

Budget Update

Key Issue

The 2022-23 October Budget was delivered on Tuesday 25 October 2022. The ABS' current funding position is provided in the following table.

Table 1	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
ABS Budget Position as at 2022-23 October Budget	Revised Budget	New Budget	Forward Estimates	Forward Estimates	Forward Estimates
	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m	\$m
Operating Appropriation EXCLUDING Census (a)	328.6	332.2	327.2	321.3	323.1
Operating Base	215.0	215.3	221.8	222.6	225.5
Council of Australian Governments (COAG)	21.1	5.8	7.6	9.4	13.4
Time Use Survey (TUS)	1.8	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1
COVID-19: Income and Housing	1.0	0.4	-	-	-
Mental Health Dashboard	0.5	-	-	-	-
Maintaining Australia's Essential Statistics	74.1	74.0	76.4	76.4	76.4
Big Data, Timely Business Insights - ICT Investment	4.9	5.4	-	-	-
Reducing Regulatory Burden on Business Reporting	0.2	-	-	-	-
Data Gaps - Industrial Relations Review Package	0.9	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.9
AgATTRACT ANZSCO - ABS Component	2.9	1.3	-	-	-
COVID-19 Vaccine Implementation and Rollout - Flow on Impact	0.4	-	-	-	-
ABS Asset Replacement Transition to Cloud	3.2	2.1	2.2	0.9	-
Digital Economy Strategy - data.gov.au	2.4	-	-	-	-
MoG S75 DTA data.gov.au transfer	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	-
Deregulation Agenda - Accounting Software ¹	-	5.1	3.4	2.0	-
Workforce Strategy - ANZSCO	-	7.2	7.2	6.1	3.1
Workforce Strategy - Regional Labour Market Data	-	1.1	1.0	0.6	0.6
Reclassification from Capital funding to Operating (NEW)	-	17.0	3.4	-	-
Barriers and Incentives measures (NEW)	-	0.8	1.2	0.7	1.2
WoG Election Commitment Savings (NEW)	-	(6.1)	-	-	-
WoG APS Reform Offsets (NEW)	-	(0.1)	(0.4)	(0.4)	-
Census (b)	250.9	36.4	37.8	54.4	105.9
Own Source Income (User Funding) (c)	62.4	70.3	62.2	40.2	40.2
Total Operating Funding (d = a+b+c)	641.8	438.9	427.2	415.9	469.3
Capital Appropriation (e)	22.1	18.6	16.7	16.5	16.1
DCB²	12.6	12.5	12.7	15.5	16.1
Equity Injections	9.5	6.2	4.0	1.0	-
Big Data, Timely Business Insights - ICT Investment	3.9	0.2	-	-	-
Leasehold Improvements - Equity	2.7	1.3	0.4	-	-
Digital Economy Strategy - data.gov.au	0.4	-	-	-	-
Deregulation Agenda - Accounting Software ¹	-	4.7	3.7	1.0	-
Census - Equity	2.5	-	-	-	-
Total Funding (f = d+e)	663.9	457.5	443.9	432.4	485.4
ASL Cap	3,174	2,678	2,658	2,662	2,876

- The figures for Deregulation Agenda - Accounting Software include funding for 2021-22 that will be appropriated in 2022-23 (\$1.335m Operating and \$0.523m Capital).
- DCB reflects the net effect of reclassifications from capital to operating.

Talking Points

- The ABS will receive an additional \$4.0 million over four years from 2022-23 to better measure barriers and incentives to labour force participation.
- ABS funding in 2022-23 has been reduced by \$6.1 million from the impact of the *Savings from External Labour* and *Savings from Advertising, Travel and Legal Expenses* election commitments.
- ABS funding has been reduced by \$0.9 million over three years from 2022-23 through a departmental levy to offset Australian Public Service reform initiatives.

Background

Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation

- The ABS will receive an additional \$4.0 million over four years from 2022-23 to support changes to the frequency and detail of data measuring the barriers and incentives to participating in the labour market.
- Barriers remain for many Australians including older people, First Nations people, women, people with disability, unpaid carers, culturally and linguistically diverse people and those living in certain regional and remote areas. Understanding the barriers to employment is crucial to reducing them.
- The ABS will now release data every year, not every two years, on barriers and incentives to participating in the labour market. Data for the 2020-21 financial year will be released in November 2022. This will tell us the primary reasons given by those who want to start a job or work more hours but could not do so.
- Starting with the 2022-23 data, the ABS will also produce quarterly national information, including a breakdown by sex, to better understand the different challenges faced by women and men. New questions will be added to the survey focussing on people with disability or a long-term illness.
- There are other data sets that contain important information on the factors that influence how cohorts of people participate and the hours they work. The ABS will partner across Government to identify this data with the aim of providing the most useful and comprehensive insights on the unique barriers people face.

Census Cyber Security

Key Issue

On 20 October 2022, *The Guardian* reported on the one billion attempted cyber attacks on the 2021 Census website.

Talking Points

- Census systems were completely rebuilt for the 2021 Census, incorporating state of the art cyber-security protections. The Australian Cyber Security Centre partnered with the ABS at every step.
- The systems were subjected to extensive security assessment and testing, including penetration testing (ethical hacking) and distributed denial of service (DDoS) testing.
- The systems performed to expectations with no security incidents.
- The ABS has publicly committed to delete all names submitted to the 2021 Census within 18 months of the Census day, and all addresses within 3 years. All paper forms from the 2021 Census have been destroyed.

Facts and Figures

- The Census systems withstood nearly one billion attacks during Census period (28 July to 1 October 2021).
- On Census day (10 August 2021) alone, the ABS blocked 308,735 malicious connections, with further investigation resulting in 130,000 IP addresses being identified and blocked as the source of attacks.
- To protect privacy, names and addresses are stored separately from other Census data.

Background

- The 2019-20 Budget provided an additional \$38.3 million in funding to address key areas of risk highlighted in the Senate and MacGibbon reviews of the 2016 Census.
- The ABS designed and implemented a comprehensive Census Security Strategy to support the overall 2021 Census program, engaging with external cyber security experts along the way.
 - The ABS partnered across Government, including with the Digital Transformation Agency and the Australian Cyber Security Centre within the Australian Signals Directorate, to inform and implement this Strategy and shape how we protect Australian's data.
 - The Australian Cyber Security Centre partnered with the ABS at every step of the way, providing a comprehensive package of support from when the ABS went out to tender for the new system in September 2018 to after Census day.
- Consistent with the Strategy, the ABS undertook an extensive program of risk assessment and assurance activities to ensure the security of the Census.
 - An independent security and compliance assessment was completed in June 2021 under the framework set out by the Australian Cyber Security Centre (known as an IRAP). This confidential assessment ensured that any potential security vulnerabilities were identified and mitigated.
- Reflecting the lessons from the 2016 Census, the ABS also improved its data management practices, including:
 - seeking independent security consultants' advice on storing and collecting Census data
 - implementing new processes for handling personal information including commissioning independent Privacy Impact Assessments
 - developing a more robust approach to engaging outsourced ICT suppliers.
- The ABS will continue to invest in security, data and privacy protection to ensure the success of future Censuses and maintain the trust and confidence of all Australians.

Extract from *The Guardian*, 20 October 2022

As Australia reels from another "immensely harmful" data hack, the Australian Bureau of Statistics has revealed it has fended off close to a billion cyber-attacks against the census.

Australian statistician Dr David Gruen told the Melbourne Business Analytics Conference last week that after the 2016 distributed denial-of-service attacks which led to the first digital census being taken offline by the ABS for 40 hours, every effort was made to protect the census and its data.

"In the event, everything ran smoothly even though there were slightly less than one billion cyber-attacks on our census digital system on census day, 10 August 2021," he said.

"Billion is not a misprint."

Complaint to the Australian Human Rights Commission

Key Issue

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has been made aware of a complaint lodged by Equality Australia with the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC). The complaint alleges breaches of the *Sex Discrimination Act* by former Minister Sukkar and the ABS.

Talking Points

- The ABS will provide full support to the AHRC in relation to the complaint and seek a resolution with the concerned parties.
- The ABS is aware that due to a very large increase in complaints received by the AHRC, there may be a significant delay by the AHRC actioning complaints.

Facts and Figures

- Equality Australia issued a media release on Friday 16 September 2022 outlining their complaint, in conjunction with complainant April Long and on behalf of other LGBTIQ+ people. The complaint is in relation to the 2021 Census and sexual orientation, gender identity and variations in sex characteristics.
- There has been some media and social media coverage of the complaint. The ABS issued a [media statement](#) on Friday 16 September 2022 in response.
- Under the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, the topics for the Census are determined by Government and specified in the *Census and Statistics Regulations 2016*. The ABS determines the questions which will be asked on Census forms for each topic.
- The 2021 Census topics were determined by the previous Government in 2019 with the consequential changes to the regulations tabled in Parliament in February 2020.
- In late 2022, the ABS will commence consultation on what topics to include in the 2026 Census. The ABS will engage with the public and stakeholders, including LGBTIQ+ communities, to understand data needs and test any proposed changes.
- The ABS' recommendations on 2026 Census topics will be submitted to the Australian Government in 2024 for its decision.
- The 2021 Census provided an option of 'non-binary sex' in addition to male and female. The addition of the non-binary sex option was to allow respondents to participate in the Census when the male or female sex categories did not accurately describe their sex.
- An analytical article was published by the ABS on Tuesday 27 September 2022 with [analysis of the non-binary sex responses](#) in the 2021 Census. The article highlighted that the

addition of the option of reporting 'non-binary sex' to the sex question did not yield meaningful data.

Background

- The ABS is committed to ensuring everyone in Australia can participate in the Census and help us to deliver high quality data for our communities.
- In 2018, the ABS undertook a public consultation on changes to Census topic. The consultation received approximately 450 submissions, including from the peak representative bodies for LGBTIQ+ people in Australia.
- There are many considerations for inclusion of Census topics, including that there is limited capacity to add new topics without removing others from this important data collection.
- The ABS worked with key data users and stakeholders across many topics in the development of the 2021 Census questions. This included peak bodies representing LGBTIQ+ communities and testing of the questions with members of these communities.
- The ABS highlighted eight potential new topics, including gender identity, sexual orientation and non-binary sex. This was published by the ABS in [November 2018](#).
- The ABS analysis included consideration of the policy need for the data, the cost and complexities of collecting and analysing the information, whether the Census is the appropriate vehicle to collect this data, and the overall burden placed on the community to complete the Census.
- The recommendations by the ABS to Government were made public in a Senate Order for Production of Documents in [November 2019](#).

Data Availability and Transparency Act

Key Issue

The Data Availability and Transparency Act 2022 (The Act) commenced on 1 April 2022. The Act establishes the DATA Scheme under which Commonwealth bodies are authorised to share their public sector data with accredited users. Accredited users are authorised to collect and use the data, where the requirements of the Act are met.

Talking Points

- The ABS will primarily benefit from the DATA Scheme by removing data sharing barriers and streamlining existing data sharing arrangements. The ABS is examining potential Act use to improve statistics, reduce respondent burden and better meet user needs.
- The ABS has three roles in the Data Scheme: as a data custodian of public sector data; as an accredited data services provider (ADSP); and as an accredited data user.
- As a data custodian of public sector data, the ABS will assess requests for data to be shared on a case-by-case basis. The ABS will only ever share data it holds when it is completely secure, accessed by accredited users, and provides public value.
- As an ADSP the ABS will support enhanced, safe data sharing through providing complex data integration, de-identification, and secure data access.
- The Act does not contain authority to compel the ABS to share data.

Background

- The DATA Scheme requires that Australian Government data custodians apply Data Sharing Principles to safeguard their data. These principles are based on the Five Safes Framework put in place by the ABS to make de-identified data available to approved researchers in the ABS Datalab.
- The Data Scheme is consistent with the *Privacy Act 1988* and will operate alongside existing legal and regulatory requirements in the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*, *Archives Act 1983*, and the Protective Securities Policy Framework.
- The ABS supports data sharing capability uplift across the Australian Public Service as lead agency for the Data Professional Stream.

- The ABS receives ongoing funding (\$637,000 in the 2022-23 Budget) to provide independent technical advice to the Office of the National Data Commissioner (ONDC). For example, the ABS provided advice to ONDC as it developed the Data Availability and Transparency Bill and Scheme, to ensure the right balance was achieved between making government data available for authorised purposes and maintaining privacy protections and security of the data.

Released under FOI Act

Future of the Census

Key Issue

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has commenced planning for the 2026 Census. The ABS will develop a 2026 Census which builds on the strong results achieved in 2021.

Talking Points

- The ABS is required under the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* to undertake a Census every 5 years.
- The ABS continues to evolve how we conduct the Australian Census to maximise its value, take advantage of technology advances and increased data availability, and to mitigate against operational risks. For the 2026 Census it will be necessary to build a new processing system, as the current processing system has now been in use for the last 4 Censuses and is no longer fit for purpose.
- The ABS will undertake a public consultation process to inform recommendations to Government on the topics for the 2026 Census. This process is planned to commence in late 2022 and will be open to public submissions in 2023.
- The 2026 Census will continue to be primarily collected online, however paper forms will still be available for Australians who cannot or choose not to complete digitally.
- The ABS will continue to take advantage of other data sources to make the Census more efficient and provide complementary information – while maintaining Australians' privacy.
- Similar to the approach used in preparation for the 2021 Census, the ABS will undertake an independent privacy impact assessment in preparation for the 2026 Census.
- The ABS has commenced consideration of the 2031 Census and the potential for more major transformation to a model that uses a combination of directly collected data and administrative records.

National Disability Data Asset / Australian National Data Integration Infrastructure

Key Issue

In December 2021, the Commonwealth committed \$36.9 million as a package of measures to support Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031. This includes funding for 50 per cent of the total cost to establish the National Disability Data Asset (NDDA) and the establishment of infrastructure known as the Australian National Data Integration Infrastructure (ANDII). The remaining 50 per cent of funding for the NDDA and ANDII is to be provided by states and territories.

Talking Points

- The Department of Social Services (DSS) has overarching responsibility for delivering the NDDA, including negotiating with the states and territories on co-funding. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing (AIHW) are responsible for the ANDII.
- The Commonwealth allocated \$19.3 million to fund the project until December 2022. That investment has enabled early co-design activities. The ABS and AIHW have made substantial progress on the ANDII technical and data governance infrastructure design in collaboration with states and territories.
- The ANDII will remove barriers to data sharing and embed system reforms developed under the National Data Sharing Work Programs, including a share-once-use-often approach to data sharing, and improved data discoverability. The ANDII will also remove the need for inefficient and time-consuming data sharing and access arrangements.
- Once established, the ANDII will be leveraged for reuse across other policy domains, reducing the need for the Commonwealth to fund new infrastructure for future data needs.

Facts and Figures

- The ABS will receive \$42 million over 3.5 years to build the ANDII and support the NDDA.
- The ANDII is the foundational infrastructure to deliver the NDDA, including governance, streamlined and enduring data sharing arrangements, linkage methods, the data sharing platform, and analytical environment. The ABS and AIHW are funded by DSS and are responsible for developing the ANDII.
- The ANDII is co-designed by the ABS and AIHW in consultation with DSS, states and territories and key users (e.g., academics). The ABS and AIHW will support the delivery and on-going management of the ANDII, with the ABS responsible for the ANDII ICT solution.
- The ABS and AIHW have made substantial progress on the ANDII technical and data governance infrastructure design in collaboration with states and territories. This includes preparation for the ICT build, design of the new data integration system and the national data linkage model, design of centralised data products and the development of robust data governance, privacy, and ethics frameworks to ensure the integrity and security of the ANDII to deliver the NDDA.

Background

- The total cost of the NDDA/ANDII is \$73.8 million – DSS, in addition to \$15 million to fund the NDDA pilot, has allocated up to \$36.9 million for NDDA/ANDII.
- The disability sector expects the NDDA to be delivered to address outcome measures under Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031 and to address recommendations of the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.
- The strong preference of the Commonwealth is for states and territories to commit to the NDDA/ANDII, so DSS continues to be focused on securing funding from states and territories. However, at the time of writing, states and territories have not committed to fund the NDDA/ANDII due to unresolved issues relating to the funding source, data use, and governance arrangements. Timeframes for resolution of those issues are unknown.

Order for the Production of Documents No. 32 – Births and Deaths Data

Key Issue

In early September 2022, the Senate agreed to an order for production of documents covering Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) births and deaths data, moved by Senator Malcolm Roberts. The ABS provided some information and claimed public interest immunity for the rest.

Talking Points

- The order was agreed on 7 September 2022 and covered births data from 1 January 2021 up to 6 September 2022, so the Senator requested almost 'real time' statistics on births.
- The order also covered provisional mortality statistics for May to July 2022, and 2021 *Causes of Death* statistics.
- The ABS provided births statistics up to the March quarter 2022. This is the most recent data available. Similarly, some of the deaths statistics were not ready at the time of the request.
- It takes time for births and deaths to be registered. It then takes more time for the registries of births, deaths and marriages to get the data to the ABS. We publish the statistics as soon as they are ready.
- Earlier release would increase the possibility of errors in the published statistics. There would be undercounts of the numbers of births and deaths if the ABS produced statistics before most of the registrations come through.

Facts and Figures

- The response to the Order for the Production of documents was tabled in the Senate on 15 September 2022.
- In late September 2022, Senator Roberts asked the Senate to note the document and thanked Minister Gallagher and Assistant Minister Leigh for providing a considered and timely response. The Senator noted 'the Australian Bureau of Statistics has now committed to a publishing schedule for health related data that has the effect of returning data disclosure back to pre-COVID turnaround times. Finally. At last.'
- The ABS have brought the release of *Births, Australia* forward this year. It has been published in mid-December in the last few years. The 2021 publication became available on 25 October 2022.

- The ABS released March quarter 2022 births statistics on 21 September 2022 in the publication titled *National, State and Territory Population*.
- The ABS will publish statistics for births for the June quarter 2022 on 15 December 2022. The ABS will publish statistics for the September quarter 2022 on 16 March 2023.
- The annual *Births, Australia* publication provides more detailed information on births.
- The order covered provisional mortality statistics for May, June and July 2022. The ABS released provisional mortality statistics for May on 26 August 2022 and June statistics on 30 September 2022. The figures for July were made available on 27 October 2022.
- The order also covered the 2021 *Causes of Death* publication. The ABS released this on 19 October 2022.

