



WHAT'S NEW IN REGIONAL STATISTICS

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Welcome from the Director

As Director of the Regional Statistics Branch it is my pleasure to welcome you to the first issue of 'What's New in Regional Statistics'.

This newsletter has been prepared as part of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Regional Statistics Program to provide information on the latest developments in statistics that are relevant to regions, including metropolitan, urban, non-urban and rural areas, and other information of likely interest to researchers, policy makers and other users of small area data.

The role of the Regional Statistics Program is to improve the availability of regional and small area data by leading the development of regional statistics and coordinating their dissemination. This work is undertaken by the Rural and Regional Statistics National Centre located in Adelaide and the Regional Statistics Units, which are located in each ABS state and territory office.

This newsletter will highlight products released by the Regional Statistics Program. This first issue includes details of the Information Development Plan for Rural and Regional Statistics, information on regional wages and salaries and the National Regional Profile. In this issue we also look at regional population growth and how the ABS responded to the impact that Cyclone Larry had on the estimation of populations of towns in far north Queensland.

This newsletter will also include articles on other ABS releases which are relevant to users of regional statistics. In this issue we have included articles on the Agricultural Census, information on natural resource management and tourism accommodation, and the introduction of mesh blocks.

I trust that you will find this newsletter useful and we welcome your feedback and comments.

Danny Zabrowarny
Director
Regional Statistics Branch

ABS cat. no. 1379.0

Issue 1 April 2007

The Information Development Plan for Rural and Regional Statistics

The Information Development Plan (IDP) for Rural and Regional Statistics was released in January 2006 and sets out a series of statistical development recommendations to expand the future availability and relevance of rural and regional statistics in Australia.

Through investigation of existing survey and administrative data sources, the IDP highlights specific gaps in the currently available suite of rural and regional information and proposes a plan through which significant gaps may be addressed over the following 3 to 5 years.

The IDP discusses the policy and research context for rural and regional data; key user needs identified through an extensive consultation process; existing data sources (ABS data and other sources); and recommendations for statistical development.

The IDP can be accessed from the ABS Website (cat no. 1362.0) or by clicking [here](#).

For further information about the Rural and Regional Statistics IDP contact Ms Danny Zabrowarny on (08) 8237 7368. Send comments and questions to regional.statistics@abs.gov.au.

To subscribe to 'What's New in Regional Statistics' send an e-mail with the subject: 'Subscribe to What's New in Regional Statistics' to regional.statistics@abs.gov.au.

Regional Wages and Salaries

The publication 'Regional Wage and Salary Earner Statistics, Australia, 2003-04' (cat. no. 5673.0.55.001) was released in March 2007 and includes data on the characteristics of wage and salary earners in the statistical local areas with the highest average incomes from wages and salaries in 2003-04 for each state and territory.

This release found that employees in mining and inner metropolitan areas generally had the highest average wage and salary incomes in Australia in 2003-04. Employees living in the mining areas of Queensland (Broadsound, Belyando and Peak Downs), South Australia (Roxby Downs) and the Northern Territory (Groote Eylandt, Nhulunbuy, and Jabiru) had the highest average wage and salary incomes of their respective state/territory.

However, across Australia the top ten areas with the highest average income from wages and salaries were in metropolitan areas of New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia, with Mosman in New South Wales the highest. Other findings include:

- Across Australia, the average wage and salary income was \$38,820.
- Wage and salary earners in the areas of Mosman, Woollahra and Hunter's Hill in New South Wales had the highest average wage and salary incomes in Australia at \$88,658, \$70,765 and \$68,818 respectively.
- Wage and salary earners in Mosman and Woollahra also had the highest income from sources other than wages and salaries (e.g. superannuation and annuities, unincorporated business income, investments).
- Wage and salary earners residing in the Australian Capital Territory had the highest average wage and salary income of all the states and territories at \$44,664, followed by wage and salary earners in New South Wales (\$41,407) and the Northern Territory (\$40,027).

'Regional Wage and Salary Earner Statistics, Australia, 2003-04' is available free of charge from the ABS website or by [clicking here](#).

Data for wage and salary earners by age, sex, income ranges and occupation are available for all statistical local areas across Australia in the associated data cube release, 'Regional Wage and Salary Earner Statistics, Australia - Data Cubes, 2003-04' (cat. no. 5673.0.55.003). Click [here](#) to access.



