

## 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

For more information about newsletter articles, to alter mailing details or to receive a personal copy of this newsletter, contact the Client Liaison Unit.

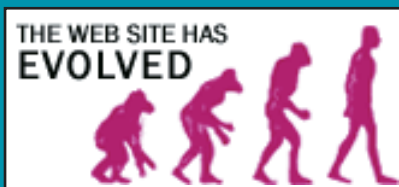
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For further information and assistance about ABS products and services visit the  
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<<http://www.abs.gov.au>>

For specialised help contact the:  
**National Information Referral Service (NIRS)**  
☎ 1300 135 070

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



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October 2006

## Thank you, Western Australia



*The ABS 2006 Census team would like to thank all West Australians for their co-operation during the Census collection phase. The overwhelming majority participated willingly and were friendly and helpful to our collectors. The ABS Census team also received tremendous assistance from many organisations during the year.*

The WA ABS Office is finishing off the last stages of the Census collection. The field staff finished the normal collection on 28 August and spent the first part of September following up in selected areas and finalising the record keeping.

Approximately 1,200,000 household and personal forms were collected from all over Western Australia. During October, five shipping containers full of forms were transported across the Nullabor to the Central Processing Centre in Melbourne.

Although there is still much work to be done on the 2006 Census the ABS has already started working on the 2011 Census. An important contribution to this planning is the feedback we obtain from people working on the 2006 Census. During September, workshops were held for 2006 Census collectors and area supervisors to provide feedback. A number of organisations who assisted in this year's Census were also invited to attend.

For a sneak preview of Census 2006 Products...  
see page 3

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# Farewell from the Top



*Dennis Trewin  
Australian Statistician*



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

## Management Changes

### **Dennis Trewin**

The Australian Statistician, Dennis Trewin, has recently announced his intention to retire at the end of 2006. Throughout his distinguished career, Dennis has been very conscious of the responsibilities of the ABS to meet state and territory statistical needs. He has also been a strong supporter of regional offices in the ABS as a means of serving these clients. I am sure the new Statistician will also be keen to continue in this tradition and will want to engage with state and territory officials.

### **Alan Hubbard**

My initial term as Regional Director for Western Australia also ends later this year. I have chosen to retire rather than seek another term. I have greatly enjoyed working with the ABS and building the capability of the WA Office. I am now looking forward to assisting my successor settle into the role of Regional Director.

A number of features of the ABS as an organisation enhanced my experiences as an employee. I found the ABS to have a very strong sense of purpose and clarity about its values and standards and to place considerable importance on maintaining the trust of those who provide it with information and the confidence of those who use its statistics. It continues to seek to improve its products and services.

Finishing full time work will provide me with the opportunity to spend time exploring the more remote areas. Trips to the Kimberley and Central Australia will be early priorities. I also intend to increase my sporting activities and look for voluntary work opportunities in Landcare.

## Future Directions

The WA Office of the ABS is in a sound state and performing well. Our contribution to national statistical programs is highly regarded and the Office has attracted additional work as a result. We have just completed a successful census operation in Western Australia and we are seen as innovative and responsive to state statistical requirements. A recent influx of new staff combined with a stable and dedicated management team provides the base for a sustainable future and a continued contribution to Western Australia.

The new Regional Director, Michael Tindall, will determine future priorities for the Western Australian Office but I will be suggesting a number of priorities. These include increasing the level of ABS outposting activity to state government agencies which for various reasons has recently fallen to an historically low level. Outpostings offer state government agencies the opportunity to improve their information base and their use of statistical information at minimal cost. The ABS has the capacity to make a greater contribution in an advisory role to the policy development and planning activities of state government. This is tied closely to the level of awareness in state government of ABS services and capability. The Office can do more in terms of increasing the informed use of statistics and providing the means for agencies to improve their statistical output. Finally, the ABS can encourage better access to state government data for state government users and for the general public.

*Alan Hubbard*

## ABS Retail and Wholesale Economic Activity Survey 2005-06

The ABS is conducting a survey of retail and wholesale businesses in respect of the 2005-06 financial year. Survey questionnaires were despatched to a sample of approximately 16,000 businesses across Australia in August 2006.

