement in the State's environmental, social and economic well-being also a priority. Social and environmental policies appear likely to drive demand for statistics over the coming years.

Areas identified as statistical priorities include:

- Childcare
- Disabilities
- Indigenous
- Job mobility
- Criminal behaviour
- Telecommunications
- Environment and energy
- Agriculture
- Regional and smaller area data

## Statistical Policy Committee (cont.)

The SPC has recently been expanded and will now also coordinate the **National Statistical Service** initiative in WA. Separate meetings will be convened for that purpose.

The current members of the SPC are:

- David Smith (Chair), Director Economic & Revenue Policy, Dept of Treasury & Finance
- Hew Mortlock, Asst Director Economic & Revenue Policy, Dept of Treasury & Finance
- Graham Barrett, Dept of Indigenous Affairs
- Dr Jim Codde (Chair, SSCG), Dept of Health
- Ian Hafekost (Chair, ESCG), Dept of Housing & Works
- Shawn Boyle, Director Social Policy Unit, Dept of Premier & Cabinet
- Judy Hogben, Executive Director, Office for Senior's Interests and Volunteering
- Dr Marnie Leybourne, acting Director, WA Land Information Service
- Graham Harnwell, acting Director, WA Police Service
- Julie Rosenberg, Manager, Performance Review & Statistics, Dept of Justice
- Erwin Swasbrook, Manager, Research, Dept for Planning and Infrastructure
- John Harris, Principal Policy & Planning Officer, Dept of Education & Training
- Alan Hubbard, Regional Director, ABS WA

## Using Census Data



The Bureau of Rural Sciences has made extensive use of Census Data to inform policy. Their recent publication, **Country Matters: A Social Atlas of Rural and Regional Australia** is a close analysis of data from the 2001 Census, focusing on the people and communities of regional Australia.

In recognition of the considerable variation in rural and regional Australia, from large regional cities to very sparsely-populated remote areas, **Country Matters** also provides commentary and thematic maps detailing the similarities and differences between areas. The publication uses the Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics (ABARE) regional classification for its regional analysis of census data.

## Using Census Data (cont.)

The Publication also makes use of **SEIFA (Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas)** to examine the socio-economic status of regional areas, and uses 1996 Census data to analyse changes over time.

### **Country Matters: A Social Atlas of Rural and Regional Australia**

is published by the Bureau of Regional Services and is available to view or purchase on their web site

**<www.brs.gov.au>**

## Labour Price Index, Australia (cat. no. 6345.0)

### **previously Wage Cost Index, Australia (cat. no. 6345.0)**

The ABS has produced quarterly wage price indexes since September 1997. Non-wage price indexes and labour price indexes were published for the first time in the September 2004 edition released in November 2004.

The non-wage price indexes include annual and public holiday leave, employer funded superannuation, payroll tax, and workers' compensation. Like the wage price indexes, the non-wage price indexes are Laspeyres-type price indexes, which measure changes in the price of labour using fixed weights. The price changes recorded are unaffected by changes in the quality and quantity of the work performed.

The Labour Price Index is constructed by combining the individual wage and non-wage components. Two versions of the Labour Price Index are produced, one excluding bonuses and the other including them.

The new indexes are all financial year indexes. They will be published annually in November, as part of the September quarter Labour Price Index publication. In November 2004, data for three financial years was released; 2001-02, 2002-03 and 2003-04. The wage price indexes will continue to be published quarterly as in the past.