Rural and Regional Statistics Advisory Group

The Rural and Regional Statistics Advisory Group, at the most recent of their biannual meetings held in November 2006, identified and discussed emerging issues that relate to data priorities for rural and regional areas. Some of these issues were previously identified in the Information Development Plan for Rural and Regional Statistics.

New issues discussed at this meeting included:

- Assessing the social, environmental and economic consequences of the introduction of water license trading;
- Monitoring the effects that climate change, drought and water management have on regions; and
- Measuring the impact that humanitarian settlement has on regional communities and the involvement of migrants in the community.

This Advisory Group was formed to provide advice to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) on rural and regional statistics priorities, development, adequacy and availability from both government and research perspectives. The Advisory Group is one mechanism by which the ABS keeps up-to-date with regional priorities with members advising the ABS on emerging rural and regional issues in Australia and how these might be statistically addressed.

The Rural and Regional Statistics Advisory Group is comprised of high level representatives from government and academics of high standing in the field of regional research.

For more information on the Rural and Regional Statistics Advisory Group, or to comment on any emerging issues or regional issues of relevance to you, e-mail regional.statistics@abs.gov.au.

National Regional Profile

First released in 2004, the National Regional Profile is an easy to use web-based facility for locating data at various geographical levels, including local government areas.

The latest version of the National Regional Profile was released in September 2006. It caters for:

- users who want a brief snapshot of their region,
- those who prefer more detailed regional data, and
- those who wish to compare regions.

You can find statistical summaries of key economic and social information from a variety of ABS and non-ABS sources.

Data include Estimated Resident Population, some Census data, Births and Deaths, Unemployment, Income Support Customers, Taxable Income, Building Approvals, Motor Vehicle Sales, and Agriculture.

How to access the National Regional Profile

The National Regional Profile can be accessed from the Regional Statistics theme page on the ABS website or by clicking [here](#).

Users can select a region by name or drill-down to the area they want using maps. Remember to click on the 'triangles' or map region until the required geographic level is reached.

Compare Regions Using SuperTABLE Data Cubes

If you wish to compare these data across different regions you can do so by downloading the SuperTABLE data cubes from the 'details' tab of the National Regional Profile web page or by clicking [here](#).

To view these files, you will need to install the [SuperTABLE](#) software from Space-Time Research. It is free to download and is used to view and manipulate data in multi-dimensional tables. Instructions on how to use SuperTABLE to compare regions can be found [here](#).

New Developments in Geocoding

Mesh blocks, AddressCoder@ABS and the Geocoded National Address File (G-NAF) are three new technologies that are changing how statistics are collected, maintained and published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. More importantly however, they make these statistics far more useful for users.

The G-NAF is an authoritative and well maintained list of Australian addresses published by the [Public Service Mapping Agency](#). It includes an accurate location for most addresses and therefore allows the population of small areas to be estimated as well as allowing statistics associated with address information to be coded to a 'mesh block' (see below) using a new Australian Bureau of Statistics web service called AddressCoder@ABS.

The AddressCoder@ABS web service is provided free of charge by the Australian Bureau of Statistics through the [National Data Network](#). It allows users to geocode addresses to mesh blocks, collection districts and statistical local areas. Members of the National Data Network are able to use this service to code single or many thousands of addresses.

As of the [2006 Census](#), the Australian Bureau of Statistics is using a new micro level geographical unit called the '[mesh block](#)'. Mesh blocks allow many of the statistics produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics to be published for unique sets of areas that are more relevant to users and more meaningful for analysis.

Because of their small size (between 30 and 60 dwellings in residential areas), mesh blocks enable the ready comparison of statistics between geographical areas by aggregating the data from multiple mesh blocks to build commonly used geographic regions, such as Australia Post postcodes, local government areas or even historical boundaries.

Previously a group of 200 to 300 dwellings, called a 'collection district', was the smallest level of geographic detail produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. However, because of their size and design, collection districts cannot support the flexible mapping to larger geographic regions that can be obtained by using mesh blocks as a base.

To protect the privacy of individual information, data from individual mesh blocks are only released containing very basic Census information. However, aggregates of several mesh blocks can contain a very rich and detailed range of statistical information mapped very accurately to user-specified regions.

The 2006 Census was the first to use G-NAF, AddressCoder@ABS and mesh blocks, enabling users to access data that best fits the political, administrative or physical geography required.

2006 Census Products

QuickStats: Finding Census Data Has Never Been Easier

If you haven't tried the Census internet interface yet, here's a good reason to visit today. QuickStats Quick Search now makes it even easier to find the Census data you're looking for.