The survey will provide a detailed snapshot of the retail and wholesale industries. Government policy makers and private sector analysts will use this information to assess the effectiveness of their policies and programs.



Data available from the survey will include:

- ◆ business counts, employment, income and expenses;
- ◆ commodity sales and gross margins; and
- ◆ selected performance indicators, e.g. operating profit before tax, industry value added.

Data will be released in the publications *Retail Industry, Australia, 2005-06* (cat. no. 8622.0), *Wholesale Industry, Australia, 2005-06* (cat. no. 8638.0), and several associated spreadsheets. These products will be available for free download from the ABS web site in mid 2007. More detailed data may be available on a customised basis on request.

For further information please contact  
William Milne ☎ (03) 9615 7862 or  
visit the ABS web site  
<[www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)>

## 2006 Census Data Products to be Free On-line

The first 2006 Census results will be available on the ABS web site in June 2007.



The Census takes a 'snapshot' of Australia every 5 years, collecting vital information on the social, economic and housing characteristics of Australian Society.

The ABS has released 2001 Census data in the new formats that have been developed to disseminate 2006 Census data on-line.

**Sample the new formats for free via the following online options:**

**Quickstats-** A new quick and simple summary of key Census data relating to persons, families and dwellings.

**Census Tables-** A new product that enables you to obtain census data in a single table for a specified geographic area.

**Community Profiles-** A series of profiles providing key Census characters related to persons, families and dwellings, covering most topics on the Census form.

In the future, the following new products will also be available free on-line.

**Quickmaps-** A range of thematic Census maps based on larger geographies depicting selected population, ethnicity, family, income, labour force and dwelling characteristics.

**CData Online-** A sophisticated product aimed at offering expert clients freedom to select and combine geographic areas from a single collection District (CD) through to an entire state/territory or Australia.

**Table Builder-** aimed at experienced users of Census data, this product will allow you to design and populate your own tables of Census data via an interactive web interface.

**Note: Table Builder** will be a charged product and is not part of the free product suite.

Visit the ABS web site  
<[www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)>

### Did you know?

Census data helps determine the allocation of federal government funds to state and local governments.

Want more information? See *How Australia Takes a Census, 2006* (ABS cat. no. 2903.0) on the ABS Web site.

<[www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)>



### Joint Project

The ABS WA office is undertaking a joint project with the Department of Indigenous Affairs to promote information sharing across government.

The project entails identifying and recording metadata for the statistical indicators used in the *Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage Report* and two related frameworks, the *Indigenous Women's Report Card* and *Well-being Indicators for Children and Youth*.

The project will highlight the benefits of sharing these indicator frameworks across government, with the goals of reducing overlap and compliance cost to agencies providing indicator data, and improving the statistical quality and comparability across frameworks. This information is to be stored in the across-Government ABS@ facility. Updating the frameworks will occur annually and will be coordinated by the ABS.

Greg Hilton joined the team in September. If the project proves successful, the intention is to continue identifying and loading other state government indicator frameworks to the ABS@ facility.

**For further information please contact**  
**Greg Hilton** ☎ 9360 5991 or email:  
[<greg.hilton@abs.gov.au>](mailto:greg.hilton@abs.gov.au)

### Pricing Policy

In line with the release of the *Australian Government Cost Recovery Guidelines* in July 2005 the ABS has undertaken a review of its pricing policies.

As a result of this review, the amount of data freely available to download from the ABS web site has increased dramatically. This free data includes publications, spreadsheets, data cubes and detailed Census information. Simple inquiries are also answered free of charge via the National Information and Referral Service (NIRS).

Customised data, including tables, graphs and maps not previously published, are charged for on a cost recovery basis. In line with the guidelines, the cost of providing these customised services must be recovered from clients requesting these services.

The new pricing structure was implemented with effect from 2 October 2006. Whilst labour charges will increase marginally in accordance with recent cost increases, infrastructure (data) charges will decrease due to improvements in IT systems.