Background

- The ABS' birth and death statistics are based on data provided by the state and territory Registries of Births, Deaths and Marriages.
- Parents have 60 days to register the birth of a child in all states and territories except the ACT, where they have six months to register the birth. Not all births are registered within these time frames.
- There are also lags in registrations of deaths. Deaths cannot be registered until after the body is cremated or buried.
- The annual *Causes of Death* publication is the most complete mortality dataset. It includes data from both registrations and the National Coronial Information System. It takes time to receive and process all the data. This publication usually comes out about nine or ten months after the end of the reference period.
- It is not in the public interest to release statistics before statistical processing and appropriate quality assurance checks are completed. Earlier release would increase the risk of errors, in turn undermining Australians' trust in the reliability of ABS statistics.

Sex and Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variation

Key Issue

The ABS is implementing the new statistical standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation.

Talking Points

- The ABS released the new standard in early 2021, after extensive external consultation with entities including the Human Rights Commission, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and LGBTIQ+ groups.
- The new standard replaces the 2016 standard for sex and gender variables. The standard includes updated sex and gender variables and new standards for variations of sex characteristics (also known as 'intersex') and sexual orientation.
- In September 2021 ABS consulted with experts in the fields of genetics and variations in sexual development to address confusion about what was meant by "a person's sex can change...". Based on this advice the statement was amended to "a person's **reported** sex can change over the course of their lifetime".
- The ABS is implementing the new variables into its surveys on a case by case basis depending on the survey topic and the information needs of stakeholders.

Key Facts and Figures

- The new standard replaces the *Standard for Sex and Gender Variables, 2016* and was released on 14 January 2021.
- The 4 question modules from the new standard are Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics, and Sexual Orientation.
- The [ABS Standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables](#) defines both Sex and Gender as:

Sex: a person's sex as being based on their sex characteristics, such as their chromosomes, hormones and reproductive organs.

Gender: is about social and cultural differences in identity, expression and experience as a man, woman, or non-binary person. A person's gender may differ from their sex and may also differ from what is indicated on their legal documents.

Background

- Revised sex and gender questions are being implemented across most household surveys.
- New questions for Variations of Sex Characteristics are being collected in surveys being conducted as part of the Intergenerational Health and Mental Health Study (IHMHS).
- Revised questions on Sexual Orientation have been collected in the General Social Survey and are being included across the Family and Community Experiences Survey, components of the IHMHS and the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers.
- Summary statistics from the National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing released in July 2022 included analysis of sexual orientation data.
- Analysis of non-binary sex responses in the 2021 Census was released in September 2022. This analysis showed that the concept of non-binary was not consistently understood and did not yield meaningful data. The results cannot be used as a measure of gender diversity, non-binary genders or trans populations.
 - The ABS notes results from the 2021 non-binary sex category do not provide data of high enough quality to be used.
 - The non-binary sex option was marked on the Census form for 43,220 respondents or 0.17% of the Australian population.
- The ABS will undertake community consultation on potential changes to topics in the 2026 Census during 2023.

Summary of Surveys in the Field as at 7 November 2022

Survey Name	Survey Acronym	Cycle/Reference Period	Despatch Date	Close Off
Survey of International Investment	SII	Sep 22	29 Sep 22	11 Nov 22
Rural Environment and Agricultural Commodities Survey	REACS	2021-22	7 Jul 22	15 Nov 22
Building Approvals Survey	BAPS	M05 M Nov 22 M05 Q Nov 22	31 Oct 22 31 Oct 22	16 Nov 22 16 Nov 22
Retail Business Survey	RBS	Oct 22	1 Nov 22	22 Nov 22
Consumer Price Index	CPI	Nov 22	31 Oct 22	30 Nov 22
Engineering Construction Survey	ECS	Sep 22	26 Sep 22	9 Dec 22
Building Activity Collection	BACS	Sep 22	5 Oct 22	15 Dec 22
Economic Activity Survey Core	EAS Core	2021-22	25 Aug 22	19 Dec 22
Economic Activity Survey Film, Television and Digital Games Survey	EAS FTV	2021-22	15 Sep 22	19 Dec 22
Producer Price Index	PPI	Dec 22	21 Oct 22	22 Dec 22
Retail Business Survey Provider Induction Program	RBS PIP	Oct 22	10 Oct 22	11 Jan 23
Survey of International Investment - Frames	SII Frames	Sep 22	4 Nov 22	16 Jan 23
Survey of International Trade in Services - Frames	SITS Frames	Sep 22	4 Nov 22	16 Jan 23
Wage Price Index Survey	WPI	Nov 22	4 Nov 22	19 Jan 23
Survey of Average Weekly Earnings	AWE	Nov 22	4 Nov 22	20 Jan 23
Environment Activity Survey Energy and Water	EAS EWS	2021-22	13 Sep 22	6 Feb 23
Business Characteristics Survey	BCS	2021-22	21 Oct 22	6 Mar 23

Upcoming Surveys

Survey Name	Survey Acronym	Cycle/ Reference Period	Despatch Date	Close Off
Mineral and Petroleum Exploration Survey	MINEX/PE TEX	Dec 22	8 Dec 22	3 May 23
Quarterly Business Indicators, Mining	QMIN	Dec 22	8 Dec 22	
Retail Business Survey	RBS	Nov 22	24 Nov 22	22 Dec 22
Survey of New Capital Expenditure	CAPEX	Dec 22	8 Dec 22	4 May 23
Quarterly Business Indicators Survey	QBIS	Dec 22	8 Dec 22	4 May 23
Public Finance	PUBFIN	Dec 22	15 Dec 22	27 Jan 23
Research and Development Businesses Survey	RDBS	2021-22	19 Jan 23	14 Jul 23
Update of Business Structure	UBS	2023	6 Feb 23	7 Aug 23

Still Available for Providers to Complete (No Active Follow Up)

Survey Name	Survey Acronym	Cycle/ Reference Period	Despatch Date	Close Off
Mineral and Petroleum Exploration Survey	MINEX/PE TEX	Sep 22	15 Sep 22	7 Nov 22
Quarterly Business Indicators, Mining	QMIN	Sep 22	15 Sep 22	10 Nov 22
Communication Services / Energy Retailing Survey	CSS/ERS	Sep 22	4 Oct 22	15 Nov 22
Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced	VACP	2021-22	12 Jul 22	5 Jan 23
Survey of New Capital Expenditure	CAPEX	Sep 22	15 Sep 22	2 Feb 23
Quarterly Business Indicators Survey	QBIS	Sep 22	15 Sep 22	2 Feb 23
Economic Activity Survey Retail Trade Margins Case Study	EAS RTM	2022 P2	11 Oct 22	28 Feb 23

Household Surveys Currently in the Field

Survey Name	Survey Acronym	Start Date	End Date
Monthly Populations Survey	MPS	6 Nov 22	26 Nov 22
National Health Survey	NHS	23 Dec 21	8 Apr 23
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (Community)	NATSIHS	14 Aug 22	24 Jun 23
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (Non Community)	NATSIHS	9 Oct 22	24 Jun 23
Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers	SDAC	12 Jun 22	10 Dec 22
National Health Measures Survey	NHMS NATSIHMS	16 Jan 22 9 Oct 22	31 Dec 23 31 Dec 23

Upcoming Surveys

Survey Name	Start Date	End Date
Monthly Population Survey - MPS (Dec)	4 Dec 22	17 Dec 22
National Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey	Anticipated Jan 23	31 Dec 23
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey (Non Community)	Anticipated Jan 23	31 Dec 23
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey (Community)	Anticipated Feb 23	31 Dec 23

Released under FOI Act

2021 Census Topics

Key Issue

The Australian Parliament passed the *2021 Census Regulations* in February 2020. These Regulations contain the list of topics in the 2021 Census.

Talking Points

- New topics in the 2021 Census were long-term health conditions and service with the Australian Defence Force.
- The “household access to the internet” topic was removed.
- Topics were not added for “Gender identity”, “Sexual orientation” or “Variations in sex characteristics”.
- Topic consultation for the 2026 Census will commence in late 2022.

Facts and Figures

- Under the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, the topics for the Census are determined by Government and specified in the *Census and Statistics Regulations 2016*. The ABS determines the questions which will be asked on Census forms for each topic.
- Data on the two new topics was released on 28 June 2022 and its use has been supported through the production of analytical articles and conducting data seminars.
- In addition to the questions on the new topics, the following changes have been made to existing questions:
 - addition of the response category 'non-binary sex' to the sex question;
 - addition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ancestry and language options; and
 - changes in the order of response categories for country of birth, language spoken, ancestry and religion to reflect the most common responses from the 2016 Census.

EC22-000106

Background

- Starting in 2018, the ABS undertook a public consultation on changes to Census topic. The consultation received approximately 450 submissions, including from the peak representative bodies for LGBTIQ+ people in Australia.
- There are many considerations for inclusion of Census topics, including that there is limited capacity to add new topics without removing others from this important data collection.
- The recommendations by the ABS to Government were made public in a Senate Order for Production of Documents in [November 2019](#). They recommended the addition of topics on health conditions and ADF service, and the removal of topics on household internet access and motor vehicle garaged. It sought Government's decision on including new topics on sexual orientation and gender identity.
- The 2021 Census topics were determined by the previous Government in 2019 with the consequential changes to the regulations tabled in Parliament in February 2020.
- Census topics had not changed since the 2006 Census. The changes for the 2021 Census aimed to ensure Census data reflects current information needs, balanced with considerations of capability to ask questions that produce reliable data.
- Adding the 'non-binary sex' response category to the sex question provided an option for people when the male and female sex categories did not accurately describe their sex. The supporting documentation clarified that the question asks about a person's sex, which is based on their sex characteristics, such as their chromosomes, hormones, and reproductive organs.
- To help respondents participate in the Census, the ABS reviewed all the questions that may have caused confusion to people in lockdown and prepared additional clarifying material.

EC22-000108

Data Integration Sharing

Key Issue

The ABS integrates data from numerous sources to enhance the data available to inform Australia's important decisions.

Talking Points

- ABS works with data custodians to facilitate the legal sharing of data with the ABS under the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* for statistical and research purposes.
- Integrated data is used to gain insights into our society, economy and environment and inform government policies and services in areas such as health, education, infrastructure and business.
- Access to integrated data through the ABS DataLab is managed to protect privacy and confidentiality, and is only for research and statistical purposes. The data cannot be used for compliance or regulatory purposes.

Facts and Figures

- As of September 2022 there were 1,538 researchers accessing integrated data products across 235 projects in the ABS DataLab. The integrated data products are being used for a wide range of research projects.
- **The Australian Immunisation Register data integration project** has linked the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) dataset to the Multi-Agency Data Integration Project (MADIP) data asset to inform, and understand, the impact of Australian COVID-19 strategies. This integration project enables timely analysis of vaccine uptake and outcomes across socio-demographic cohorts and geographic areas.
- **Patterns and drivers of wages levels and growth** uses ABS Wage Price Index data linked to the Business Longitudinal Analysis Data Environment (BLADE) to help understand drivers of wages growth and the impact on employment and wages, of policies such as fiscal and monetary policy, wage-setting and industrial relations policies, and tax and superannuation policies.
- **Labour Market Tracker Project** integrates job-related data, including Single Touch Payroll data, to MADIP and BLADE integrated data assets. This project has enabled close to real time monitoring of the labour market and the Australian economy.

EC22-000108

- **Cultural and linguistic diversity among Australians who died with dementia** project provided insights into the nearly 27,800 Australians who had dementia recorded on their death certificate between September 2016 and December 2017.

Background

- The data holdings of the Australian Government are a strategic national resource that are vital to evidence-based decision-making and increasing productivity.
- Unlocking data by safe, legal sharing and integration enables program evaluation, informed policy, risk-based regulatory processes and effective services for all Australians. It is critical to inform government responses during crises including natural disasters, such as bushfires and floods, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The ABS has transitioned under Ministerial Rule from an Accredited Integrating Authority to an Accredited Data Service Provider under the Data Availability and Transparency Act 2022. This accreditation acknowledges the ABS has the requisite expertise, skills, knowledge, infrastructure and secure environment to undertake data integration projects involving Australian Government data for statistical and research purposes, consistent with ABS legislation.
- The ABS has developed two significant integrated data assets for Australia over the last decade, in partnership with a number of Government agencies - MADIP and BLADE. Through these major initiatives and partnerships, the ABS has sought to systemise and scale efforts to create additional value in public sector data.
- There are strict controls on the researchers who can access detailed microdata files and the purpose for which they can use the files. Approved users gain access to de-identified integrated data through highly secure systems.
- Researchers are limited to government employees, government contractors and individuals sponsored by government, academics, and researchers from public policy research institutes.
- Unit record information cannot leave the ABS DataLab. Any output a researcher wants to use outside the ABS DataLab is checked by the ABS before release, to ensure it meets ABS confidentiality standards. Output cannot be released in a manner likely to identify an individual or organisation.

EC22-000113

Classification of NSW Transport Asset Holding Entity

Key Issue:

The classification of the NSW Transport Asset Holding Entity (TAHE) as a Public Non-financial Corporation (PNFC).

Talking Points:

- The ABS is responsible for classifying entities in the public sector for the purposes of statistical reporting.
- The ABS classifies entities according to guidance provided by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- The ABS Government Financial Statistics (GFS) manual articulates the meaning of a realistic rate of return on investment but does not specify a numerical threshold. The IMF GFS manual adopts the same approach.
- The classification of TAHE was reviewed internally from first principles late in 2021. The review found that the classification of TAHE as a Public Non-financial Corporation (PNFC) was correct.
- In June 2022 NSW Treasury requested the ABS undertake a formal sector classification review of TAHE, NSW Trains and Sydney Trains.
- These reviews concluded that all three units were correctly classified as Public Non Financial Corporations. The reviews were endorsed by the ABS Conceptual Classification Committee (CCC).
- In September 2022 the ABS published a shortened version of the TAHE determination on the ABS website, which was a first for the ABS. (See Appendix 1).

Facts and Figures:

- As outlined in international manuals, there are three questions to determine how an entity is classified in economic statistics.

S2D2P2

S2D2P2

General Manager responsible: Jacqui Jones

Division: Macroeconomic Statistics Division

Contact Officer: S22

Telephone: W S22 / M S22

EC22-000113

S2D2P2

S2D2P2

S2D2P2

S2D2P2

- More information is included in Appendix 1.

Background:

S2D2P2

- The ABS received an FOI request regarding TAHE, in both August and December 2021. A range of documents were identified as in scope but the vast majority were not released as they are subject to the Census and Statistics Act. Three in scope documents that were not covered by the Act were released on 17 March 2022.
- The former NSW Auditor-General, Tony Harris, publicly expressed concerns about the profitability and independence of TAHE as a PNFC (see Appendix 2 and Appendix 3). S2D2P2
- The ABS follows the advice in the SNA and IMF manuals and has publicly articulated the considerations taken into account. The sales to costs ratio is one of three considerations. These are outlined in Question 3 in Appendix 1.

General Manager responsible: Jacqui Jones
Division: Macroeconomic Statistics Division
Contact Officer: s22
Telephone: W s22 / M s22

EC22-000113

Appendix 1:**TAHE sector classification decision as published on the ABS website**

The ABS has assessed that TAHE is classified as a market producer. Further, as TAHE provides non-financial services it is classified as a public non-financial corporation.

TAHE is a market producer

If a separate institutional unit is under government control, it is then reviewed to determine whether it is a market or non-market producer.

Units will typically be classified as market producers if they sell the majority of their output over the long-term at economically significant prices.

Economically significant prices are prices that have a significant effect on the amounts that producers are willing to supply and on the amounts that purchasers wish to buy (para 6.95, System of National Accounts 2008 (SNA 2008)).

The ABS considers three tests, on balance, to determine whether a unit is a market or non-market producer (para. 2.58, AGFS 15).

Sales to costs ratio test

This test considers the proportion of total production costs that are covered by total sales (including particular subsidies). The higher the proportion, the more likely the unit is to be a market producer. There is no specified threshold for the sales to costs ratio which mandates that a unit is a market producer.

TAHE's revenue from sales of goods and services is predominantly derived from rail access charges and licence fees, as well as a small amount of other goods and services income.

TAHE has entered into commercial track access agreements with each of Sydney Trains, NSW Trains and third-party operators. These agreements set out the terms of the arrangement and the access charges and licence fees payable to TAHE.

TAHE also receives additional income from investment activities (including property rental and interest income) and other revenue, such as gains on disposal of assets. This income is not included in the sales to costs ratio.

Forward estimates of revenue and expenses were provided by NSW Treasury. These estimates indicate that production costs for TAHE are expected to be fully covered by revenue from sales of goods and services over the forward estimates.

General Manager responsible: Jacqui Jones

Division: Macroeconomic Statistics Division

Contact Officer: s22

Telephone: W s22 / M s22

EC22-000113

The sales to costs ratio is projected to increase over the next 10 years. This is driven by projected growth in revenue from rail access charges paid by Sydney Trains and NSW Trains. Total production costs (including depreciation) are projected to stabilise over the forward estimates.

Based on this information, the sales to costs ratio test indicates that TAHE is a market producer.

Government intervention test

This test considers the extent to which the government can directly influence the prices, nature and level of goods and services provided by the producer.

TAHE has been legally established under NSW legislation to own, promote and facilitate access to transport assets, for use by government and private sector operators.

Economic decisions relating to TAHE's operations are made at arms-length from government. TAHE is not subject to the day-to-day direction and control of the Minister for Transport.

Under the SOC Act, all decisions and overall strategy are made by or under the authority of the Board. The Minister can only issue directions in accordance with the process and requirements of the SOC Act. This includes consulting with the Board and obtaining Treasurer approval.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) is responsible for regulating rail activity in Australia. A state can establish its own access regime and request a determination from ACCC to ascertain that the regime is compliant with the Competition and Consumer Act 2010. This included the setting up of the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART).