QuickStats provides a summary of key Census data relating to persons, families and dwellings and includes topics such as age, countries of birth, languages, religions and employment information.

With the introduction of Quick Search you can now easily view a variety of Census information for any postal area in Australia. Data from the 2001 Census are currently available through QuickStats Quick Search and results from the 2006 Census will be accessible when the data become available. It's as simple as typing in the postcode on the [Census homepage](#) and clicking 'Go'.

QuickStats Quick Search

For 2001 Census QuickStats, enter your Postcode into the box below.

Postcode (e.g. 2913)

Go

2006 Community Profile Templates - out now!

The 2006 Census Community Profile Series templates, released on the Australian Bureau of Statistics' website in January 2007, are provided as a guide to the standard tables that will be available when the 2006 Census data are released. Templates for the Basic Community, Indigenous and Place of Enumeration profiles are currently available.

Take advantage of this early release of the templates in preparation for the release of 2006 Census data from mid 2007. Determine in advance which data will be available as standard output and plan your requirements for customised tables accordingly. Please note that release dates vary for different Community Profile types.

[Click here to access more information.](#)

2006 Census Customised Tables Advance Order Service

The countdown to the release of the 2006 Census data has begun with the news that the Advance Order Service (AOS) is now available. The Australian Bureau of Statistics is once again offering its AOS to help you prepare for your receipt and use of 2006 Census information.

Demand for customised tables is high in the months following the release of Census data. The first release is scheduled for July 2007 and the second release is expected in October 2007. Using the AOS reduces waiting time by enabling you to specify your table requirements prior to the data release.

This service is perfect for those requiring large and/or complex tables. The service will ensure your customised tables are delivered to you as soon as possible after the official release of the data. Clients taking advantage of this service will have their orders processed on a 'first in, first served' basis.

Australian Bureau of Statistics information consultants are available to guide you through the process and provide advice on data issues and pricing of Census tables.

With only a few months until this information becomes available to you we look forward to launching the first release of Census data in mid 2007. Staff at the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Data Processing Centre in Melbourne are currently processing responses from the Census in preparation for this event.

For more information on how to take advantage of the Advance Order Service phone 1300 135 070. An online brochure is also available on the Australian Bureau of Statistics web site. Visit www.abs.gov.au and click on the Advance Order icon, or click on the logo below.



Regional Population Growth

The publication 'Regional Population Growth, Australia, 2005-06' (cat. no. 3218.0) was released in February 2007 and provides estimated resident populations for local government areas (LGAs) in Australia for June 1996, 2001 and 2006 (electronic version) and 2001, 2005 and 2006 (pdf version), and highlights population growth and decline.

This publication includes estimated resident population and average annual growth rates for each LGA, statistical division and statistical district in Australia. For the Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory, statistical subdivisions are also included.

Some of the findings from this publication include:

- Australia's estimated resident population at June 2006 was 20.6 million, which was an increase of 265,700 since June 2005. This represents an annual growth rate of 1.3%, which was higher than the average annual growth rate (1.2%) for the five years to June 2006.

- All states and territories experienced population growth in 2005-06, with the largest increases occurring in Queensland (up 76,400 people), Victoria (up 68,500 people) and New South Wales (up 58,800 people). Queensland's population passed the 4 million mark in 2005-06.

- Melbourne recorded the largest growth within capital cities in 2005-06, increasing by 49,000 people, followed by Sydney (up 37,200 people), Perth (up 29,900 people) and Brisbane (up 29,500).

- Many outer local government areas within capital cities continued to experience large increases in population in 2005-06. In Sydney, the LGAs of Blacktown and Bankstown experienced strong growth (up 5,000 and 2,900 people respectively). Within Melbourne, the largest growth occurred in the fringe LGAs of Melton (up 6,800 people), Wyndham (up 6,700) and Casey (up 6,400).

- In 2005-06, nine of the ten fastest growing statistical districts were located on the coast, with the Western Australian statistical districts of Bunbury (up 5.1%) and Mandurah (up 4.9%) recording the fastest growth, along with Queensland's Hervey Bay (also up 4.9%).