**More information on the ABS' pricing policy can be found on the ABS web site:**  
[<www.abs.gov.au>](http://www.abs.gov.au)

## ABS Training Courses

### Turning Data Into Information (15 & 16 November 2006)

This two-day course develops skills in transforming data into meaningful written information, including:

- ◆ understanding how the collection and compilation of data affects its usefulness, quality and relevance;
- ◆ understanding various statistical techniques for use in data analysis;
- ◆ communicating results and writing effective reports; and
- ◆ constructing meaningful graphs and tables.

The course is best suited to people involved in using data to produce a reports or social commentary, or with analysing and describing data that has been collected in surveys or through administrative processes.

These courses are all conducted in the Perth ABS Office. If you live outside Perth and you are interested in having a course conducted in your area, please contact Amy Gardos (contact details below).



**For further information about this course, or ABS Statistical Training, please contact**  
**Amy Gardos** ☎ 9360 5391 or email:  
[<amy.gardos@abs.gov.au>](mailto:amy.gardos@abs.gov.au)

### Did you know?

Census data answers public inquiries. The ABS web site and your local library provide detailed free information from the Census.

Want more information? See *How Australia Takes a Census, 2006* (ABS cat. no. 2903.0) on the ABS Web site.

[<www.abs.gov.au>](http://www.abs.gov.au)



## WA Statistical Indicators (cat. no. 1367.5)

Is the quality of life in Western Australia getting better?

Is the standard of living improving fast enough?

Can these changes be sustained into the future?

These questions have grown in significance for many Western Australians in recent years. Although Gross State Product is regarded as an important measure of progress, many analysts believe that it should be assessed in conjunction with other measures of progress.

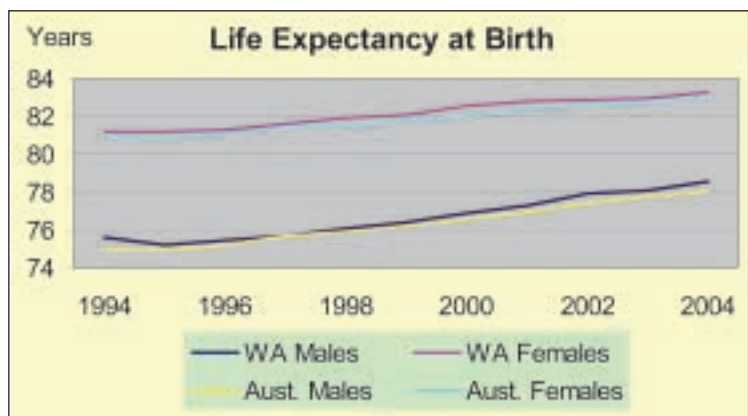
An article measuring Western Australia's progress featured in the 2006 September quarter edition of Western Australia's Statistical Indicators (WASI) which was released onto the ABS web site on 4 October 2006.

This study brings together a variety of statistics, enabling people to make a more informed judgement on whether the quality of life and standard of living in Western Australia are improving. It looks at 14 major areas of progress within the broad categories of: individuals; the economy and economic resources; the environment; and living together.

One of the most widely used indicators of population health is life expectancy at birth. In Western Australia, over the 10 years to 2004, life expectancy improved for both males and females. A boy born in 2004 could expect to live to be 78, while a girl could expect to reach 83 - an increase of 3 years for males and 2 years for females since 1994.

Source: Australian Social Trends  
(cat. No. 4102.0)

Note: Years represent the last year  
of a 3 year period.



Also included in the 2006 September quarter WASI is an article summarising the results from the 2005 *Western Australian Housing Motivations and Intentions Survey*. Included is information on the motivators that affect Western Australians in their choice of current dwelling (and location of that dwelling), and their intentions regarding their future choice of housing.



For further information please contact Phil Smythe ☎ 9360 5224  
or email: <phil.smythe@abs.gov.au>

## Department of the Attorney General Outposting

ABS outposted officers play an important role with regard to transferring knowledge and statistical skills to state government staff and improving the amount of relevant data available for informed decision making.

Greg Hilton recently completed an outposting with the Department of the Attorney General. A key feature of the outposting was to conduct a Statistical Information Review for the Court Services and Tribunals division.