TAHE access fees are informed by IPART determinations that are made at arms-length from government. IPART's independent regulation is intended to ensure that monopoly track owners provide prices and conditions of access on reasonable terms. Within these bounds, rail owners and access seekers negotiate an access agreement. If they cannot agree, either party can refer the dispute to IPART to arbitrate.

Based on this information, the government intervention test indicates that TAHE is a market producer.

Competition test

This test considers the ability of consumers to acquire similar goods and services from other

General Manager responsible: Jacqui Jones

Division: Macroeconomic Statistics Division

Contact Officer: s22

Telephone: W s22 / M s22

EC22-000113

producers based on the prices charged, as competition can be restricted by excessive market control or government regulation. This test also considers the lack of competition when a unit is primarily supplying ancillary services to other government units.

There is limited competition and no material demand risk faced by TAHE in relation to its rail assets that support passenger rail services. TAHE operates in a monopolistic market in NSW, due to the barriers to entry arising from the high cost of owning or leasing rail assets. This is particularly the case in the same regions of NSW that TAHE operates within.

The majority of TAHE's revenue from sales of goods and services are driven by two customers, Sydney Trains and NSW Trains, which are themselves public sector entities. They are both subsidised by the NSW Government to enable the provision of efficient public transport access. Therefore, the charges paid by Sydney Trains and NSW Trains would not be possible without the subsidy payments received from the NSW Government.

The rail freight industry is more competitive in NSW relative to passenger rail services. The Greater Sydney Rail network is made up of rail lines which are either owned by the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) or owned by TAHE. ARTC is a Commonwealth entity and like TAHE, is subject to the NSW Rail Access Undertaking. Further away from Sydney, the Country Rail Network is run by the private sector.

When considering freight transport more widely than rail, TAHE's freight customers can also choose from non-rail options. Road freight, for example, is generally more timely, less costly and more flexible. However, fees from rail freight make up a smaller proportion of TAHE's revenue compared to the fees charged for access to rail lines which support passenger rail services.

Based on current information, the competition test is inconclusive for TAHE. There is lower competition in relation to its rail assets that support public transport passenger services and higher competition in relation to the private sector freight industry.

Determination

On balance, the above tests indicate that TAHE is a market producer.

EC22-000113

Appendix 2:

This appendix addresses the publicly expressed concerns by former NSW Auditor-General, Tony Harris, regarding structure, operations, and sector classification of TAHE.

- Mr Harris raised concerns about the profitability and independence of TAHE as a Public Non-Financial Corporation.
 - As per the Government Finance Statistics (GFS) and the System of National Accounts (SNA) guidance, public corporations are not required to be profitable or to pay dividends. At a minimum they are expected to cover capital and other costs.
 - TAHE is not required to be completely independent of Transport for NSW to be classified as a public non-financial corporation.
 - The independence of public corporations is limited by government control as per the GFS and SNA guidance. To be classified in the public sector it is expected that a public corporation has its operational activities and general corporate policy determined by a government or a government-controlled unit.

General Manager responsible: Jacqui Jones

Division: Macroeconomic Statistics Division

Contact Officer: s22

Telephone: W s22 / M s22

EC22-000113

Appendix 3:

Below is the article by Mr Harris published in the Sydney Morning Herald (SMH) on 20 August 2021.

‘Vehicles for deception’: Transport plan fails the truth test

NSW governments have a reputation for designing fiscally shady schemes. They pretended the Sydney Harbour Tunnel was privately owned to avoid then existing controls over state borrowings and to get Commonwealth tax advantages not available to state entities. It took years to unravel that deceit.

They established the Port Macquarie Base Hospital as a for-profit public hospital in a deal that quickly foundered. They developed private prisons and privately owned public schools in an expensive, but failed, attempt to hide debt.

Now the Berejiklian government wants credit rating agencies and the public to believe that a government entity owning Sydney’s rail assets – the network, rolling stock and real estate – can be profitable and thus can be taken off the government’s budget.

The Transport Asset Holding Entity, TAHE, is a vehicle designed to own all Sydney’s rail assets and to hide government rail transport expenses. TAHE was foreshadowed over a decade ago but was established only in June 2020. It took this long for the government to devise a model that gave TAHE the appearance of being a commercially independent body, to escape from the government sector budget, while ensuring that passenger train operations remained in government hands.

The developed model fails the truth test. According to state documents, TAHE cannot negotiate with any potential customer other than Transport for NSW. It cannot independently decide to invest in new rail assets or to divest any rail asset. It must allow Transport for NSW to maintain TAHE’s trains and TAHE’s rolling stock. It cannot decide not to exclude Transport for NSW from running TAHE’s trains on TAHE’s tracks even when the government refuses to meet TAHE’s expenses, including a reasonable return on its assets. In short, TAHE is not an independent, commercial government corporation.

The government thinks it can fool credit rating agencies, which decide whether the government meets its principal fiscal goal, keeping a AAA credit rating, as required by the Fiscal Responsibility Act 2012. It is true that credit agencies have carried a tarnished reputation following their role in creating the Global Financial Crisis. But even they must be able to see through the accounting scam that TAHE is.

And if they are fooled, we can expect to see more NSW “commercial” bodies based on the TAHE model. Wednesday’s *Herald* reported that the NSW government is already thinking of a similar body to own state roads. We all know how profitable state roads can be when they

General Manager responsible: Jacqui Jones

Division: Macroeconomic Statistics Division

Contact Officer: s22

Telephone: W s22 / M s22

EC22-000113

collect no tolls. And no doubt some consultant will soon develop schemes for independent “commercial” state-owned corporations to own (fee-free) public hospitals and (fee-free) public schools.

These models are not only deceitful. They remove the need for the government to undertake real fiscal reforms, reforms that have a real economic impact. The Treasurer has made an attempt by proposing to replace stamp duty on property transactions with land tax. But there are many remaining opportunities. There have been countless reports on how to strengthen state finances, but alas, it is easier for our governments to devise accounting rorts.

The TAHE rort is now to be investigated by a committee of the Legislative Council. Hopefully, that committee can demonstrate these rorts are just vehicles for deception.

Released under FOI Act

EC22-000115

Australian Key Economic Statistics

KEY MESSAGE

- Gross Domestic Product rose 0.9% in the June quarter 2022 and was up 3.6% through the year. The key drivers to quarterly growth were household spending and exports.
- The economy has grown 5.5% since the start of the pandemic.

KEY FACTS AND FIGURES

- The Consumer Price Index rose 1.8% in the September quarter 2022, and 7.3% over the year. This was the highest annual CPI increase since June 1990.
- The unemployment rate for September 2022 was 3.5%.
- By 17 September 2022, the number of payroll jobs was 8.6% above pre-pandemic levels.
- There were nearly half a million job vacancies in May.
- The Wage Price Index rose 0.7% during the June quarter 2022 and 2.6% over the year.
- The Consumer Price Index for the December quarter 2022 will be published on 25 January 2023.
- The September quarter 2022 national accounts will be published on 7 December 2022.
- Labour force data for the month of October will be published on 17 November 2022.

BACKGROUND

National Accounts

- Gross Domestic Product (GDP) rose 0.9% in the June quarter 2022, following a 0.7% rise in the March quarter 2022. Strength came from household consumption, which grew 2.2%, and exports (+5.5%). Inventories detracted from growth following an unprecedented replenishment of stocks in the March quarter.
- The economy grew 3.6% through the year to June quarter 2022 and was 5.5% bigger than pre-pandemic levels (December quarter 2019). Per capita GDP rose 0.5% in the June quarter and grew 2.7% through the year.
- Nominal GDP grew 4.3% in the June quarter 2022, aided by a 4.6% increase in the terms of trade. Domestic prices (+1.6%) also contributed and grew at the fastest rate since the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax.

General Manager Responsible: Jacqui Vitas

Division: Macroeconomic Statistics Division

Contact Officer: Jacqui Vitas

Telephone: Work (02) 6252 5722 / Mobile s22

EC22-000115

- Gross value added (GVA) rose in 15 of the 19 industries. The strongest contributions to growth came from Transport, postal and warehousing (+7.5%) and Accommodation and food services (+10.7%). GVA fell in Wholesale trade (-2.2%) and Manufacturing (-1.1%).
- Hours worked rose 2.9% in the June quarter 2022, recovering from Omicron-related absences and flooding on the east coast during the March quarter. GDP per hour worked fell 1.9%.

Households

- Household spending rose 2.2% during the June quarter 2022, with increases in all states and territories. Household spending grew 6.0% through the year and was 5.5% above pre-pandemic December quarter 2019 levels in chain volume terms.
- Spending on food in supermarkets and other retailers fell 1.2%, whilst spending in restaurants, cafes and pubs surged 8.8%. This quarter marked the first full quarter of re-opened domestic and international borders, driving a 37.3% rise in spending on transport services.
- Compensation of employees grew 2.4% during the June quarter 2022, though gross disposable income grew a more modest 1.0%.
- An increase in consumption opportunities, coupled with higher income tax and interest payments, contributed to the household saving-to-income ratio falling to 8.7% in the June quarter, compared to 11.1% in the March quarter 2022. The ratio remains slightly above pre-pandemic levels.
- Retail sales remained at elevated levels in August, with turnover in current prices rising 0.6% following a 1.3% rise in July.

Balance of Payments and International Investment Position

- The current account surplus rose to \$18.3 billion in the June quarter 2022, the 13th consecutive current account surplus and the longest period on record. The rise was driven by strong export commodity prices.
- The terms of trade rose 4.6% reaching its highest level on record.
- Exports volumes rose 5.5% and imports volumes rose 0.7%. Exports of services grew 13.7% during the June quarter yet remained 38.1% below pre-pandemic levels (December quarter 2019).
- Net exports contributed 1.0 percentage points to GDP growth in the June quarter 2022.

Prices

- The Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose 1.8% in the September quarter 2022. This followed an increase of 1.8% in the June quarter 2022.

General Manager Responsible: Jacqui Vitas

Division: Macroeconomic Statistics Division

Contact Officer: Jacqui Vitas

Telephone: Work (02) 6252 5722 / Mobile [REDACTED]

EC22-000115

- This was the equal-second highest quarterly growth in consumer prices since September quarter 2000.
- The CPI rose 7.3% through the year. This was the highest annual CPI increase since June 1990.
- The main contributors to the CPI rise during the September quarter 2022 were new dwellings (+3.7%), gas (+10.9%) and furniture (+6.6%).
- The GDP implicit price deflator, a measure of price pressures across the whole economy, rose 2.9% in the March quarter 2022, the highest quarterly rise since March quarter 1988.

Labour

- In September 2022, total employment increased by 900 people (+0.0%) compared to August 2022.
- 13,590,800 people were employed in September 2022.
- Full-time employment increased by 13,300 people and part-time employment decreased by 12,400 people. The part-time share of employment remained at 30.3%, which was 1.5 percentage points lower than in March 2020.
- The September 2022 unemployment rate was 3.5%, unchanged from August.
- The participation rate was 66.6% in September 2022, unchanged from August.
- In September 2022, monthly hours worked fell slightly (-0.0%) compared to August 2022.

Wages

- The Wage Price Index rose 0.7% during the June quarter 2022 and 2.6% over the year.
- In seasonally adjusted terms, the through the year rise for the private sector index was 2.7%, while the public sector index rose 2.4% through the year.
- Growth in original terms was driven by Western Australia (+0.8%) and Queensland (+0.7%).
- Growth in original terms was driven by construction (+1.4%), mining (+0.9%), and electricity, gas, water and waste services (+0.9%).
- Accommodation and food services recorded the lowest quarterly rate of growth (+0.1%).
- The highest through the year growth was recorded in the construction industry at 3.4%. This was the highest annual rate of growth for the industry since December quarter 2012.

EC22-000116

Classification of Queensland (QLD) Titles Register

Key Issue:

S2D2P2

Concerns regarding QLD Treasury's classification have been raised in a public blog by a local economic consultant (see Appendix 1). An earlier article on this topic by the same author referenced the ABS including the ABS's published article on unit classifications (see Appendix 2).

Talking Points:

- The ABS is responsible for classifying entities created by Governments for the purposes of statistical reporting.
- The ABS classifies entities according to guidance provided by the International Monetary Fund.

S2D2P2

Facts and Figures:

- As outlined in international manuals, there are three questions to determine whether, and where, a unit is classified in Government Financial Statistics. S2D2P

S2D2P2

- Q1: Is the QLD Titles Registry a separate institutional unit?

General Manager responsible: Jacqui Jones

Division: Macroeconomic Statistics Division

Contact Officer: S22

Telephone: W S22 / M S22

EC22-000116

S2D2P2

- Q2: Is the Titles Registry under government control?

S2D2P2

- Q3: Is QLD Titles Registry a market or non-market producer?

S2D2P2

S2D2P2

S2D2P2

S2D2P2

General Manager responsible: Jacqui Jones

Division: Macroeconomic Statistics Division

Contact Officer: s22

Telephone: W s22 / M s22

EC22-000116

Background:

S2D2P2

S2D2P2

S2D2P2

S2D2P2

S2D2P2

- To date, there has been no media references to the ABS's treatment of the QLD Titles Registry. However, concerns have been expressed about QLD Treasury's classification of this unit as a private sector unit by a private economic consultant and these articles are shown in Appendices 1 and 2 below.

General Manager responsible: Jacqui Jones

Division: Macroeconomic Statistics Division

Contact Officer: s22

Telephone: W s22 / M s22

EC22-000116

Appendix 1:

This appendix contains a copy of the February 4, 2022, article written by Gene Tunny, an economic consultant trading as Adept Economics in her Queensland Economy Watch blog. There are no references to the ABS or our classification of QLD Titles Registry in [this article](#).

QLD Titles Trickery should be investigated in integrity inquiry

There is growing pressure for a wide-ranging inquiry into the Queensland Government's integrity, and, in my view, any such inquiry should explore the [fake privatisation of the Titles Registry](#) in mid-2021. This gave the Government political cover to take on billions in additional debt, while breaching fundamental principles of government budget reporting. The Titles Registry trickery raises big questions about the Government's public financial management and whether Queensland Treasury has been politicised. Is the state Treasury offering the frank and fearless advice it should?

What impact did it have on the state government budget and balance sheet?

Let's have a closer look at what happened with the Titles Registry. Recall the Titles Registry, previously legally part of the Department of Resources, was legally changed to a Pty Ltd company, owned by multiple investment funds of the Queensland Government, just prior to 30 June 2021. In the lead up to the legal manoeuvres, the Government had obtained a valuation for the Titles Registry from government-owned funds manager QIC of around \$8 billion.

The Queensland Government is now claiming the Titles Registry is a private company, although it ultimately owns it, and it is claiming the Titles Registry is no longer in the general government sector, for which budget aggregates are reported. The surplus of the Titles Registry, which is hundreds of millions of dollars annually (given annual revenue is around \$350 million and operational costs are likely only in the tens of millions) is earmarked to support the purposes of the Queensland Government investment funds which own it, such as the Debt Retirement, Housing Investment, Path to Treaty, and Carbon Reduction Funds. Of course, money is fungible, and the Titles Registry earnings are still supporting the Queensland Budget, because they alleviate the need for the money spent on these purposes coming out of Consolidated Revenue.

The beauty of the Titles Registry trickery, from the Government's perspective, is the fake improvement it allows the Government to claim on its balance sheet. The Titles Registry trickery allows the Government to pretend net debt and it appears gross debt, too, as discussed below, are lower than otherwise, giving the Government additional "fiscal space" so to speak. It is being used by the state government to pretend it has uncovered a hitherto untapped source of financing, providing new money for the government to spend without going further into debt, which is wrong, by the way.

In [2021-22 Budget Paper 2](#) (p. 69), the Government notes:

General Manager responsible: Jacqui Jones

Division: Macroeconomic Statistics Division

Contact Officer: s22

Telephone: W s22 / M s22

EC22-000116

General Government Sector net debt at 30 June 2021 is forecast to be nearly \$10 billion lower than anticipated at the time of the 2020–21 Queensland Budget. This is primarily due to faster than anticipated improvements in the domestic and national economies leading to a softer impact on gross borrowing requirements, and the contributed valuation for the Titles Registry, being greater than anticipated.

The Titles Registry had already been factored into the calculation of net debt in the 2020-21 Budget (published in December 2020), but only at a value of around \$4 billion, rather than the nearly \$8 billion the Government was now claiming in the 2021-22 Budget (published in June 2021).

Before proceeding, let’s consider exactly what net debt is supposed to represent. Net debt is essentially gross debt less liquid financial assets. This is how [Investopedia](#) defines it:

Net debt is a liquidity metric used to determine how well a company can pay all of its debts if they were due immediately. Net debt shows much debt a company has on its balance sheet compared to its liquid assets.

For the Queensland Government the major liquid asset is what is labelled “Investments, loans and placements”, and this is the major item which is subtracted from gross debt to determine net debt. This is largely Let’s now have a look at how the net debt estimates for 2020-21 have changed as the Government developed its Titles Registry deception over the last couple of years in Table 1. Incidentally, the Titles Registry had to become part of the Government’s Queensland Future Fund announced by previous Treasurer Jackie Trad in late 2019 (in the [Mid Year Fiscal and Economic Review](#)) because that was intended to be funded with \$5 billion of surplus funds set aside to meet the defined benefit superannuation liability. But that money turned out to be much less than expected. Indeed, in mid-2020, they thought they had only ended up with \$1 billion of surplus funds for the \$5 billion Future Fund. So to cover themselves politically, the Government had to get creative, and that’s when the fiendishly clever fake privatisation of the Titles Registry was thought up and revealed. It was first factored into official budget figures in the September 2020 [COVID-19 Fiscal and Economic Review](#)).