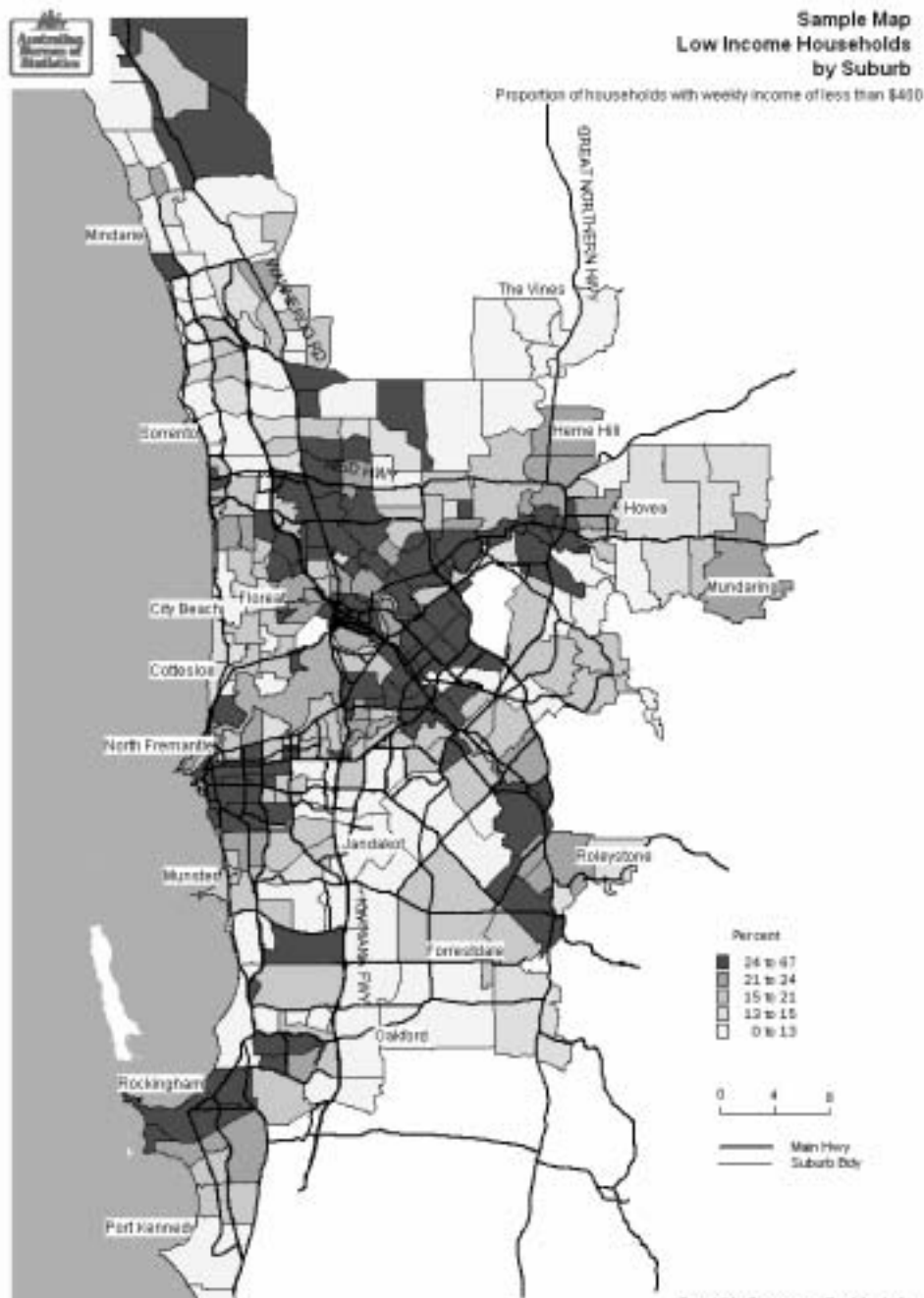
**For further information contact Tim Landrigan on**

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**<tim.landrigan@abs.gov.au>**



## ABS Consultancy Service Customised Mapping



Policy makers, researchers and planners from State and Federal Government Departments, public and private organisations, businesses and academia utilise Thematic Maps created by the ABS to support informed decision making using the most up to date data sources.

The map displayed was created in response to a request from a non profit organisation wishing to plan for the best use of its volunteer workforce over the Christmas period. This map shows clearly where the most needy households are located.

For further information contact David King on  
☎(08) 9360 5903 or email: <david.king@abs.gov.au>

# Regional Profiles

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For all your Regional Information Needs

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**Would you like to know how your region is performing ?**

**Regional Profiles** have been designed to meet a wide range of regional information needs and are a valuable decision-making tool for regional businesses, universities and colleges, planning organisations and government agencies.

For easy reference and analysis **Regional Profiles** are presented in thematic tables, historical time series and graphs. The profiles are available in hard copy and electronic spreadsheet format to make it easy for you to present the complete report, or customise to meet your own requirements.

The **Regional Profiles** encompass three comprehensive fields: Social Indicators; Economic and Environmental Indicators and Selected Area Comparisons. This year additional data analysing Intrastate Migration and Water Consumption have also been included.

For expert assistance with your **Regional Profiles** contact  
Darryl Malam on ☎ (08) 9360 5932  
or email: <darryl.malam@abs.gov.au>