The Review provides a set of recommendations designed to improve the quality, availability and use of information within the division. It is expected that the recommendations will be incorporated into the ongoing development of a statistical framework which adopts the use of standards and promotes best practice. The Review also considered issues arising from the *National Information Development Plan for Crime and Justice Statistics* which was released by the ABS in 2005.

Many of these crime and justice priority areas overlap with other statistical fields, such as: progress and social well-being, Indigenous issues, children and youth, families and communities, Internet use and electronic crime, health and mental health, substance use, gender, cultural diversity and spatial data.

Greg also assisted with the development of simulation modelling. The models will be used to predict future costs and workloads to help facilitate the generation of forward resource requirements, and also to provide managers with the opportunity to analyse current practices and procedures.



**For further information**  
contact Greg Hilton ☎ 9360 5991 or email  
<greg.hilton@abs.gov.au>

### Did you know?

Census data helps determine the number of seats for each state and territory in the Federal House of Representatives.

Want more information? See *How Australia Takes a Census, 2006* (ABS cat. no. 2903.0) on the ABS Web site.

<[www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)>

## Economic Statistics Consultative Group

The Economic Statistics Consultative Group (ESCG) was formed in 1999 to provide a forum for :

- ◆ identifying key economic issues;
- ◆ assessing the State Government's statistical needs and priorities;
- ◆ exchanging information on economic statistics issues and initiatives being undertaken by ABS and member agencies;
- ◆ obtaining client input to ABS statistical reviews and strategic directions.

The ESCG began with 12 members but has grown to comprise 19 member organisations. Ian Hafekost has been in the chair since 2003.

Prior to joining the State public service, Ian worked for the former Airlines of Western Australia as a market forecaster. As a recent migrant from London, he travelled to all the towns serviced by the airline and was introduced to the vast geographical diversity of the State and saw first-hand the major resources industries.

Now working in the area of housing policy and Commonwealth State relations on housing, Ian makes regular use of ABS statistical outputs. The data enables him to monitor trends in housing tenure and activity in the residential construction sector in WA. The results of the recent Census of Population and Housing will be of great interest to Ian, particularly to see if home ownership trends are changing.

Ian is partial to an English ale from Fenians. His most recent great read is "On Beauty", by Zadie Smith which tells of two families set in a university town near Boston. His outdoor pursuit is birdwatching.



*Ian looking for Blue Wrens at Mt Dale, Western Australia.*

It's free when you find it on-line  
<[www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)>

#### New and Recent Releases

##### *Survey of Motor Vehicle Use*

(cat no. 9208.0)

Release Date: 7 September 2006

Results of this survey which was conducted between 1 November 04 and 31 October 05 showed that Western Australian drivers did not travel as far as their interstate counterparts during this period. In Western Australia 1,542,199 vehicles travelled a total of 21,647,000km, an average of 14,000km per vehicle. This is below the national average of 14,800km and only ahead of South Australia with 13,100 km per vehicle.

Despite being the largest state, WA's articulated trucks recorded the lowest average kilometres travelled, 70,700km compared to a national average of 92,100km. Even more surprisingly, the ACT recorded the highest average kilometres travelled for articulated trucks, 118,800km.



##### *Sales of New Motor Vehicles*

(cat. no. 9314.0.55.001)

Release Date: 20 October 2006

Nationally WA was the only state to record an increase in the trend figure for new motor vehicles over the 2005-06 financial year. Sales in WA rose by 8.7% while NT, Vic, NSW, Qld, Tas and SA all had falls of between -8.9% and -3.0%.

##### *Diabetes in Australia: A snapshot, 2004-2005*

(cat. no. 4820.0.55.001)

Release Date: 22 August 2006

4.0% of males and 3.2% of females reported having diabetes mellitus in 2004-05. In all age groups above 35 years, males had higher rates of reported diabetes than females in 2004-05, with the peak for both sexes occurring in the 65-74 years age group.

The prevalence of diabetes has previously been reported as being higher among people born overseas, eg. persons born in Southern and Central Asia (8.7%), compared with people born in Australia (3.3%).