Table 1. Evolution of Queensland Government 2020-21 net debt estimate over budget statements, \$ million

	2020-21 (2019-20 Budget projection)	2020-21 (2019-20 MYFER projection)	2020-21 (C19FER projection)	2020-21 Budget	2020-21 Est. Actual
Borrowing with QTC	35,218	34,772	53,148	53,501	47,102
Leases & other similar arrangements	7,071	7,845	7,557	7,565	7,779
Securities and derivatives	122	121	198	198	198
Advances received	1,441	1,455	1,527	1,506	1,505

General Manager responsible: Jacqui Jones

Division: Macroeconomic Statistics Division

Contact Officer: s22

Telephone: W s22 / M s22

EC22-000116

Gross debt (for net debt calculation)	43,852	44,193	62,430	62,770	56,584
<i>less</i>					
Cash and deposits	489	438	1,019	1,005	951
Advances paid	629	620	1,415	1,415	1,357
Investment, loans and placements	30,429	30,523	34,407	34,851	38,466
Liquid assets (for net debt calculation)	31,547	31,581	36,841	37,271	40,774
Net debt (\$ million)	12,305	12,612	25,589	25,499	15,810

Source: Queensland Government Budget papers. Note tiny differences in the net debt figures compared with the reported figures is due to rounding. MYFER stands for Mid Year Fiscal and Economic Review, C19FER stands for COVID-19 Fiscal and Economic Review, and Est. is short for estimated.

From Table 1, we can see how incorporating the Titles Registry has obviously been a major part of investments, loans, and placements ending up nearly \$8 billion higher at the end of 30 June 2021 than originally projected at the end of 2019 (see the value in the final column of Table 1 compared with the value in column for the 2019-20 MYFER projection). The \$8 billion or so improvement cannot solely be due to the Titles Registry, and must reflect some other asset revaluations, too, for the following reason.

The Titles Registry has been used as a vehicle by the Government for borrowing an additional \$2.1 billion “off budget” so to speak, in that the amount does not show up in the borrowing line for the general government, although it would reduce the value of the Titles Registry which is carrying the debt (i.e. it would partly offset the \$8 billion valuation). Here is how the Queensland Audit Office in its [Establishing the Queensland Future Fund report](#) (p. 7) published in December 2021 described the manoeuvre:

On the same day the Queensland Titles Registry operations transferred to the Debt Retirement Fund, \$2.1 billion was borrowed. This occurred in a company within the Queensland Titles Registry structure to provide liquidity to the fund and support the state’s credit rating.

This was a very clever, though dubious, way to attempt to conceal an additional \$2.1 billion of government borrowings. Note that the Debt Retirement Fund is part of the Queensland Future Fund. It definitely appears that the state government has set this up to both facilitate its creative accounting and also to confuse the public.

General Manager responsible: Jacqui Jones

Division: Macroeconomic Statistics Division

Contact Officer: §22

Telephone: W §22 / M §22

EC22-000116

What's wrong with including the Titles Registry in investments, loans and placements?

There are at least two problems with the inclusion of the Titles Registry in investments, loans and placements.

First, as discussed in [my previous post](#), the Titles Registry valuation dubiously includes the capitalised value of a general government taxation power which could not possibly be sold (at least in the modern world).

Second, as also discussed in my previous post, the Titles Registry does not qualify as a liquid asset, given it is not something the Government would readily sell its shares in to others. It cannot be used to pretend the Government has a lower net debt than otherwise.

Incidentally, the fact equity in Government-owned corporations (GOCs) such as Energy Queensland is not liquid is the reason the \$22 billion the Queensland Government has of equity in "Investments in other public sector entities" is not figured in the net debt calculation. Why would equity in GOCs be excluded but the equity in the Titles Registry be included in the Government's estimation of its net debt? It does not make any sense.

In conclusion, the Titles Registry trickery should be investigated as part of any inquiry into the Queensland Government's integrity.

EC22-000116

Appendix 2:

This appendix contains an earlier article (from January 17, 2022) also written by Gene Tunny, in her Queensland Economy Watch blog. [This article](#) contains several references to the ABS (highlighted in this colour) including to an ABS published article on unit classifications.

Fake privatisation of Titles Registry helping QLD Gov't pretend it has debt management plan

This post is an early draft of an article I'm preparing for a public finance or public policy journal about the Queensland Government's accounting trickery regarding the Titles Registry last year. The state government has violated some well-established principles for government financial reporting and risks being called out by the ABS when it publishes its annual Government Finances Statistics report in April. The state government is defying logic by pretending the Titles Registry has a market value of nearly \$8 billion, even though a large part of that value relates to a general government taxation power the government couldn't possibly transfer, as comments at Estimates from Treasurer Cameron Dick confirmed. The state government has effectively capitalised the value of a general government taxation power as a financial asset on its balance sheet, something which it is not allowed to do, given that the offsetting liability to pay for future government services is not recognised on the balance sheet.

Introduction

In a remarkable feat of creative accounting, the government of the Australian state of Queensland has recorded a financial benefit from privatising its land titles registry, without actually privatising it. It is using a dubious and logically-flawed valuation of the registry of \$8 billion, compared with sale prices in the order of \$3 billion achieved in NSW and Victoria, to claim billions of dollars of additional financial assets which reduce Queensland's net debt. But the economic substance of the Titles Registry has remained the same, and the state government cannot legitimately count those additional assets. Indeed, the Queensland Government is in breach of the spirit and, in my view, the letter of well-established international principles for government financial accounting codified by the IMF and adopted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

How was this valuation reached?

The Queensland Treasurer Cameron Dick explained the Titles Registry valuation to the Budget Estimates committee on 16 July 2021 like this:

To give some context as to why our Titles Registry is so valuable, it is important to note that our registry turns over approximately \$350 million per year. This is higher than the revenue streams estimated by other jurisdictions which have privatised their registries. Because Queensland has retained the asset in public hands, we have included ad valorem fees in its valuation, which other states have not. Informed by several independent valuations and independent commercial advice, QIC has valued

General Manager responsible: Jacqui Jones

Division: Macroeconomic Statistics Division

Contact Officer: s22

Telephone: W s22 / M s22

EC22-000116

the registry on a multiple of 23 times earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation. That is quite a conservative multiple. Of the four titles registries that have traded in the last few years, only one traded at a lower earnings multiple, and that was the first one to be sold, when it was a novel asset in Australia. A concession period of 50 years was adopted, reflecting discussions with the Queensland Audit Office and agreed by the QIC steering committee. Having used a conservative earnings multiple and a 50-year horizon, QIC has arrived at the valuation of almost \$8 billion. (from p. 51 of the Hansard, emphasis added)

The huge logical flaws in the Queensland Government's accounting

Regardless of whether the 23x multiple is appropriate based on the discount rate and other assumptions, there is a huge logical flaw in the Titles Registry valuation which is clear from a close reading of what the Treasurer told Estimates. The Treasurer has basically admitted that, if the Titles Registry were privatised, the privatised entity could not charge ad valorem (i.e. according to value) fees (i.e. \$37 for each \$10,000 or part of \$10,000 over \$180,000 of consideration). This is because the ad valorem fees in question are characteristic of a general government taxation power, and the government would not allow a private monopoly to have this power. Ultimately, it means the Titles Registry could not be sold for nearly \$8 billion. So how does the Queensland Government now have a financial asset worth \$8 billion, which it is using to reduce its net debt, if it couldn't sell the Titles Registry for \$8 billion? It is a complete sham.

The large value of the Titles Office is essentially related to its ability to levy what is effectively a tax rather than a fee-for-service. The ability to generate future taxation revenues is treated as an asset on the government balance sheet. If governments were allowed to do this, then the future liabilities to deliver government services would have to be, too.

The Government has legally separated the Titles Registry, which records land transactions, from the general government Department of Resources, and made it a Pty Ltd company (i.e. to pretend it's a private entity outside of the general government or public non-financial corporations sectors), owned by various state government investment funds. The tricky financial engineering is well documented in the Queensland Audit Office's Establishing the Queensland Future Fund report published in early December 2021. In a telling passage of the report, on p. 7, the Queensland Audit Office observed:

While the indirect owners of the Queensland Titles Registry were all government entities as at 30 June 2021, there is no legislative protection under the Queensland Future Fund Act 2020 or the Queensland Future Fund (Titles Registry) Act 2021 to prevent some or all of the holdings in the Queensland Titles Registry from being sold to private entities.

I'm guessing the Government probably can't provide that legislative protection because then it would be an open-and-shut case on the nature of the Titles Registry: that it remains a general government entity, subject to government direction and with employees

General Manager responsible: Jacqui Jones

Division: Macroeconomic Statistics Division

Contact Officer: s22

Telephone: W s22 / M s22

EC22-000116

effectively remaining public servants, regardless of whatever legal status the Government attempts to give it. Indeed, the Titles Registry appears to be operating out of the same offices as it previously did, including offices where it's co-located with Resources department officers in the regions.

Violation of well-established principles for government financial reporting

The ABS made it clear in a note on ABS public sector unit classification decisions in early July, a few weeks after the Queensland Government released its 2021-22 Budget including the Title Registry change, that:

When classifying a unit for official statistics, the ABS looks beyond legal status and focuses on the economic substance behind the nature of an entity.

I have no idea whether the ABS was sending a message to the Queensland Government (and to other governments watching the Queensland Government's tricky play), but I hope the state government noticed it. It's possible the ABS could refuse to recognise the state government's hypothetical privatisation of the Titles Registry and, hence, won't recognise the billions of dollars of additional financial assets. We'll learn its decision next April when it publishes its annual Government Finance Statistics for the 2020-21 financial year. In my view, the ABS should recognise the Queensland Titles Registry is exercising a general government taxation power and hence it should remain as part of the general government sector.

The ABS is responsible for reporting Australia's government finance statistics on a basis which is compatible with the IMF Government Finance Statistics (GFS) standards. This is to ensure statistics are as accurate and reliable as possible. My feeling is that the Queensland Government's Titles Registry manoeuvre is contrary to the spirit, and probably the letter, of IMF rules. The Queensland Government is at risk of violating well-established IMF GFS rules, by not properly accounting for the scope of government activities, by pretending it has privatised an activity that it has not. After all, this is a government which opposes asset sales.

While I've been critical of some previous Queensland Government budgetary manoeuvres, such as the 2015-16 debt switch, at least they were accounted for correctly. We know something fishy is going on here, because the state government won't release full financial statements for the various funds which part own the Titles Registry (see InQld's report Show me the money: Auditor-General demands answers on future fund fate). This is disgraceful in its lack of transparency.

Conclusion

The fake privatisation of the Queensland Titles Registry is the most deceptive fiscal play I've seen from any government in Australia in recent decades, and we need to call it out so state governments don't think they can get away with worse.

General Manager responsible: Jacqui Jones

Division: Macroeconomic Statistics Division

Contact Officer: s22

Telephone: W s22 / M s22

EC22-000119

Regional CPIs

Key Issue

There has been interest in a regional CPI, including from Senator McDonald at Senate Estimates hearings in February 2022.

Talking Points

- The ABS has previously estimated that it would cost between \$3-\$5 million to produce a regional CPI. Given other priorities, such as producing the monthly CPI indicator, we are not able to produce a regional CPI at this time.
- To produce a robust regional CPI would require investment:
 - In additional data collection activities, particularly for locally produced services, such as childcare, restaurant meals, cleaning, house and car repair services;
 - An upgrade to our systems;
 - To research and generate accurate weights to underpin the 'basket' of goods and services for the index. This is a particular issue because the source for the new weights, the Household Expenditure Survey, is quite dated.
- The ABS has some data sources that could, with a smaller investment, be used to create regional indexes for some parts of the CPI including groceries, petrol and rents.

Facts and Figures

In response to a question from Senator McDonald in February 2022, ABS advised:

- It would cost approximately \$3 million for the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to produce a regional Consumer Price Index (CPI) (ie rest of state, for example a new Rest of NSW index to complement the existing Sydney Index). These indexes would directly measure many but not all prices outside capital cities and would assume some prices move in line with capital cities (for example we would assume the price of a fridge purchased in regional NSW changes in line with the price of a fridge purchased in Sydney).

Back Pocket Brief

Budget Estimates - November 2022

EC22-000119

- A full regional (rest of state) CPI, including direct measurement of prices for all goods and services in the CPI basket would be approximately \$5 million.
- It should be noted that these are estimates based on current costs. Further work would be required to refine these costings and to have them confirmed by the Department of Finance.

Released under FOI Act

EC22-000120

Measuring Labour Hire Employment

Key Issue

The ABS may be asked questions about how it measures labour hire employment and the extent to which different data sources provide a consistent picture.

Characteristics of Employment (a Labour Force supplementary topic) has been the longstanding data source. *Labour Account* and *Jobs in Australia* – two new ABS collections since 2017 - provide complementary but different insights, and this has led to some confusion, particularly for the Senate Select Committee on Job Security.

Talking Points

- ABS produces a broad range of information on labour hire employment, including new statistics over the past 5 years in the *Labour Account* and *Jobs in Australia*. We appreciate that it would be useful to provide more information on how this information fits together.
- Labour Hire employment is a particularly difficult working arrangement to measure, given it is a three-party relationship. It involves an employee and two businesses – the labour hire firm and the business where the work is being supplied to – and not just a simple employer-employee relationship. There are also different arrangements used across businesses and industries.
- We are looking to improve how we communicate and explain this information on our website during 2022, ahead of the next release of *Characteristics of Employment* in December 2022.
- The traditional source of information on labour hire as a working arrangement has been the annual *Characteristics of Employment* release. This provides information on whether employees were registered with a labour hire firm or an employment agency in their main job, and also whether they were paid by a labour hire firm or an employment agency.
- The quarterly *Labour Account* is the best source of industry-level information on employment in the Administrative and support services industry.

EC22-000120

- Detailed information on jobs specifically worked in the 4-digit industries of 'Labour supply services', and 'Employment placement and recruitment services', and their relative share of total jobs, is available from the annual *Jobs in Australia* release, which is based on annual tax data.

Facts and Figures

- *Characteristics of Employment* data – the longstanding data source – suggests labour hire employment in people's main job has had a relatively consistent share of the employment over time.
 - In August 2020, 3% of employees reported being registered with a labour hire firm or employment agency. Of these, 30% reported they were paid by a labour hire firm or employment agency, with the remaining 70% paid by other businesses (mainly businesses they were placed with).
 - ABS investigations are exploring whether this consistently low figure of 30% reflects people not understanding some of the complex payment arrangements associated with labour hire employment. Current analysis of tax data in the *Jobs In Australia* release is looking at the nature of payments in the 'labour supply services' industry.
- *Labour Account* and *Jobs in Australia* data suggests there is an increasing share of jobs in the industries where labour hire employment is concentrated.
 - Annual *Jobs in Australia* data is data for the entire financial year, based on annual personal income tax data. The most recent data is for 2018-19.
 - Current analysis of tax data in the *Jobs In Australia* release will produce quarterly point-in-time estimates of people with an active paid job in the 'Labour supply services' industry – something which has not previously been available.
- These differences may not indicate a coherence issue, given the extent of secondary jobs and also the shorter duration secondary jobs in those industries. However, ABS will undertake work to reconcile these different data, as the Senate Select Committee noted we should in its report, in Recommendation 2. ABS accepted this recommendation in the Australian Government response.

Background

- The final report of the Senate Select Committee on Job Security was released on 11 February 2022 and titled '[The job insecurity report](#)' (the first interim report focused on '[On-demand platform work in Australia](#)', the second interim report focused on '[Insecurity in publicly-funded jobs](#)' and the third interim report focused on '[Labour hire and contracting](#)').

EC22-000120

- The final report highlights some of the challenges the Committee faced in reconciling a broad range of ABS information. Recommendation 2 of the report makes explicit reference to this:

2.137 The committee recommends that the Australian Government provides funding and support to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to enable the ABS to reconcile information from the Characteristics of Employment, Labour Account, and Jobs in Australia releases in order to provide clearer and more coherent information on labour hire employment in Australia. The revised labour hire information should be published on the ABS website and include:

- *data reconciling the number of people who are registered with a labour hire firm or employment agency with industry level estimates of people employed directly by those businesses; and*
 - *data and graphs/tables showing changes in labour hire employment over time.*
- ABS are confident this recommendation can be addressed through better packaging, communicating and explaining our statistics, which Labour Statistics Branch will progress before the December 2022 release of the 2022 *Characteristics of Employment* data (which is collected in August and released in December).
 - We will engage with the Labour Statistics Advisory Group on our approach to measuring and describing forms of employment, to ensure we draw upon deep expert advice.
 - Through this engagement we will also address Recommendation 12 of the report, which ABS accepted in-principle in the Government response:

8.132 The committee recommends that the Australian Bureau of Statistics consults with relevant migrant and international student community groups, community leaders, unions, employer associations and experts to ensure that its methods for data collection in relation to the on-demand platform workforce include effective and appropriate approaches to collecting data from key worker cohorts.

- The Committee also made recommendations about the need to collect regular data on on-demand platform workers and work-related injuries for these workers in recommendations 1 (ABS accepted) and 2 (ABS accepted in-principle) of its first interim report.
 - The ABS has developed a new survey module on digital platform workers, which will be asked of outgoing respondents from the monthly Labour Force Survey from July 2022 onwards. Data from this new survey will be available in the second half of 2023.
 - Initial public consultation is being undertaken through the ABS Consultation Hub between 14 October 2022 and 30 November 2022.

EC22-000120

- The Committee noted concerns about the time taken by the ABS to respond to QoNs, with the key dates highlighted below:

10 November – Initial three QoNs from the ABS appearance of 4 November provided by the Committee to ABS (**due 24 November 2021**)

22 November – Responses to the three initial QoNs provided to the MO for noting

22 November – Written QoN received from Senator Sheldon (**originally due 6 December but extension provided to 17 December 2021, given data releases that week**)

17 December – Responses to the three initial QoNs tabled

12 January – Responses to the QoN from Senator Sheldon tabled with the Committee

Released under FOI Act

EC22-000121

RAPID Surveys

Key Issue:

The ABS conducted rapid surveys through the pandemic period, including the Household Impacts of COVID-19 Survey and the Business Conditions and Sentiments Survey.

These surveys complemented a range of other new products, including preliminary releases, to deliver more timely insights to inform Australia's pandemic response.

The Business Conditions and Sentiment Survey ceased after the June 2022.