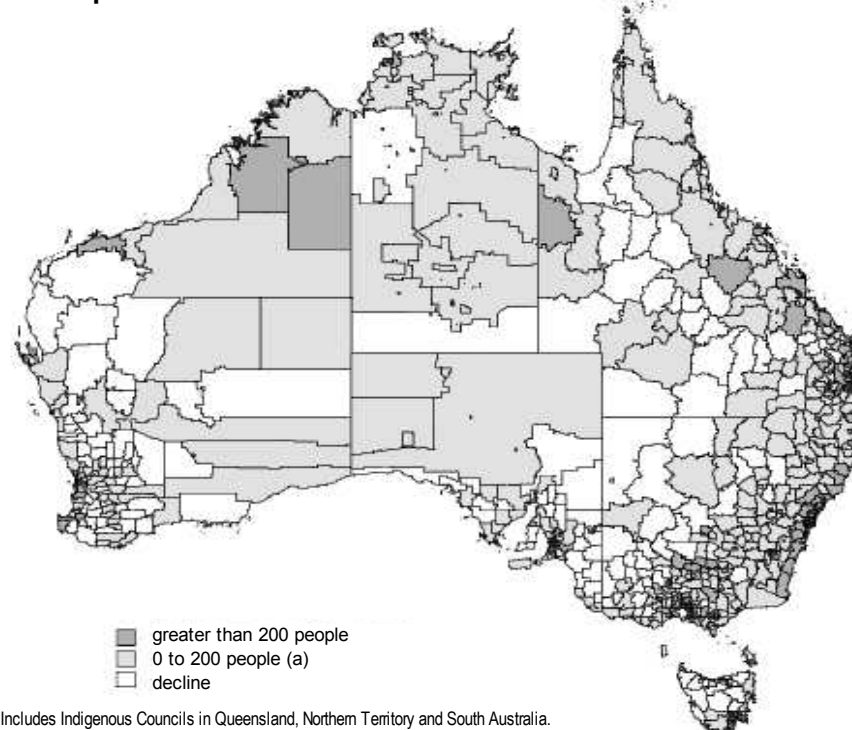
- The four fastest growing inland statistical districts were all located within Victoria, with Mildura increasing by 2.2%, followed by Bendigo (up 2.0%), Ballarat and Shepparton (both up 1.9%). The Queensland statistical district of Toowoomba experienced a population increase of 1.8%, while Warrnambool (located in Victoria) increased by 1.7%.

- The remaining states and territories recorded lower annual growth rates than Australia overall. The Australian Capital Territory and New South Wales both increased by 0.9%, while South Australia increased by 0.8% and Tasmania by 0.7%.

- In each state and territory, the areas with the largest or fastest population growth tended to be outer suburbs, inner areas of capital cities and certain regional centres, especially along the coast.

[Click here to access this publication.](#)

Population Growth in Statistical Local Areas 2005 - 06



Natural Resource Management

Results from the first of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' biennial nationwide natural resource management surveys, which was conducted in November 2005, are now available at the national, state and natural heritage trust (NHT2) region levels (see figure to the right for an example of NHT2 regions).

Some of the key findings are:

- The proportion of agricultural establishments with a natural resource management issue and undertaking some type of management activity was consistently above the 95% level.

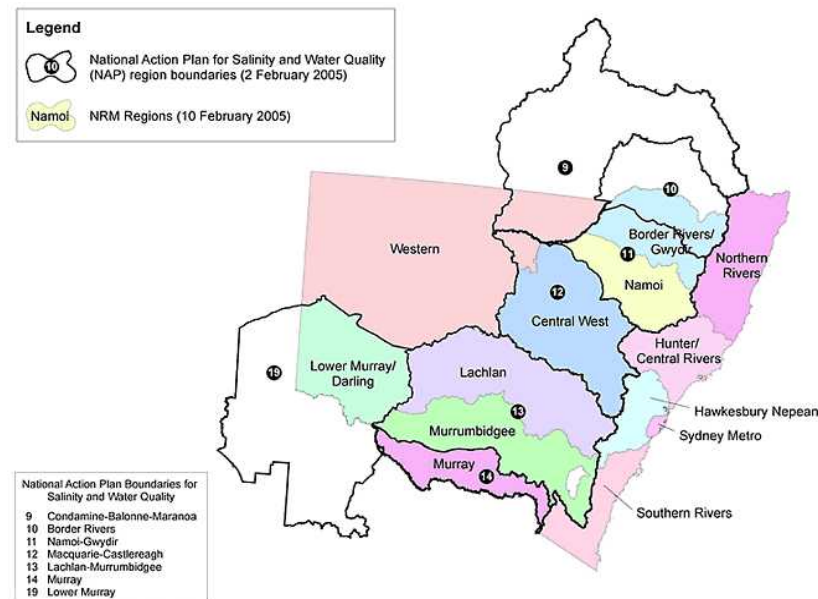
- Avon (WA), Central West (NSW) and Border Rivers/Gwydir (NSW) were the three regions that spent the most on natural resource management during 2004-05 (\$192 million, \$168 million and \$157 million respectively) and predominately in relation to the prevention or management of weed, pest, and land and soil issues.