##### *Labour Price Index*

(cat. no. 6345.0)

Release Date: 15 November 2006

The Labour Price Index measures changes in the price of labour services resulting from market pressures, and is unaffected by changes in the composition of the labour force or quantity of work performed. The increases in indexes (in original terms) at the industry level, for the Mar Qtr 2006, to Jun Qtr 2006, ranged from 0.3% for Accommodation, cafes and restaurants and Cultural and recreational services to 2.4% for Mining.

## Community Indicators

The ABS recently hosted a national *Community Indicators of Wellbeing Workshop* in Melbourne. The workshop, on 5 & 6 September 2006, brought together over 100 people; including international visitors and representatives from federal, state and local government agencies, and academia.

The acting Deputy Australian Statistician, Mr Denis Farrell, facilitated proceedings. Ms Susan Linacre, the acting Australian Statistician, provided opening remarks and was followed by Mr Jon Hall who presented on the OECD World Forum *Statistics, Knowledge and Policy*. Professor Doug May (Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada) and Mr Alton Hollett (Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency, Canada) gave a presentation of the Newfoundland and Labrador Community Accounts Program. They described how their system of community accounts was developed, the challenges they faced, and how the accounts are being used by both the community and government.

Presentations were delivered on community indicator developments in Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania. A federal perspective was given by representatives from the Department of Transport and Regional Services and the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. In addition, Dr Adam Graycar from the Government of South Australia (a member of the Australian Statistics Advisory Council) highlighted the human capital aspect of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) National Reform Agenda.

ABS gave a number of presentations throughout the workshop. These covered the development of *Measures of Australia's Progress*; data management and dissemination issues; and the themes of social capital, participation and cohesion; environment and sustainability; and crime and justice. Mr Denis Farrell also led a panel discussion on "Developing a sustainable program of community indicators" which provided a range of opinions and insights on current and future community indicator developments.

The workshop was very successful in highlighting the demand for community indicators to assist with the measurement of community health, wellbeing and sustainability. It also provided a valuable forum to share international and Australian experiences and to discuss the way forward in the development of community.

Professor David Adams (Department for Victorian Communities) at the Community Indicators Workshop and Mr Denis Farrell (Australian Bureau of Statistics)



# Population, Policy and Australia's Destiny

Adelaide 5-8 December 2006

The **Population, Policy and Australia's Destiny** Conference is the showcase for demographers, population geographers, policy makers and planners to discuss contemporary issues relating to population studies. Highlights and key speakers include:

## **The W D Borrie Lecture**

- ◆ Professor Ian Pool, Professor of Demography, University of Waikato

## **Population & Policy**

- ◆ Professor Graeme Hugo, Federation Fellow and Professor of Geographical and Environmental Studies, University of Adelaide
- ◆ Professor Peter McDonald, Professor of Demography and Head of the Demography and Sociology program, Australian National University.
- ◆ Professor Gavin Jones, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore.

## **Population Change and Policy at the Local and Regional Levels**

- ◆ Ms Cate Atkinson, General Manager, City of Playford
- ◆ Mr Peter Hall, Director Planning and Community Services, City of Victor Harbour
- ◆ The Hon Greg Crafter, Consultant, Adelaide

## **Transnationalism**

- ◆ Professor Barry Chiswick, Head and Research Professor, Department of Economics, University of Illinois at Chicago
- ◆ Dr Marla Asis, Director of Research and Publication, Scalabrini Migration Centre, Philippines
- ◆ Dr Hania Zlotnik, Director, United Nations Population Division.

The Conference will cover a range of issues for those with interests in:

Population and Social Inclusion  
Population and Health  
Historical Demography  
2006 Census  
GIS and Population  
Life Course Transition  
Trans Tasman Migration  
International Migration  
Student Migration  
Internal Migration  
Diversity and Change  
Family Structure

Urban and Rural Dynamics  
Population and Labour Force  
Population and Development  
Population and Environment  
Locational Disadvantage  
Mortality and Morbidity  
Fertility and Family Change  
Intergenerational Relations  
Population Ageing  
Gendered Demography  
Local and Regional issues  
Population Projections



**For further information on the Population, Policy and Australia's Destiny conference visit the Australian Population Web site**  
**<[www.apa.org.au](http://www.apa.org.au)>**