A reduced household survey topic was introduced on the Monthly Population Survey from July 2022 focussed on COVID and cold/flu symptoms, COVID testing and employment and education impacts. Monthly reporting has been paused but can resume if required.

Talking Points:

- **Household Impacts of COVID-19**
 - The Household Impacts of COVID-19 survey was conducted regularly between April 2020 and June 2021 and then monthly between February and April 2022. It was collected by online forms and/or telephone interviews with a continuing panel of between 2,000 and 3,400 people. The survey provided insights into how the pandemic affected people's ability to work and take part in activities, attend schools and childcare and what kinds of precautions people are taking.
 - A reduced COVID and cold/flu topic was introduced on the Monthly Population Survey from July 2022 and results released monthly from July to September 2022. This survey provides information on COVID and cold/flu symptoms, COVID testing, and impacts of COVID and cold/flu on employment, school or childcare. Monthly reporting has now been paused but the collection remains active, and reporting can resume if required.

EC22-000121

- **Survey of Business Conditions & Sentiments**

- The voluntary Business Conditions and Sentiments survey was conducted monthly from March to December 2020, February to June 2021 and January to June 2022. It was collected by telephone interview from a random sample of approximately 2,000 businesses. The survey provided timely insights into the financial resilience of businesses, workforce absences and supply chain impacts, as well as near real-time information to understand the impacts of government support initiatives and decisions.

Released under FOI Act

EC22-000122

Labour Force - Barriers and Incentives

Key Issue

The ABS will receive an additional \$4 million over four years to increase the frequency and detail of data measuring barriers and incentives to labour force participation.

Talking Points

- This announcement was an outcome of the Jobs and Skills Summit held 1-2 September 2022.
- ABS has been measuring barriers and incentives to labour force participation for a long time – with a dedicated module collected with the Labour Force Survey every second year.
- The ABS will now measure and release data every year, with a partial data release to occur quarterly. In addition, from 2022-23, new questions have been added in relation to those with a disability or long-term illness.
- The latest published Barriers and Incentives data is for 2020-21, with initial quarterly data to be released in March 2023.

Facts and Figures

- Barriers and Incentives data tells us the primary reasons given by those who want to start a job, or work more hours, but could not do so. Data is available by a range of demographic variables, such as age, sex and geographic location but to date, not on those with a disability or long-term illness.
- In 2020-21, the most common reason given by women was 'caring for children' (a quarter of all women and more than half of mothers with children under 15 cited this reason). For men, it was long-term sickness, or disability (just over a third of men cited this reason).
- 2020-21 data was released on 4 November 2022. It was delayed due to competing COVID priorities, including new data and insights.
- The ABS Labour Force Survey sample does not support robust estimates for First Nations people. Therefore, the increased survey frequency and detail will not provide barriers and incentives to labour force participation for First Nations people.

EC22-000122

- The ABS is actively partnering across Government to identify administrative data that can provide insights into how specific cohorts of people (such as First Nations people) participate in the labour market and barriers they face.

Released under FOI Act

EC22-000123

Quality of Labour Force Statistics

Key Issue

Labour Force statistics are some of the most used statistics the ABS produces.

Talking Points

- ABS Labour Force statistics are collected via a household survey with 24,000 responding households.
- We strictly adhere to international concepts and standards to ensure global comparability – including the ‘one-hour rule’ for employment and the economic concept of unemployment
- Large seasonally adjusted movements in July-September 2014 were the result of implementing small changes to the survey design.
- Enhancements to the time series methodology were implemented in October 2014 data and have performed well since then.

Facts and Figures

- Labour Force statistics have traditionally headlined with trend series since they provide the best indication of the underlying behaviour of the labour market. Trend series were introduced in 1987 to provide a better means of determining change in the labour market over time, to reduce the month-to-month variability that has been an ever-present and unavoidable feature in seasonally adjusted data. These trend series were temporarily suspended from April 2020, and now that the labour market shocks in 2020 and 2021 have eased, trend was re-instated in labour force statistics with the September 2022 data, released on 20 October 2022.

Background

- Australia achieves a higher response rate than other countries (pre-COVID: 92%, now around 83% but we don't publish this number, only number of responding households and its currently 24,000) and large sample (pre-COVID: 25,000 households or 50,000 people, now: 24,000 or 48,000 people). Comparisons across countries has not been practical during COVID, given different countries have had to respond to data collection challenges in different ways.

EC22-000123

- Survey has been a world leader in moving to online response, with more than a third of people choosing to respond online, higher than other countries. We have innovated in our use of technology over the years, introducing telephone interviewing in 1996, computer assisted interviewing in 2004 and online self-response in 2013.
- Household visits and face to face interviews are critical to the collection of high-quality data. Through COVID we have effectively minimised impacts to Labour Force statistics through temporary method enhancements and reinstating field interviewing as soon as possible.
- We have learned from what happened in 2014. We regularly seek advice from the Labour Statistics Advisory Group (which meets 1-2 times per year) and our international peers.
- Volatility in data reflects (1) highly dynamic Australian labour market and (2) measuring relatively small month-to-month movements using a survey – which is why we focus on trend estimates. Volatility comes from a range of sources, particularly: (1) sample size, (2) rotating panel design (i.e. 1/8 of sample changes each month) and (3) different people responding and not responding each month.
- The 'one-hour rule' is used internationally and has always been used in Australia's Labour Force statistics. Only around 15,000 people out of around 13 million employed (or 0.1%) usually work one hour and only around one-third of them are underemployed. This hasn't changed much historically and we last produced an article on this in the March 2021 release.
- To produce estimates that reflect the labour market status of the Australian population aged 15 years and over (around 21 million people), population benchmarking is undertaken. Population benchmarking is essentially working out how many people in the population each survey respondent represents – on average it is designed to be around 339 people. Every 3 months the population benchmarks are updated with revised ABS Estimated Resident Population estimates, resulting in some very minor revisions.
- Content release schedule:
 1. Every month – generally around the third Thursday - headline measures of employment, hours worked, unemployment, unemployment rates and participation rates are released. Data in this release is available for Australia, the states and territories, for men and women, for various age groups.
 2. The following week we release more detailed data. For example - regional labour force measures, duration of unemployment and a range of labour force measures for detailed demographic characteristics.
 3. Every third month (Feb, May, Aug, Nov) we release information collected quarterly. For example - industry, occupation, whether people have leave entitlements, retrenchments, tenure.

EC22-000124

Preliminary estimates of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population (ERP)

Key Issue

Preliminary estimates of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population as at June 2021 were released on Wednesday 21 September 2022 and reported a 23.2% increase since June 2016.

Talking Points

- The estimates are based on the 2021 Census counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and are adjusted for net undercount as measured by the Post Enumeration Survey.
- Preliminary estimates are available by state and territory as well as age and sex.
- Final estimates will be released in August 2023 and will include finer geographic output (including SA2s, LGA, and Remoteness).
- The 23.2% increase is higher than the 5.5% increase for the non-Indigenous population over the same period.
- There have seen similar increases in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population between past Censuses, and they are partly explained by changing identification over time.

Facts and Figures

- There were 984,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia, or 3.8% of the total Australian population (as at 30 June 2021). This is an increase of 185,600 people (23.2%) since 30 June 2016.
- New South Wales had the largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population (339,500 people), followed by Queensland (273,200 people) and Western Australia (120,000 people).
- While Victoria showed the fastest growth in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between 2016 and 2021 (36.2%) it remained the jurisdiction with the smallest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (1.2%).

EC22-000124

- The Northern Territory has the highest proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people relative to its total population size (30.8%).
- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population has a younger age structure than the non-Indigenous population. One-third (33.1%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are aged under 15 years (compared with 17.9% of non-Indigenous people), and just 5.4% are aged 65 years and over (compared with 17.2% of the non-Indigenous population).

Preliminary estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, June 2021

	n.	% increase from June	
		2016	% of population
New South Wales	339,546	27.8	4.2
Victoria	78,698	36.2	1.2
Queensland	273,224	23.4	5.2
South Australia	52,083	23.3	2.9
Western Australia	120,037	19.4	4.4
Tasmania	33,894	18.8	6.0
Northern Territory	76,736	3.0	30.8
Australian Capital Territory	9,544	26.8	2.1
Australia(a)	984,002	23.2	3.8

a. Includes Other Territories

EC22-000126

COVID-19 related deaths

Key issues

The ABS has released monthly mortality data since June 2020 to help monitor deaths during the pandemic. There is a lot of interest in the timeliness of these statistics.

Deaths from COVID-19 vaccines are also of interest. ABS published information on these in its *Causes of Death, 2021* publication on 19 October.

Talking points

COVID-19 related deaths

- The ABS releases three types of reports to provide insights into mortality during the COVID-19 pandemic. These include:
 - a. COVID-19 mortality reports which focus on deaths from or with COVID-19. The reports provide key demographic breakdowns and information about associated causes of death including chronic illnesses. The ABS releases these reports within days of receiving the data.
 - b. Monthly Provisional Mortality Statistics reports which focus on changes in patterns of mortality (by all-causes and for specified leading causes of death) compared to historic averages. The ABS publishes these reports 2-3 months after deaths occur to ensure data are complete enough to support historical comparisons.
 - c. Excess Mortality reports which provide a more statistically advanced way of comparing actual numbers of deaths with expected counts. These provide a more complete picture of the pandemic as they account for deaths due to COVID-19, potentially misclassified or undiagnosed COVID-19 deaths, and deaths indirectly related to the pandemic (e.g. relating to social isolation or changed access to health care). The reports rely on high levels of data completeness.
- The delay of 2-3 months in reporting of provisional data is partly because death registration in Australia occurs after burial or cremation, delaying registration. About 95% of doctor certified deaths are registered and reported to the ABS within two months. We then need time to assign cause of death codes, quality assure data and compile reports.

General Manager Responsible: Michael Smedes

Division: Social Statistics Division

Contact Officer: Linda Fardell

Telephone: Work (02) 6252 6336/ Mobile s22

EC22-000126

- We code COVID-19 related deaths according to rules from the World Health Organization (WHO).
- The ABS also produces an annual Causes of Death publication. This is the most complete mortality dataset. It includes data from both registrations and the National Coronial Information System. It takes time to receive and process all the data so this publication usually comes out 9-10 months after the end of the reference period.

Facts and figures on COVID-19 vaccine related deaths

- There were 15 vaccine-related deaths in 2021. Thirteen of these were certified by a coroner. Two were certified by a doctor.
- Almost all the coroner certified deaths are still open cases (12 of 13). ABS may revise the information when more information is available.
- The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) reviews all deaths that are potentially related to COVID-19 vaccination. The TGA provides weekly updates on adverse consequences of vaccines including deaths. The scope and timing of the TGA investigations are different to the ABS' so there can be differences between ABS and TGA figures. The TGA had identified 14 deaths due to the vaccination as of 6 October 2022 (13 in 2021 and 1 in 2022).
- The ABS and TGA will continue to work together to ensure datasets remain as consistent as possible.

Facts and figures on COVID-19 deaths

Of the 9,428 deaths from COVID-19 that occurred by 31 August 2022 and were registered and received by ABS:

- 98 were due to long-term effects of COVID (e.g. long COVID-19)
- 5,300 were males and 4,128 were females.
- The highest number of COVID-19 deaths occurred among people aged 80-89 (3,504).
- Most deaths due to COVID-19 had other conditions listed on the death certificate (95%).

EC22-000126

There were a further 2,013 people who died of other causes (e.g. cancer) but COVID-19 contributed to their death.

These figures are preliminary as some deaths are currently unregistered and unreported. The shorter the lag between the reference period and publication, the more preliminary the figures.

The ABS will publish figures for COVID-19 deaths that occurred by 30 September on 27 October.

Released under FOI Act

EC22-000127

Capacity to Contribute

Key Issue

The ABS is providing data to support the Department of Education (DoE) as they implement a direct method for determining non-government school funding.

Talking Points

- In 2020, the Department's funding method changed from being based on the socio-economic status of an area, to using a direct measure of parental income for each school, based on administrative data relating to the parents of students. Full implementation of the direct measure commenced in 2022, after a transition period in 2020 and 2021.
- DoE manages the policy implementation and applies variations on the funding model based on a range of school-specific characteristics. ABS provides services to DoE to support the policy, including data supply, data integration, data access and advice regarding the statistical measures of parent income.
- The ABS also provides technical advice to DoE for their review process.

Facts and Figures

- Capacity to Contribute (CtC) links details of parents of students attending non-government schools with data from the Multi-Agency Data Integration Project (MADIP): tax and social security information. This allows for the construction of a direct measure of income, which is then used by DoE to inform base recurrent funding to non-government schools.
- The project has been ongoing since 2017 and ABS has an MOU with DoE in place until 2030 to deliver integrated data on an annual basis. The ABS also provides services to DoE to support their continued development of the CtC's direct measure of income and their review process.
- Protecting privacy and ensuring data security are at the core of how the ABS manages data and are critical in the success of the CtC project. Information is protected by the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* (Cth), the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and the [Australian Privacy Principles](#), and abides by the [High Level Principles for Data Integration Involving Commonwealth Data for Statistical and Research Purposes](#). Background

General Manager responsible: Michael Smedes

Division: Social Statistics Division

Other Contact: s22

Telephone s22 s22

EC22-000127

Background

- Before 2020, the CtC measure was determined using an area-based socio-economic status score (SES score). While the SES score was based on the best available data when it was implemented in 2001 (area-based Census data), and accurate in many cases, a review commissioned by the [National School Resourcing Board](#) showed that these scores overstated the SES of some schools and understated that of others.
- Introduced in 2020, the CTC Direct Measure of Income (DMI) informs the distribution of over \$170 billion in funding to non-government schools over ten years.
- The DMI is based on the median income of parents/guardians of students at a non-government school. Adjusted Taxable Income is used as the measure of income, and is consistent with other government policy for payments such as Family Tax Benefit and the Child Care Subsidy.
- CtC scores for 2022 are now available on DESE's website, and are based on data that ABS integrated and released to DoE in 2019, 2020 and 2021. Data for a small number of (small) schools was not released by ABS under the confidentiality provisions of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.
- Data integration for the 2023 CtC scores has occurred in 2022, with data to be released to DoE in late October 2022.
- To support a smooth transition to the DMI, in 2020 and 2021 schools' funding was based on either their 2011 Census SES score, their 2016 Census SES score or their DMI score - whichever was best for them financially. From 2022 schools will have their funding based on the new direct measure.
- ABS developed a Technical Framework for the CtC review process in 2020, to support DoE's review of a CtC score, if an approved authority believes the score does not accurately reflect the school community's circumstances. This framework is currently being updated to reflect increased administrative data availability.
- Continually improving the quality of data and methods is important for DoE and schools. To support DoE's continued development of the CtC direct measure of income, the ABS' services have comprised data linkage improvements, imputation for missing income, a review of the median as the statistical measure and adjusting income for family size.

General Manager responsible: Michael Smedes

Division: Social Statistics Division

Other Contact: s22

Telephone: s22 s22

Back Pocket Brief

Budget Estimates - November 2022

EC22-000127

Released under FOI Act

General Manager responsible: Michael Smedes

Division: Social Statistics Division

Other Contact: s22 [REDACTED]

Telephone: s22 [REDACTED] s22 [REDACTED]

EC22-000128

Intergenerational Health and Mental Health Study (IHMHS)

Key issue

The Intergenerational Health and Mental Health Study (the Intergenerational Study) is underway.

Talking points

- The Intergenerational Study is a \$90M investment by Government in health information. ABS is delivering it from 2020 to 2025.
- The Intergenerational Study covers a wide range of topics including mental health, nutrition, and biomedical information (see Attachment A).
- Surveying for the National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing is now complete.
- The National Health Survey started in February 2022 and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey started in August 2022. People who take part in these surveys are invited to voluntarily provide blood and/or urine samples which are tested for health indicators (e.g. cholesterol and kidney function).
- The ABS is working with reference groups to guide the development and implementation of the Intergenerational Study (see Attachments B and C for members).

Facts and figures

- The mental health study has two cohorts: one was run in the first half of 2021 and a second cohort finished at the end of October 2022. Together, the two cohorts for the mental health study cover nearly 16,000 people.
- The results from the combined cohorts will be published in October 2023. ABS published results from the first cohort (covering about 5,500 people) on 22 July 2022.
- The mental health study and the National Health Survey both include questions from the new ABS standard on sex, gender and sexual orientation. The Survey of

General Manager Responsible: Michael Smedes

Division: Social Statistics Division

Contact Officer: Linda Fardell

Telephone: Work (02) 6252 6336/ Mobile s22

Back Pocket Brief

Budget Estimates - November 2022

EC22-000128

Disability, Ageing and Carers (not part of the Intergenerational Study), which is currently underway, also include questions from the new standard.

- As part of the Intergenerational Study, people aged 18 years and over can choose to donate blood and urine samples for long-term storage in the Australian Health Biobank, managed by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). The samples will be used for research projects to improve the health and wellbeing of Australians. Samples will only be used for genomic research if the participant agrees. Participants can withdraw consent at any time.

Background

- Covering nearly 60,000 Australians, the Intergenerational Study is an investment in research that will underpin service delivery and planning, policy development and the evaluation of health policies and programs.
- The Intergenerational Study will cover mental health, health status, conditions, risk factors, nutrition, physical activity and biomedical health status for both the general population and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- We are seeking ethics approval for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander biomedical study. This will not include any storage of samples (i.e. there will not be an Indigenous biobank) based on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community feedback.
- The Study is made up of seven components:

Study component	Target sample size (people)	Status of survey
National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing	17,000(a)	Complete
National Health Survey	16,000	In train
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey	11,000	In train
National Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey	12,000	Starts Jan 2023
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey	4,000	Starts Jan 2023
National Health Measures Survey (blood and urine testing)	Voluntary	In train
National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Measures Survey (blood and urine testing)	Voluntary	In train

(a) Achieved size was about 15,800 people.