- Agricultural establishments undertaking natural resource management activity in Northern Agricultural Region (WA) and SA Arid Lands spent the most on a per establishment basis, averaging more than \$90,000 each during the year.

- Hawkesbury/Nepean reported the lowest percentage of agricultural land affected by pests in Australia, but the region still undertook significant preventative action in relation to pest management during 2004-05.

- Two-thirds of farmers felt there were barriers that prevented them from improving their natural resource management practices. The lack of financial resources and lack of time were reported as the greatest barriers, while insufficient or conflicting information was not considered to be a major obstacle.

Further information can be found in 'Natural Resource Management on Australian Farms 2004-05' (cat. no. 4620.0), [available by clicking here](#).



NSW Natural Heritage Trust (NHT2) Regions

Tourist Accommodation

The quarterly survey of tourist accommodation provides information on the supply of, and demand for, tourist accommodation facilities. Data include number of establishments, capacity and employment for the quarter and occupancy and takings from accommodation for each month; by type of establishment and by star grading.

This publication is a useful reference for policy makers and industry monitors and advisers, as information is presented for each state/territory and Australia and by tourism regions as defined by the respective state/territory tourism commissions.

Information on tourist accommodation for tourism regions in each state can be accessed from the 'Related Information' tab located on the 'Tourist Accommodation, Australia' (cat no. 8635.0) page on the Australian Bureau of Statistics website.

[Click here to access more information.](#)

Measuring Agricultural Production

In June 2006, 190,000 farm businesses were asked to participate in the 2005-06 Agricultural Census. This collection, conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), is second only in size to the Census of Population and Housing.

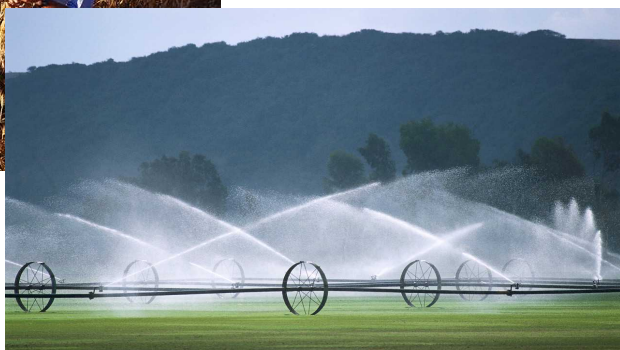
The Agricultural Census collected data on a wide range of agricultural commodities, livestock numbers and land use practices, including water use and sources, tree planting and fencing to prevent land degradation.

A preliminary publication of principal commodities collected in the 2005-06 Agricultural Census will be released in May 2007. Final data, covering the broad range of commodity and natural resource management information collected, is expected to be released in December 2007. The ABS also plans to release a range of sub-state geographic level data by early 2008. During the December release, for most regions, data will be released at the statistical local area level. It is also anticipated that data will be available for other regions of national interest such as National Action Plan regions and Natural Resource Management regions.

Agricultural statistics, compiled as part of this collection, are used by a wide variety of individuals and organisations in both government and private industry. Commonwealth and state governments make extensive use of agriculture statistics in planning, budgeting, providing advisory services and policy making related to marketing of agricultural commodities.

Farmer organisations and other producer associations use the data to make submissions to government and to better represent their members. Agriculture service companies, such as fertiliser companies, also use ABS data in their planning to better meet the needs of their clients in the farming community.

Further information on the 2005-06 Agricultural Census is available from the Agricultural Theme Page found on the ABS website. [Click here for further information.](#)



Regional Water Use

As part of the Australian Water Resources 2005 project, the Australian Bureau of Statistics was funded by the National Water Commission to model water use data from the 'Water Account, Australia, 2004-05' to a regional level; namely, Water Management Areas (WMAs). The results were published in December 2006 in the report 'Experimental Estimates of Regional Water Use, Australia, 2004-05' (cat. no. 4610.0.55.002). [Click here to access this paper.](#)

This publication presents the experimental estimates of regional water consumption for WMAs during 2004-05, the methodology used to produce the estimates and the associated explanatory material. The Australian Bureau of Statistics defines 'water consumption' as the sum of Distributed water use, Self-extracted water use and Reuse water use less Water supplied to other users less In-stream use and less Distributed water use by the environment. See 'Water Account, Australia, 2004-05' (cat. no. 4610.0) for further details. [Click here to access this paper.](#)

Measuring the Population Effects of Cyclone Larry

In March 2006 Cyclone Larry, a category four cyclone, crossed the far north Queensland coast near Innisfail, leaving a trail of destruction. Early reports suggested an exodus of people from the local area due to severe damage to housing, agriculture and infrastructure.