General Manager Responsible: Michael Smedes

Division: Social Statistics Division

Contact Officer: Linda Fardell

Telephone: Work (02) 6252 6336/ Mobile s22

EC22-000128

Attachment A – DETAILED TOPICS FOR INCLUSION

Released under FOI Act

General Manager Responsible: Michael Smedes

Division: Social Statistics Division

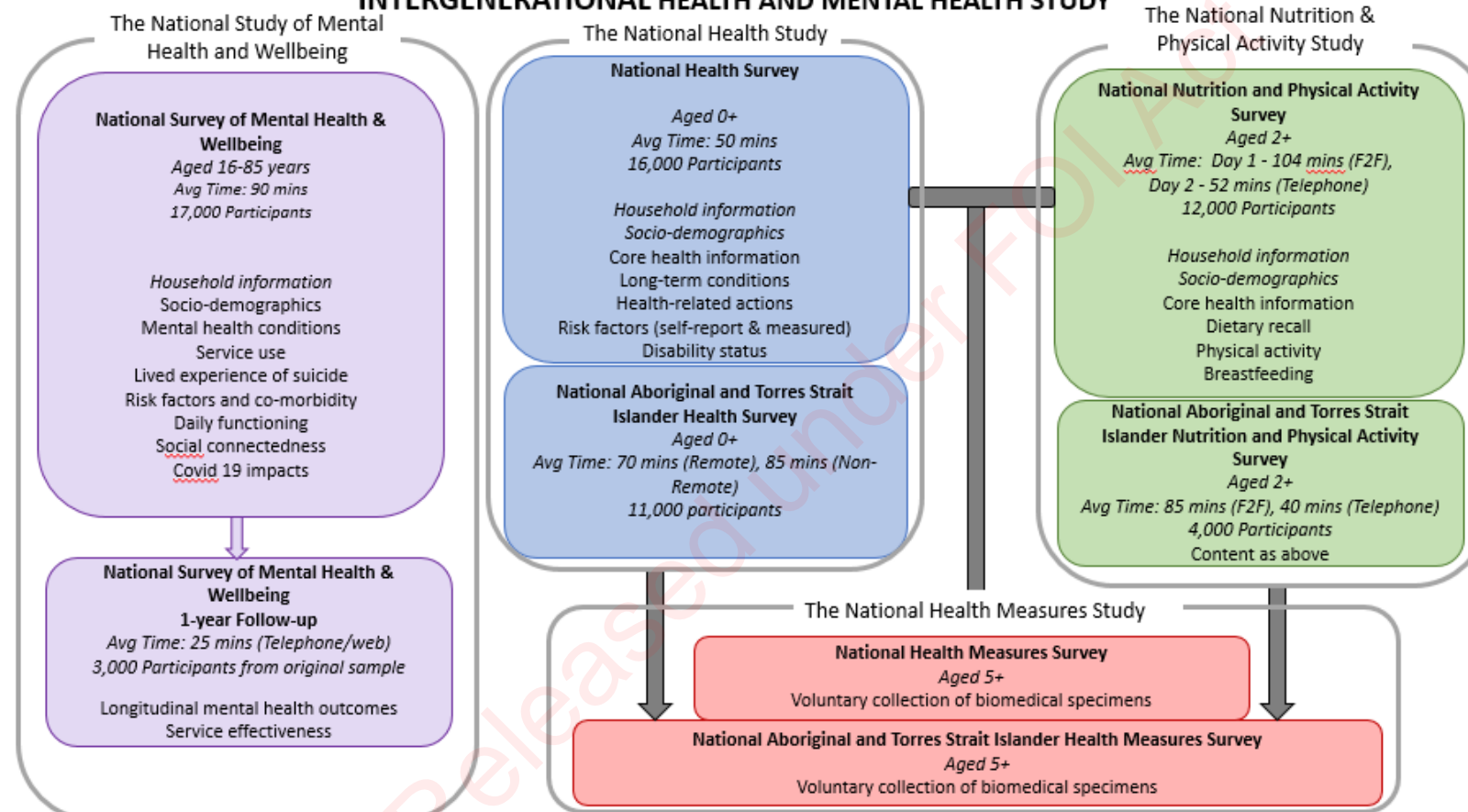
Contact Officer: Linda Fardell

Telephone: Work (02) 6252 6336/ Mobile s22

Budget Estimates - November 2022

EC22-000128

INTERGENERATIONAL HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH STUDY



All studies will also include analysis of linked data

General Manager Responsible: Michael Smedes

Division: Social Statistics Division

Contact Officer: Linda Fardell

Telephone: Work (02) 6252 6336/ Mobile s22

Released under FOI Act

General Manager Responsible: Michael Smedes

Division: Social Statistics Division

Contact Officer: Linda Fardell

Telephone: Work (02) 6252 6336/ Mobile s22

EC22-000128

Attachment B: National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing Reference Group

The Reference Group membership comprises:

- Ms Linda Fardell, Program Manager, Health and Disability Statistics, ABS [Chair]
- Professor Philip Burgess, University of Queensland
- Associate Professor Meredith Harris, University of Queensland
- Professor David Lawrence, University of Western Australia
- Professor Jane Pirkis, University of Melbourne
- Associate Professor Tim Slade, University of Sydney
- Professor Maree Teesson, University of Sydney
- Gavin Stewart, Principal, Applied Epidemiology
- Professor Nick Titov, Macquarie University (also MindSpot executive team)
- Professor Peter Butterworth, Australian National University
- Professor Meaghan O'Donnell, University of Melbourne
- Professor Graham Meadows, Monash University
- Professor Vera Morgan, The University of Western Australia
- Darren Jiggins, Consumer representative (Tasmania Based – Not for profit sector)
- Susan Adam, Carer representative (also Clinical Family Therapist)
- Jaelea Skehan, Lead - National Suicide Prevention Taskforce
- Associate Professor Grant Sara, Mental Health Principal Committee (also NSW Health)
- Ruth Fjeldsoe, Mental Health Principal Committee (also QLD Health)
- Shan Short, National Mental Health Commission
- Dr Sarah Hinde, a/g Assistant Secretary, Mental Health, Department of Health

Advisors or observers are invited as needed, including from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare and the Productivity Commission.

General Manager Responsible: Michael Smedes

Division: Social Statistics Division

Contact Officer: Linda Fardell

Telephone: Work (02) 6252 6336/ Mobile s22

EC22-000128

Attachment C: IHMHS Health Surveys Reference Group membership

- Michael Smedes, a/g General Manager, Social Statistics Division, ABS [Chair]
- Dr Andrew Boyden, Medical Advisor, General Practitioner, Remote Area Health Corps
- Professor Alex Brown, Program Leader, Aboriginal Health Equity Theme, SA Health and Medical Research Institute
- Dr Dawn Casey, Deputy CEO, National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)
- Dr Katina D'Onise, Public Health Physician. Director Prevention and Population Health, SA Health
- Professor Sharon Goldfeld, Director, Murdoch Children's Research Institute
- Ms Allyson Essex, Assistant Secretary, Health Economics and Modelling, Health
- Dr Robert Grenfell, Health Director, Health and Biosecurity Unit, CSIRO
- Dr Jessica Hartmann, Assistant Secretary, Policy Analysis and Evaluation, NIAA
- Dr Sarah Hinde, a/g Assistant Secretary, Mental Health, Department of Health
- Mr Richard Juckes, Health Group, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)
- Professor Amanda Lee, Professor in Public Health Policy, University of Queensland
- Ms Renaye Lucchese, Assistant Secretary, Diagnostic Imaging and Pathology, Health
- Dr Janine Mohamed, CEO, Lowitja Institute
- Ms Lara Purdy, Assistant Secretary, Health Protection Policy, Health
- Professor Jo Salmon, Co-Director, Institute of Physical Activity and Nutrition, Deakin University
- Professor Jonathan Shaw, Head of Clinical Diabetes and Epidemiology, Baker Heart and Diabetes Institute
- Ms Masha Somi, Assistant Secretary, Health and Medical Research Office, Health
- Dr Bernie Towler, Principal Medical Adviser, Health
- Ms Nicole Turner, Board Chair, Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA)
- Professor Terry Slevin, CEO, Public Health Association of Australia
- Ms Juanita Pettit, a/g Program Manager, Indigenous and Social Information, ABS
- Ms Linda Fardell, Program Manager, Health and Disability Statistics, ABS

General Manager Responsible: Michael Smedes

Division: Social Statistics Division

Contact Officer: Linda Fardell

Telephone: Work (02) 6252 6336/ Mobile s22

EC22-000135

ABS Corporate Statistics

Corporate Statistics - Budget, Staffing & ASL

Table 1 ABS Budget Position as at 2022-23 October Budget	2021-22 Revised Budget \$m	2022-23 New Budget \$m	2023-24 Forward Estimates \$m	2024-25 Forward Estimates \$m	2025-26 Forward Estimates \$m
Operating Appropriation EXCLUDING Census (a)	328.6	332.2	327.2	321.3	323.1
Operating Base	215.0	215.3	221.8	222.6	225.5
Council of Australian Governments (COAG)	21.1	5.8	7.6	9.4	13.4
Time Use Survey (TUS)	1.8	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1
COVID-19: Income and Housing	1.0	0.4	-	-	-
Mental Health Dashboard	0.5	-	-	-	-
Maintaining Australia's Essential Statistics	74.1	74.0	76.4	76.4	76.4
Big Data, Timely Business Insights - ICT Investment	4.9	5.4	-	-	-
Reducing Regulatory Burden on Business Reporting	0.2	-	-	-	-
Data Gaps - Industrial Relations Review Package	0.9	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.9
AgATTRACT ANZSCO - ABS Component	2.9	1.3	-	-	-
COVID-19 Vaccine Implementation and Rollout - Flow on Impact	0.4	-	-	-	-
ABS Asset Replacement Transition to Cloud	3.2	2.1	2.2	0.9	-
Digital Economy Strategy - data.gov.au	2.4	-	-	-	-
MoG S75 DTA data.gov.au transfer	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	-
Deregulation Agenda - Accounting Software ¹	-	5.1	3.4	2.0	-
Workforce Strategy - ANZSCO	-	7.2	7.2	6.1	3.1
Workforce Strategy - Regional Labour Market Data	-	1.1	1.0	0.6	0.6
Reclassification from Capital funding to Operating (NEW)	-	17.0	3.4	-	-
Barriers and Incentives measures (NEW)	-	0.8	1.2	0.7	1.2
WoG Election Commitment Savings (NEW)	-	(6.1)	-	-	-
WoG APS Reform Offsets (NEW)	-	(0.1)	(0.4)	(0.4)	-
Census (b)	250.9	36.4	37.8	54.4	105.9
Own Source Income (User Funding) (c)	62.4	70.3	62.2	40.2	40.2
Total Operating Funding (d = a+b+c)	641.8	438.9	427.2	415.9	469.3
Capital Appropriation (e)	22.1	18.6	16.7	16.5	16.1
DCB²	12.6	12.5	12.7	15.5	16.1
Equity Injections	9.5	6.2	4.0	1.0	-
Big Data, Timely Business Insights - ICT Investment	3.9	0.2	-	-	-
Leasehold Improvements - Equity	2.7	1.3	0.4	-	-
Digital Economy Strategy - data.gov.au	0.4	-	-	-	-
Deregulation Agenda - Accounting Software ¹	-	4.7	3.7	1.0	-
Census - Equity	2.5	-	-	-	-
Total Funding (f = d+e)	663.9	457.5	443.9	432.4	485.4
ASL Cap	3,174	2,678	2,658	2,662	2,876

- The figures for Deregulation Agenda - Accounting Software include funding for 2021-22 that will be appropriated in 2022-23 (\$1.335m Operating and \$0.523m Capital).
- DCB reflects the net effect of reclassifications from capital to operating.

Corporate Services Division
 DAS Responsible: Jenet Connell
 Mobile: s22

Date Cleared:
 Other Contact: Lane Masterton / Nick Stanton
 Mobile: s22 / s22

ABS Corporate Statistics

Expenditure

	1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021	1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022	1 July 2022 to 30 September 2022
	\$000	\$000	\$000
Accidental use of credit cards ¹	2	2	0.13
Consultants	5,985	4,026	842
Contracts for Service and Contractors	32,744	37,437	3,913
Information Technology	32,426	37,539	8,574
Domestic Travel	4,195	10,103	2,764
International Travel	48	169	163
Hospitality	36	63	38
Training	1,281	2,021	422

1. All accidental use of credit cards in the financial years 2020-21 and 2021-22 has been repaid to the ABS. Please note that for the period ended 30 September 2022, all but \$17.20 has been recovered.

ABS Corporate Statistics

Group Budget and Budget ASL

Statistical Services Group	1 Jul 2021 to 30 June 2022			1 Jul 2022 to 30 June 2023		
	ASL	Opex \$m	Capex \$m	ASL	Opex \$m	Capex \$m
Macroeconomic Statistics	250	26.6	0.1	241	27.9	-
Population, Labour, Industry & Location Statistics	446	49.3	-	413	46.2	-
Prices and Economic Statistics Futures	102	11.4	-	105	12.7	-
Social Statistics	238	28.7	-	239	31.8	-
Total	1,036	116.0	0.1	999	118.7	-

Census and Data Services Group *	1 Jul 2021 to 30 June 2022			1 Jul 2022 to 30 June 2023		
	ASL	Opex \$m	Capex \$m	ASL	Opex \$m	Capex \$m
Census	765	220.4	0.7	142	18.4	-
Data Strategy, Integration & Services	207	23.1	0.4	268	36.5	0.2
International Relations Unit	8	1.6	-	10	1.5	-
Methodology	113	14.1	-	123	15.3	-
National Data Acquisition (NDAD)	513	74.3	0.7	443	71.8	0.3
Total	1,606	333.5	1.8	985	143.4	0.6

Enterprise Services Group *	1 Jul 2021 to 30 June 2022			1 Jul 2022 to 30 June 2023		
	ASL	Opex \$m	Capex \$m	ASL	Opex \$m	Capex \$m
Corporate Services	206	58.0	15.4	196	51.8	0.4
Enterprise Strategy and Communication	120	17.3	-	127	16.8	-
Technology & Security	431	95.1	10.1	412	98.4	15.3
Total	757	170.4	25.5	735	166.9	15.8

*Includes Corporate Accounts

Note: Excludes staff on maternity leave, inoperative staff and staff in the Australian Statistician Cost Centre.

ABS Corporate Statistics

Staffing

	30 Jun 2021	30 Jun 2022	(YTD) 30 Sep 2022	% change (30 Jun 2022 – 30 Sep 2022)
ASL Cap	2,835	3,174	2,666	-16 %
ASL Actual	2,796	3,365	2,866	-15%
FTE (Office Based APS, EL & SES) ¹	3,071	2,898	2,860	-1%
Contractors	30	19	12	-36.8
ABS Interviewers	456	497	540	+8.7
SES	44.9	46.8	45.8	-2.1
% Aboriginal Torres Strait	1.7	1.4	1.4	0
% People with a Disability	2.5	2.6	2.7	+3.8
Gender X (number)	4	6	9	+50.0
% Female	52.8	52.6	52.4	-0.4
% Female SES	41.9	44.2	46.3	+4.8
% Non-ongoing	29	17.9	15.1	-15.6
% Part time	21.9	22.5	21.9	-2.7

Note¹ – Excludes ABS Interviewers, Census Field Officers and unpaid inoperative employees.

ABS Corporate Statistics

Actual ASL by Group and Division

Group/Division	30 June 2021	30 June 2022	(YTD) 30 Sep 2022	% change (30 Jun 2022 - 30 Sep 2022)
Statistical Services	950	1,018	1,059	4%
Macroeconomic Statistics	229	234	269	15%
Population, Labour, Industry & Location Statistics	375	437	445	2%
Prices and Economic Statistics Futures	94	101	108	7%
Social Statistics	253	246	238	-3%
Census and Data Services	1,086	1,574	1,019	-35%
Census	415	725	158	-78%
Data Strategy, Integration & Services	169	206	261	26%
International Relations Unit	11	8	9	11%
Methodology	101	120	132	10%
National Data Acquisition (NDAD)	391	515	459	-11%
Enterprise Services	731	743	757	2%
Enterprise Strategy and Communication	118	124	135	9%
Technology & Security	429	420	413	-2%
Corporate Services	184	199	209	5%

EC22-000135

ABS Staffing Actions

	30 June 2021	30 June 2022	30 Sep 2022 (YTD)
IVR number	s47F		
IVR cost			
VR number			
VR cost			
SES Incentive to Retire			
SES Incentive to Retire cost			
Dismissals			
Ongoing Commencements (Graduate intake)	44	98	-
Ongoing Commencements (Non-Graduate)	132	443	129

ABS Workforce Indicators

	30 June 2021	30 June 2022	30 Sep 2022 (YTD)
Unscheduled absence days per FTE	11.0	11.9	3.4 (13.6 annualised)
Ongoing Employee Voluntary Separation rate	5.8%	10.8%	3.2% (12.8% annualised)

EC22-000137

ABS Corporate Credit Cards

Key Points

- Staff are issued with both a physical Diners club and companion Citi Mastercard. The Diners club is used by staff for all travel related expenditure, while the Citi Mastercard is used for procurements under s47E of non-travel related expenditure.
- ABS credit cards are only used to pay for goods and services on behalf of the Commonwealth, in line with the Commonwealth Financial Framework and ABS internal policies.
- As at 30 September 2022, there were 1,522 cardholders with 3,044 cards issued. The standard card and transaction limit is s47E. Refer to Table 1 for all limits and the number of cards within each category.
- Where possible the ABS makes payments under s47E on credit card as per Resource Management Guide 416 – Facilitation of Supplier Payment.
- All credit cards are required to be acquitted by the s47E of each month, which is then required to be approved by a delegate by the s47E of the month.
- The ABS takes misuse of credit cards seriously and has controls in place to limit and monitor this, for example reducing which merchant codes that can be used and performing regular reviews of transactions.
- YTD 30 September 2022, there were 5 transactions with a total value of \$134.59 identified as accidental use. This represents 0.07% of total transactions. All but \$17.20 of these cases of accidental use have been repaid.
- In 2021-22 there were 42 transactions with a total value of \$1,679.83 identified as accidental use, this is 0.17% of total transactions. All cases of accidental use have been repaid. All cases were reported to the Audit and Risk Committee and included in the annual Compliance report.
- The ABS has nine Cab Charge accounts. These are used predominately to support temporary staff performing data collection services. These accounts have appropriate controls and reconciliations in place to ensure correct use.

General Manager responsible:

Division: Lane Masterton

Contact Officer: Nick Stanton

Telephone: W (02) 6252 6084/ Ms22

EC22-000137

Credit Card Usage

- Total spend on credit cards for 1 July 2022 to 30 September 2022 was \$2.56m. The top four areas of expenditure relate to travel (\$1.53m), Advertising of Employment Services (\$98k), Computer Equipment and Data Services (\$94k), and Postal Services (\$91k)
- In the Financial Year 2021-22, total spend on credit cards was \$9.0m. The top four areas of expenditure relate to travel (\$5.5m), Computer Equipment and Data Services (\$0.35m), Employment Services and training (\$0.31m), Professional and Business Services (\$0.44m), and Government Services (\$0.22m).

Credit Card Application Process

- Credit card applications require a business case, and applications must be approved by a delegate at EL2 or above.
- Staff are required to complete a mandatory e-learning module for the credit card policy prior to the card being issued.
- Prior to issuing a card, staff are required to sign a Credit Card Agreement, which acknowledges the card holders have read and understand the ABS' policies in relation to the use of Commonwealth Credit Cards.
- The Credit Card Agreement highlights that any accidental private expenditure must be repaid and is recoverable by the Commonwealth. Any deliberate misuse of a credit card is a crime, which is covered by the *Criminal Code Act 1995*.

Assurance Processes

- The credit card team undertakes fortnightly checks against Pay and Leave reports to ensure all ex-staff cards are cancelled. Cardholders that have had limited usage are contacted every six months to provide a justification to retain their card.
- A credit card limit and ability to withdraw cash review was undertaken in September 2022. These reviews are undertaken every six months. No staff are currently able to withdraw cash on their corporate credit card.
- If staff are on leave for a period in excess of three months, they must return their credit card with all expenditure acquitted and approved. For instances of long service leave, and secondments in excess of three months, cards are returned and held by the Credit Card team until staff return.

General Manager responsible:

Division: Lane Masterton

Contact Officer: Nick Stanton

Telephone: W (02) 6252 6084/ M [REDACTED] s22

EC22-000137

- If accidental use is identified, it is required to be repaid prior to the approval of the acquittal on the s47E of each month.
- The available Merchant Codes that can be used are limited to provide a first line of defence on credit card misuse.
- There are system controls that require staff to attach tax invoices for all Mastercard purchases above s47E GST inclusive. This also includes the need to explain instances of weekend taxi usage, hospitality spend and deviations from the WoAG travel arrangements when booking accommodation and hiring cars.
- The ABS uses an external provider (Concur Audit) to review 100% of ABS credit card transactions based on a predefined set of rules set by the ABS.
- The review function ensures that valid explanations have been provided by the cardholder and the correct receipts or tax invoices have been attached.
- Where accidental misuse has been identified, staff are provided advice and support as to why the transactions are in breach of ABS policies to limit the possibility of further misuse. Where there are instances of repeated accidental use, the credit card is cancelled.
- In April 2018, the ABS transitioned to the Uber for Business platform to help prevent accidental use of the corporate card by employees when undertaking personal rideshare. The app requires employees to acknowledge that the trip is for official business twice before confirming the booking.

General Manager responsible:

Division: Lane Masterton

Contact Officer: Nick Stanton

Telephone: W (02) 6252 6084/ M s22

EC22-000137

Table 1: Credit Card Transaction and Card Limits

Card limit	Single transaction limit	Accounts	
\$10,000	s47E	875	
\$15,000		592	
\$20,000		6	
\$25,000		3	
\$30,000		10	
\$40,000		9	
\$50,000		15	
\$60,000		2	
\$70,000		1	
\$75,000		1	
\$80,000		8	
Total			1,522

Relevant Resource Management Guide (RMG)

- RMG 416 Facilitating Supplier Payment Through Payment Card.



RMG-416-Facilitating Supplier Payment

- RMG 418 Payment terms for Australian Government Travel Arrangements – card services.



RMG-418 Payment terms for Australian

EC22-000138

Travel

Key points

- YTD 30 September 2022, the ABS has undertaken 15 international trips, totalling \$162k. Of these, 11 were DFAT funded at a cost of \$70k to support the statistical capability of NSO's in Timor-Leste, PNG and Indonesia. The 4 ABS Funded trips involved attending the International Census Forum in the United Kingdom, Co-chairing the WHO Annual Meeting in Geneva and attending OECD conferences in Washington and Paris.
- The ABS represents the Australian Government at international forums such as the United Nations Statistical Commission, the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, and the Global Conference on the G20 Data Gaps Initiative.
- Under the ABS' enabling legislation there is a requirement to develop and share knowledge about statistical best practice with other NSO's, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region.
- In support of this, the ABS undertakes regional statistical development work with countries in the Indo-Pacific region on behalf of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), strengthening ties and the statistical capability of our neighbours.
- DFAT funded aid program work generally accounts for around 60% of ABS' overseas trips each year.
- An International travel program is approved annually by the Executive Board to ensure that international engagement supports Government policy and furthers Australia's interests. Progress against that plan is reported to the Executive Board biannually.

EC22-000138

International Travel Expenses

- In 2019-20, the ABS spent \$1.2m on 192 international trips.
- In 2020-21, the ABS spent \$50k on international travel. Of this amount, \$13k related to assisting the Samoa National Statistical Organisation (NSO) organise a National Statistical Strategy workshop as part of the DFAT funded program. Other international travel expenses related to costs associated with two cancelled trips to PNG, with refunds on airfares still pending. The \$9k in international travel allowances relate to a DFAT funded trip to PNG which commenced in July 2021.
- In 2021-22, the ABS spent \$168k on international travel. Of that amount \$88k related to DFAT funded travel, with the ABS funded travel being for attendance at the Ottawa Group Meeting in Rome (\$27k), the Conference of European Statisticians and OECD-CSSP in Paris and Geneva (\$16k), visiting the Office of National Statistics in London (\$16k) and costs associated with flying the independent member of the Census Assurance Panel from Canada (\$21k).

	2019-20 \$	2020-21 \$	2021-22 \$	2022-23 ¹ \$
Overseas Travel Expenses	1,211,793	48,279	168,187	162,155
Airfares	604,398	7,365	67,622	80,762
Travel allowances	182,954	8,948	15,733	14,870
Other Expenses	39,970	25,529	40,818	10,743
Accommodation	384,471	6,437	44,014	55,780

¹ As at 30 September 2022.

Number of International Trips²

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23 ³
DFAT funded trips	143	0	9	11
ABS funded trips	49	0	5	4
Total Trips	192	0	14	15

² 1 trip = 1 traveller. ³ As at 30 September 2022.

EC22-000138

Domestic Travel

Key Points

- The work of the ABS requires a geographically dispersed footprint, with more than 50% of staff located outside of Canberra across 10 locations.
- However, ABS staff travel only where it is essential to the work program, and all travel requests must be approved by an appropriate delegate prior to travelling.
- All interstate staff travel by must be approved by an SES officer.
- For the YTD 30 September 2022, the Qantas/Virgin Australia split on domestic flights for the ABS are:
 - Qantas 76%
 - Virgin Australia 18%, and
 - Other 6%.
- The total value spent on domestic flights is \$516k:
 - Qantas \$394k
 - Virgin Australia \$95k, and
 - Other \$27k.

Qantas Chairman's Lounge and Virgin's The Club Membership

- At 30 September 2022 the Australian Statistician and three SES Band 3 were members of either the Qantas Chairman's Lounge or Virgin's The Club or both. The domestic airfare split between these four officers between Qantas and Virgin and Other was 94/4/2 during the YTD 30 September 2022.
- The membership of the Qantas Chairman's Lounge and Virgin's The Club are by invitation only at the discretion of the respective airlines' CEO to Departmental Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries whilst they remain in these positions.

Domestic Travel Expenses

- YTD 30 September 2022, the ABS has spent \$2.7m on domestic travel. Of this, \$1.4m was for data collection services.

EC22-000138

- In 2021-22, the ABS spent \$10.1m on domestic travel. Of this \$4.6m was for the 2021 Census and \$4.8m on data collection services.
- In 2020-21, the ABS spent \$4.2m on domestic travel. Of this, \$1.3m was for the 2021 Census and \$2.0m for data collection services.
- YTD 31 December 2021, 81% of domestic flights were booked online, with fee savings of approximately \$10k.
- During 2020-21, 98% of ABS domestic flights were booked online, with fee savings of approximately \$12k.

Domestic Travel Expenses

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23 ⁴
Domestic Fares	1,740,403	546,680	588,727	461,736
Domestic Travel Allowance and PDTA	1,137,515	464,801	707,619	176,786
Flight Club Membership	36,051	-	1,419	8,060
Other Domestic Travel Expenses	87,386	9,150	27,155	6,249
Taxi Charge - Domestic	478,171	81,591	89,873	45,125
Travel Booking Provider Fees	109,181	53,119	87,308	22,707
Domestic Travel - Accommodation	1,513,496	491,175	1,291,437	481,691
Car Hire - Domestic	177,819	84,009	465,840	190,524
NDAD Interviewer Fares, Travel allowance, Kms	2,942,063	2,463,402	6,852,717	1,370,962
Total Travel Costs	8,222,085	4,193,927	10,112,095	2,763,840
Census Interviewer Fares, Travel allowance, Kms	-	428,865	2,073,304	-
Census Staff Domestic travel expenses	-	863,037	2,558,779	83,758
Total Census Travel Costs		1,291,902	4,632,083	83,758

⁴ As at 30 September 2022.

EC22-000138

Domestic Business Class Travel

- In the first quarter of 2022-23 the ABS has spent \$20k on Domestic Business Class travel.

Business Class Travel Spend July - Sept 22								
	Adelaide	Brisbane	Canberra	Hobart	Melbourne	Perth	Sydney	Total
Adelaide			1,776		100			1,876
Canberra	3,501			1,070		2,261	867	7,700
Melbourne	615			277		3,975	516	5,383
Perth			570					570
Sydney					1,129	2,813		3,942
Wagga Wagga		568						568
Total	4,116	568	2,345	1,347	1,229	9,050	1,383	20,038

Business Class Travel Number of Trips July - Sept 22								
	Adelaide	Brisbane	Canberra	Hobart	Melbourne	Perth	Sydney	Total
Adelaide			2		1			3
Canberra	3			1		1	1	6
Melbourne	1			1		3	1	6
Perth			2					2
Sydney					3	1		4
Wagga Wagga		1						1
Total	4	1	4	2	4	5	2	22

- In 2021-22 the ABS spent \$61,026 on Domestic Business Class travel. 81 Domestic Business Class trips were undertaken in 2021-22.

Travel Policy

- ABS employees undertaking official travel on behalf of the ABS are required to comply with the Whole of Government and ABS travel policies.
- ABS staff travel only where it is essential to the work program, and all travel requests must be approved by a delegate prior to the travel being undertaken.
- When booking flights for domestic air travel, the ABS encourages staff to book travel early to maximise savings.
- In determining value for money, officials must also have regard to the lowest practical fare available on the day the travel is booked. This relates to all flights within a 60-minute window before and a 30-minute window after the flight departure time which meets the travellers' business requirements.

EC22-000138

Relevant Resource Management Guide (RMG)

- RMG 404 Official Domestic Travel – Use of the lowest practical fare.



RMG-404 Official
Domestic Travel – Us

- RMG 405 Official International Travel – Use of the best fare of the day.



RMG-405 Official
International Travel

Released under FOI Act

EC22-000154

Monthly CPI

Key Issue

The ABS has commenced releasing the new monthly CPI publication. The first publication was released on Wednesday, 26 October 2022 and included monthly data from 2018 through to September 2022.

Talking Points

- A monthly CPI indicator will support decisions makers, including the Reserve Bank of Australia, to manage the economy during a period of higher inflation.
- The quarterly CPI will remain Australia's key measure of inflation.
- Research undertaken by the ABS, and presented publicly in an information paper published on 16 August 2022, showed that the new monthly CPI indicator provides a timely indicator of inflation in Australia.
- The monthly CPI indicator can be considered a partial measure of the quarterly CPI as not everything included in the CPI basket will be measured monthly.
- Users, while acknowledging the limitations of the new indicator, have responded very positively to having a timelier read on inflation.
- Over time, the ABS intends to expand the coverage of what is measured monthly where possible. For instance, we will make further use of administrative data and web-scraped data, where possible, to keep data collection costs low. These changes will be implemented in both the quarterly CPI and monthly CPI indicator.
- There are constraints, however, in our current systems that will limit the capacity to expand the coverage of what is measured on a monthly basis and the amount of detailed information the ABS can publish each month.

EC22-000154

Facts and Figures

- The CPI has, to date, been published once every three months.
- On 30 March 2022, the ABS announced that it was examining the feasibility of producing a monthly CPI that would include the most significant items in the CPI 'basket'.
- On 16 August 2022, the ABS published its research and methodology in an information paper. The paper included data showing the annual movements for the monthly CPI indicator were 5.5 per cent in April, 6.2 per cent in May and 6.8 per cent in June. This compared to 6.1 per cent for the June quarter CPI.
- The information paper was open for public consultation and feedback until 13 September 2022. The ABS consulted with the Reserve Bank of Australia; Commonwealth, State and Territory treasuries; Department of Social Services; International Monetary Fund; and market economists. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Users noted the limitations of the monthly indicator, as outlined by the ABS in the information paper, but did not identify any additional concerns.
- On 29 September, the ABS released additional monthly CPI indicator data was released. The annual movements for the indicator were 6.8 per cent in June, 7.0 per cent in July and 6.8 per cent in August.

Background

- Until recently, the costs to produce a monthly CPI have been prohibitive. The use of new data sources to produce the CPI have reduced data collection costs, enabling the possibility of producing a more frequent measure of inflation. In particular, the use of scanner data and web-scraping (automated) data collection techniques provides high frequency data at a lower cost.
- The monthly CPI indicator will provide a timelier indicator of inflation using the data collected for the quarterly CPI. Each month will include updated prices for between 62 and 73% of the weight of the quarterly CPI basket.
- There will be no changes to the quarterly CPI outputs or release schedule.
- The monthly CPI indicator may be revised. As such, it is unlikely to be suitable for use for indexation purposes in contracts or policies.
- Most advanced countries publish a monthly CPI in line with the International Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standards. Australia is one of only two OECD economies (the other is New Zealand), and the only G20 country, that does not produce a monthly CPI.

EC22-000156

TableBuilder recent changes and issues

Key Issue

- The ABS updated the statistical tool TableBuilder on Wednesday 21 September to strengthen its security.
- The ABS released 2021 Census first release data into TableBuilder at the same time, and second release data on Wednesday 12 October.

Talking Points

- The ABS regularly reviews its security in an ever-evolving cyber environment to ensure the best safeguards are maintained for the data we hold.
- In February 2022, ABS IT Security commenced a security assessment of TableBuilder to support system updates and prepare for the release of 2021 Census data into TableBuilder.
- Penetration testing and risk analysis by ABS IT Security, conducted in May 2022 as part of this assessment, identified potential risks for TableBuilder.
- In response, the ABS delayed the release of 2021 Census data into TableBuilder and made immediate modifications to TableBuilder, including to user registration requirements, to strengthen security and ensure continued protection of ABS data.
- In the September update to TableBuilder, improved security measures mean there is slightly less functionality than in previous versions.
- Users can access the same data as before using a different process. Users submit a table request which is returned to their session when it is ready to be downloaded, rather than having tables of data returned on screen. This process is now shown take less than a minute for small tables, several minutes for large tables and an hour or longer for very large tables.
- All 2021 Census first and second release datasets are now available for free in TableBuilder. User feedback has been overwhelmingly positive since the data became available.

General Manager Responsible: Marcel van Kints

Division: Data Strategy, Integration and Services

Contact Officer: s22

Telephone: Work s22 / Mobile s22

EC22-000156

Facts and Figures

- ABS TableBuilder is a sophisticated statistical tool that allows users to construct customised data tables, while simultaneously preserving the privacy of individuals and households.
- TableBuilder users create thousands of tables yearly from 165 available datasets. In the coming months, ABS plans to add more datasets including labour, health and industry statistics.
- TableBuilder was released in 2009 and has more than 2,000 registered user organisations in many countries including government, universities, and private companies.
- The September update to TableBuilder addresses the immediate security vulnerabilities and the ABS will continue to work with the system vendor to further strengthen its security.

Background

- The user experience and strong security position of all other ABS products, services and systems has not been affected by this update.
- Ensuring free public access to Census data in TableBuilder helps support the Australian Data Strategy theme of 'enabling data use'.
- A privacy impact assessment on the modified version of TableBuilder was published on the ABS website on Monday 19 September.
- ABS contacted affected users and key stakeholders to alert them to the changes and provide guidance on how to find further information or access support. Incoming feedback continues to be monitored closely.

General Manager Responsible: Marcel van Kints

Division: Data Strategy, Integration and Services

Contact Officer: s22

Telephone: Work s22 / Mobile s22

EC22-000157

Bullshift training

Key Issue

ABS have entered into two contracts with The BullShift Company to deliver leadership training to ABS Senior Executive and Executive Level Staff. The total financial commitment over the period of August 2021 to June 2023 across these two contracts is \$616,406.00 (GST incl):

- **Total staff** – SES, EL2s and EL1 = **878**
- **Average cost** per staff member = **\$702.00**

Talking Points

- The BullShift Company provide leadership training with a focus on enhancing internal and external collaboration. BullShift are a Perth based organisation that provide training to a range of Commonwealth and State Government agencies and private sector organisations.
- The ABS entered into an agreement with BullShift to provide training to ABS **SES staff (48 staff)** in August 2021. The value of this contract was \$71,500 (GST incl).
- 48 live one-hour webinars were delivered to ABS SES as part of this program. These webinars were supported by a library of interactive online learning materials.
- Following the successful completion of the SES program, ABS entered into an additional contract with BullShift to deliver training to **EL2 staff (217 staff)** and **EL staff (613 staff)**. The value of this contract is \$544,906.00 (GST incl).
- 192 live webinars will be delivered to EL2 staff under this contract and all EL2 and EL1 staff will be provided access to the BullShift interactive online learning materials.
- ABS collects feedback from participants on the effectiveness of leadership training. Staff who have completed the BullShift program have found it useful in providing them with a series of habits and behaviours aimed at improving their effectiveness as leaders and in enhancing their communication and engagement skills.