Because the annual measure of such population change is a key role of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), these reports prompted the Queensland Regional Statistics Unit to investigate the cyclone's population effect, so that an accurate estimate of resident population could be made. This investigation formed part of the larger ABS response to the disaster.

At the time of the cyclone the ABS had two impending census collections - the Census of Population and Housing and the Agricultural Census. As a result, a number of ABS officers visited the region shortly after the cyclone to discuss its potential impact on the collections.

These discussions with representatives from local government and industry, as well as discussions with local ABS interviewers, provided useful information and context to the data received by the Queensland office for use in making resident population estimates.

The picture emerging on the ground was sharpened by an Urban Search and Rescue report and field notes from Census collectors. These reports highlighted the extent of damage to housing throughout the region, with many houses completely destroyed or deemed unlivable.

The extent of housing damage was supported and translated into population figures by data from the Queensland Department of Housing, which provided details of the number of people assisted into temporary, and later long-term, housing. This helped to determine the number of people who were likely to have left the area on a more permanent basis. But not all of those who lost their houses left the local area and not all of those who left did so with the assistance of the Queensland Department of Housing. As such, changes to school enrolments for public and private schools in the region were used to narrow the estimate of the number of people who left and where they went.

With towns in the region recovering from the agricultural damage, houses being repaired and new houses being constructed, it is expected that some former residents will return to the area. The ABS will continue to collect information on this area in order to provide accurate population estimates in the future.



Free Statistics and Training

You can now access the full range of electronic Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data free of charge from www.abs.gov.au.

Download an expanded range of data on the ABS website, including:

- electronic publications (PDF and HTML based content);
- Census Community Profiles down to collection district level;
- time series spreadsheets; and
- other spreadsheets and data cubes.

Not only are statistics free online, the ABS also offers Free Training

The aim of the ABS' Information Skills Program (ISP) is to promote the access to, understanding and use of ABS statistics. It focuses on adult learners in the general community and in government agencies and encourages train-the-trainer programs to promote the proliferation of statistical knowledge and expertise throughout organisations.

The ISP is a nationally coordinated and decentralised program with an ISP consultant providing services from each regional office. The ISP provides training to clients, learning materials on the ABS website, promotions and client support.

If you are interested in arranging training for your organisation please contact the friendly ISP Manager in your state (see details below).

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Recent and Upcoming Releases

'Analysis of the Regional Distribution of Relatively Disadvantaged Areas Using 2001 SEIFA' (cat. no. 1351.0.55.013). Released June 2006. [Click here to access.](#)

'Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery, March 2007' (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001). Monthly release. [Click here to access.](#)

'Water Use on Australian Farms, 2004-05' (cat. no. 4618.0). Released July 2006. [Click here to access.](#)

'Domestic Use of Water and Energy, WA, October 2006' (cat. no. 4652.5). Released April 2007. [Click here to access.](#)

Perspectives on Regional Australia Publication Series

The ABS has produced the following releases that relate to needs identified in the Information Development Plan for Rural and Regional Statistics:

'Perspectives on Regional Australia: Household Expenditure throughout Australia, 2003-04' (cat. no. 1380.0.55.003). Released July 2006. [Click here to access.](#)

'Perspectives on Regional Australia: Sources of Income, Experimental Estimates, 2000-01' (cat. no. 1380.0.55.002). Released August 2005. [Click here to access.](#)

'Perspectives on Regional Australia: Women's Employment in Urban, Rural and Regional Australia' (cat. no. 1380.0.55.001). Released August 2004. [Click here to access.](#)

Contact Us

'What's New in Regional Statistics' is produced by the Rural and Regional Statistics National Centre in Adelaide.

Click [here](#) to visit the ABS Regional Statistics Theme Page.

If you would like further information, please contact the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070 or e-mail client.services@abs.gov.au.

Please send your comments or queries regarding this newsletter to regional.statistics@abs.gov.au.