General Manager Responsible: Lane Masterton

Division: CSD

Contact Officer:

Telephone: Work (02) 6252 5040/ Mobile s22

EC22-000179

Procurement

Facts and Figures

- Table 1: Contracts awarded over \$10k excluding office leases.

Contracts awarded over \$10,000.00		
Financial Year	Number	Value (m)
2022-23 ¹	57	\$18.0
2021-22	254	\$81.2
2020-21	277	\$103.1
2019-20	352	\$131.9
2018-19	336	\$109.0
2017-18	408	\$157.1

Source: AusTender

- 1 July – 30 September 2022

- A list of the top 10 current contracts by value YTD 30 September 2022, (excluding office leases) is at Attachment A.

Consultancies

- There are 16 current consultancy contracts (over \$10k) reported on AusTender for a total contract value of \$3.2 million, as at 30 September 2022.
- The ABS use consultants where specialist internal skills and expertise are unavailable, and engagement of a consultant can only be approved by an SES officer.
- Table 2: Consultancy Contracts from 2018-19 to 2022-23

New consultancy contracts		
Financial Year	Number	Contract Value (\$m)
2022-23 ¹	3	\$0.1
2021-22	27	\$2.7
2020-21 ²	21	\$5.9
2019-20 ³	41	\$5.8
2018-19 ⁴	40	\$6.0

Source: AusTender

- 1 July - 30 September 2022
- 2020-21 includes 2021 Census advertising campaign strategies \$3.6m
- 2019-20 includes Technical/strategic support ABS review (Boston Consulting) \$900k, SBTP closure project \$443k.
- 2018-19 costs include SBTP \$2.7m and corporate costing framework \$1.0m

- A list of consultancy contracts with a contract value of \$10,000 and above on 30 September 2022 is at Attachment B.

Finance and Procurement/Corporate Services Division

A/g DAS Responsible: Lane Masterton

Mobile: s22

Date Cleared:

Other Contact: Nick Stanton

Mobile: s22

Contractors

- Table 3: Number of Contractors (Labour Hire) engaged:

As at	Number of Contractors	Total Contract Value
30 Sep 2022	13	\$4,011,122.00
30 June 2022	19	\$5,186,338.00
30 June 2021	36	\$11,641,875.00
30 June 2020	50	\$17,377,793.00
30 June 2019	95	\$35,026,037.00

Source: AusTender

- The ABS use contractors to meet temporary increases in workloads to help deliverables.
- Due to the Census and Statistics Act 1905 requiring statistical activities to be supported by ABS employees, contractors are generally only used to support ICT and corporate functions.

Big 4

- The ABS has awarded a total of 20 contracts over \$10k to Deloitte, EY, KPMG and PricewaterhouseCoopers, from 1 July 2019 to 30 September 2022.
- The value of these contracts is \$35.2 million and represents 9.7% of the value of all contracts awarded during this period \$361.86 million excluding leases. A large part of this \$35.2 million is to support the development of digital form for the Census.
- Table 4: Big 4 summary of contracts over \$10k – 1 July 2019 to 30 September 2022

Organisation	Number of contracts	Total Contract Value
Deloitte	2	\$266,114
Ernst & Young	3	\$108,975
KPMG	8	\$383,860
PwC	7	\$34,460,802

Source: AusTender

- A list of contracts awarded to the Big 4 from 1 July 2019 to 30 September 2022 is at [Attachment C](#).

Procurement

Attachment A: Top 10 ABS Contracts by value (excluding office leases) entered in the 2022-23 financial year on 30 September 2022

Title	Supplier Name	AusTender Category	Start Date	End Date	Value \$
Microsoft VSA5 licences	Data#3 Limited	Software	01-Jul-22	30-Jun-25	8,892,000.00
Web App Accounting software	Accenture Australia Pty Ltd	Software	25-Jul-22	30-Jun-23	3,567,608.00
ICT Services	North Security.Digital Pty Ltd	Business administration services	29-Aug-22	28-Aug-25	616,600.00
ICT Services	Cyconsol Pty Ltd	Business administration services	30-Aug-22	29-Aug-25	516,600.00
ICT Services	CyberCX Pty Ltd	Business administration services	01-Sep-22	31-Aug-25	516,600.00
ICT Professional Services	Amazon Web Services Australia Pty Ltd	Computer services	12-Sep-22	11-Sep-23	340,806.00
ICT Services	PCG Cyber Pty Ltd	Business administration services	29-Aug-22	28-Aug-25	316,600.00
Architecture as a Service	Design And Execution Pty Ltd & White Thistle Consulting Pty trading as Architect Associates	Software maintenance and support	08-Sep-22	30-Jun-23	300,000.00
Architect as a service	The Architecture Practice Pty Ltd	Software maintenance and support	08-Sep-22	30-Jun-23	300,000.00
ICT Services	Ionize Pty Ltd	Business administration services	29-Aug-22	28-Aug-25	266,600.00

Branch/Division: FPB Corporate Services Division
 DAS Responsible: Jenet Connell
 Mobile: s22

Date Cleared:

Other Contact: Nick Stanton
 Mobile: s22

Attachment B: Consultancy Contracts (\$10,000 and over) active as of 30 September 2022

Supplier Name	AusTender Category	Procurement Method	Consultancy Reason(s)	Agency ID	Start Date	End Date	Value \$
Ernst and Young	Internal audits	Open tender	Need for independent research or assessment	ABS2019.199	27-Jun-19	26-Jun-24	1,346,000.00
Queensland University of Technology	Research programs	Limited tender	Need for specialised or professional skills	ABS2020.325	16-Nov-20	15-Nov-23	414,480.00
Portable Australia Pty Ltd	Business intelligence consulting services	Open tender	Need for specialised or professional skills	ABS2022.153	14-Apr-22	28-Feb-23	333,107.00
Oxycon Pty Ltd	Information technology consultation services	Open tender	Need for specialised or professional skills	ABS2021.316	18-Jan-22	30-Jun-23	250,000.00
DBM Consultants Pty Ltd	Market research	Open tender	Need for independent research or assessment	ABS2022.168	01-Jun-22	30-Sep-22	179,956.00
Whereto Research Based Consulting Pty Ltd	Market research	Open tender	Need for specialised or professional skills	ABS2022.263	21-Jun-22	28-Feb-23	174,350.00
The Social Research Centre Pty Ltd	Market research	Open tender	Need for specialised or professional skills	ABS2022.217	21-Jun-22	28-Feb-23	168,740.00
Maddocks	Risk management consultation services	Open tender	Need for specialised or professional skills	ABS2022.149	05-Jul-22	31-Mar-23	59,863.00
Burbangana Group Pty Ltd	Management advisory services	Limited tender	Need for specialised or professional skills	ABS2022.139	27-Jun-22	16-Dec-22	57,361.00
3DR Pty Ltd	Management advisory services	Limited tender	Skills currently unavailable within agency	ABS2018.291	19-Jun-18	30-Jun-23	50,000.00
Reason Group Pty Ltd	Strategic planning consultation services	Limited tender	Need for specialised or professional skills	ABS2022.078	15-Mar-22	31-Dec-22	40,000.00
Central Bureau of Statistics	Information services	Limited tender	Need for specialised or professional skills	ABS2022.148	20-Apr-22	31-Dec-23	38,000.00
MinterEllison	Risk management consultation services	Open tender	Need for independent research or assessment	ABS2022.160	01-Jul-22	09-Dec-22	36,300.00
Agilient Pty Limited	Information technology consultation services	Limited tender	Need for specialised or professional skills	ABS2022.113	01-Apr-22	30-Sep-22	35,640.00
The Trustee for the Jones Family Trust	Business intelligence consulting services	Limited tender	Need for specialised or professional skills	ABS2019.202	05-Jul-19	02-Dec-22	28,500.00
Dr Peter Stewart	Medical science research and experimentation	Limited tender	Skills currently unavailable within agency	ABS2022.194	07-Jul-22	30-Jun-23	10,000.00
Total							3,222,297.00

Procurement

Attachment C: Contracts awarded Deloitte, Ernst & Young, KPMG and PricewaterhouseCoopers - 1 July 2019 to 30 September 2022

Deloitte

Description	AusTender CN	Agency Ref ID	Start Date	End Date	Value \$
Consultancy Services	CN3621077	ABS2019.224	31-Jul-19	30-Jun-21	191,314.00
ICT Services	CN3913638	ABS2022.224	30-Jun-22	29-Jun-23	74,800.00
Total					266,114.00

Ernst & Young

Description	AusTender CN	Agency Ref ID	Start Date	End Date	Value \$
ICT Professional Services	CN3758315	ABS2021.091	26-Mar-21	30-Jun-21	44,000.00
ICT Services	CN3683958	ABS2020.169	25-May-20	30-Jun-20	25,000.00
Consultancy services	CN3693307	ABS2020.244	10-Jun-20	10-Jul-20	39,975.00
Total					108,975.00

KPMG

Description	AusTender CN	Agency Ref ID	Start Date	End Date	Value \$
Impairment services with KMPG	CN3651425	ABS2019.582	07-Jan-20	30-Jun-20	44,000.00
Software	CN3734330	ABS2020.467	01-Feb-21	31-Jan-24	71,280.00
Accounting services	CN3739229	ABS2020.418	18-Dec-20	17-Dec-23	82,500.00
Accounting services	CN3747325	ABS2021.018	08-Feb-21	30-Jun-21	38,500.00
Accounting services	CN3639529	ABS2019.532	31-Oct-19	30-Jun-20	27,500.00
Financial Accounting Advisory Services	CN3829642	ABS2021.606	22-Nov-21	31-Mar-22	28,380.00
Impairment of Assets Review	CN3849243	ABS2022.002	01-Apr-22	30-Jun-22	40,000.00
Software Licenses	CN3884773	ABS2022.144	01-Jul-22	30-Jun-25	29,700.00
Total					361,860.00

Date Cleared:

Branch/Division: FPB Corporate Services Division

DAS Responsible: Jenet Connell

Mobile: s22

Other Contact: Nick Stanton

Mobile: s22

PWC

Description	AusTender CN	Agency Ref ID	Start Date	End Date	Value \$
Accounting Services	CN3650040	ABS2019.578	25-Nov-19	25-Feb-20	165,000.00
Accounting services	CN3770153	ABS2021.168	12-May-21	30-Jun-22	165,000.00
Order 2: 2021 Census Digital Service	CN3639151	ABS2018.350.002	15-Oct-19	31-Mar-21	24,958,350.00
Order 3: 2021 Census Digital Service	CN3617307	ABS2018.350.003	31-Jul-19	03-Dec-19	221,000.00
Order 4: 2021 Census Digital Service	CN3768434	ABS2018.350.004	01-Apr-21	31-Jan-22	7,191,985.00
ICT Services	CN3658556	ABS2019.558	03-Feb-20	31-Mar-21	1,606,636.00
ICT Professional Services	CN3860899	ABS2022.001	22-Mar-22	30-Jun-22	152,831.25
Total					34,460,802.25

Released under FOIA

EC22-000180

Gifts and Benefits

Key Issue

APSC guidance requires Commonwealth entities to publish quarterly on their website a register of all gifts and benefits received by the Agency Head with a value of more than AUD\$100.00 (GST exclusive). The ABS has extended this to include ABS Senior Executive Staff.

Facts and Figures

- The ABS gifts and benefits register was last updated on the ABS website on 29 July 2022.
- It is ABS policy that staff must not accept gifts or benefits in the course of their work duties which might reasonably be seen to compromise their integrity.
- Staff are required to report the acceptance of any gift or benefit valued over AUD\$100.00 (GST exclusive) within 28 days, through an internal Gifts and Benefits Register.
- The table below provides an overview of Gifts/Benefits reported by all ABS staff (not just SES) for the past 5 years.

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Reportable Value of Gifts/Benefits AUD\$	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00
No of Gifts/Benefits	20	11	7*	6	6
Total Value	\$1,722.00	\$3,917.00	nil*	\$795.00	\$1,291.00

* Qantas Club Chairman's Lounge Membership, Virgin Australia's The Club Membership & Virgin Australia Lounge Membership – Invitations received by Australian Statistician and Deputy Australian Statisticians. Monetary value is unknown – providers do not advise the ABS of the cost of memberships.

- A list of Gifts and Benefits reported for all ABS staff 2022 year to date is located at [Attachment A](#).

Attachment A

Gifts and Benefits 2022 year to date

Month received	Gift and/or Benefit	Estimated Value
February	Lunch – Journalist Interview	\$150.00
March	Dinner – CBA The Alliance 70 th Anniversary Dinner	\$150.00
March	Lunch – Qantas Group Federal Treasurer’s Post Budget Luncheon Address	\$100.00
May	Restaurant Dinner – PricewaterhouseCoopers	\$120.00
August	FitBit Versa 2 lucky door prize at Comcare conference – donated to ABS Social Club	\$191.00
August	Airfare and accommodation Delivery of conference keynote speech (StemlikeaGirl)	\$580.00
Total		\$1291.00

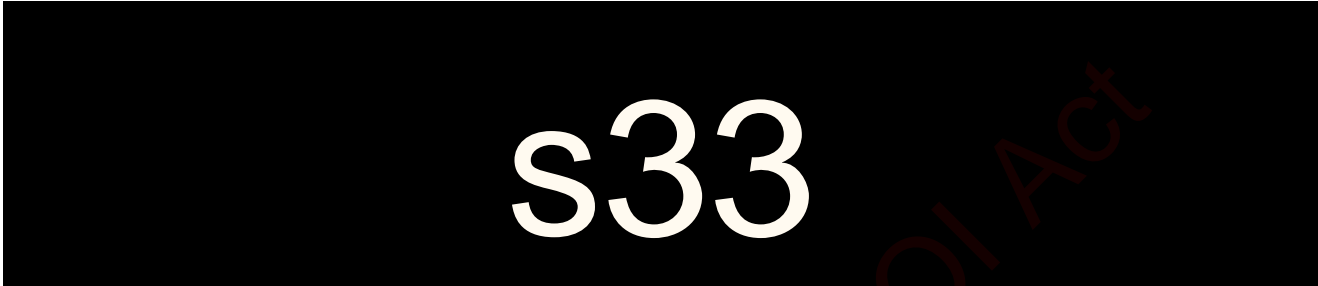
Released under FOIA Act

EC22-000216

Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)

Key Issue

The ABS was contracted by the then Department of Education, Skills and Employment in 2019 to conduct the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) in Australia.



s33

This briefing content has been shared with DEWR who have agreed that all questions should be directed to them. The exception is that if very specific questions arise about our penetration testing regime on PIAAC then DEWR will need to have ABS input.

Talking Points

- All questions or discussion about Australia's involvement in PIAAC should be directed to Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) in the first instance.

General Manager Responsible: Michael Smedes

Division: Social Statistics Division

Contact Officer: s22

Telephone: Work s22, s22

EC22-000217

Homebuilder grants program and inflation

Key Issue

The impact of the HomeBuilder program on household expenditure is measured in the *New dwelling purchase by owner occupier* series in the Consumer Price Index at the time the grant is paid to eligible purchasers.

Recent discussions regarding the HomeBuilder program have focussed on the impact of the program on inflation.

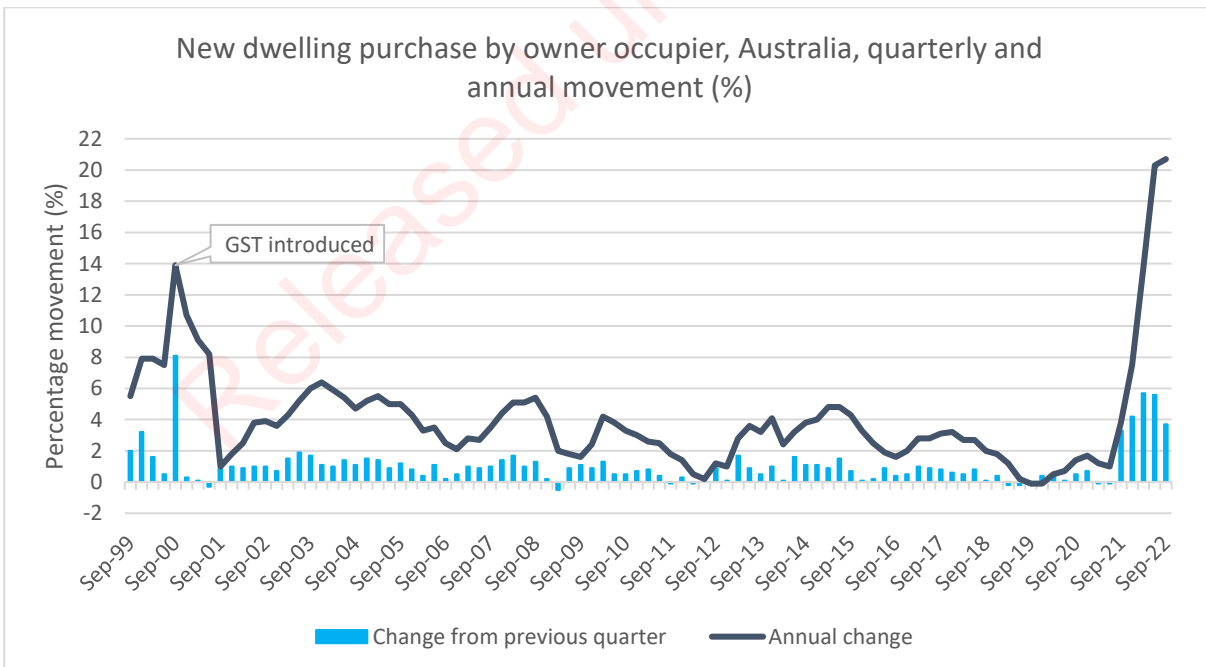
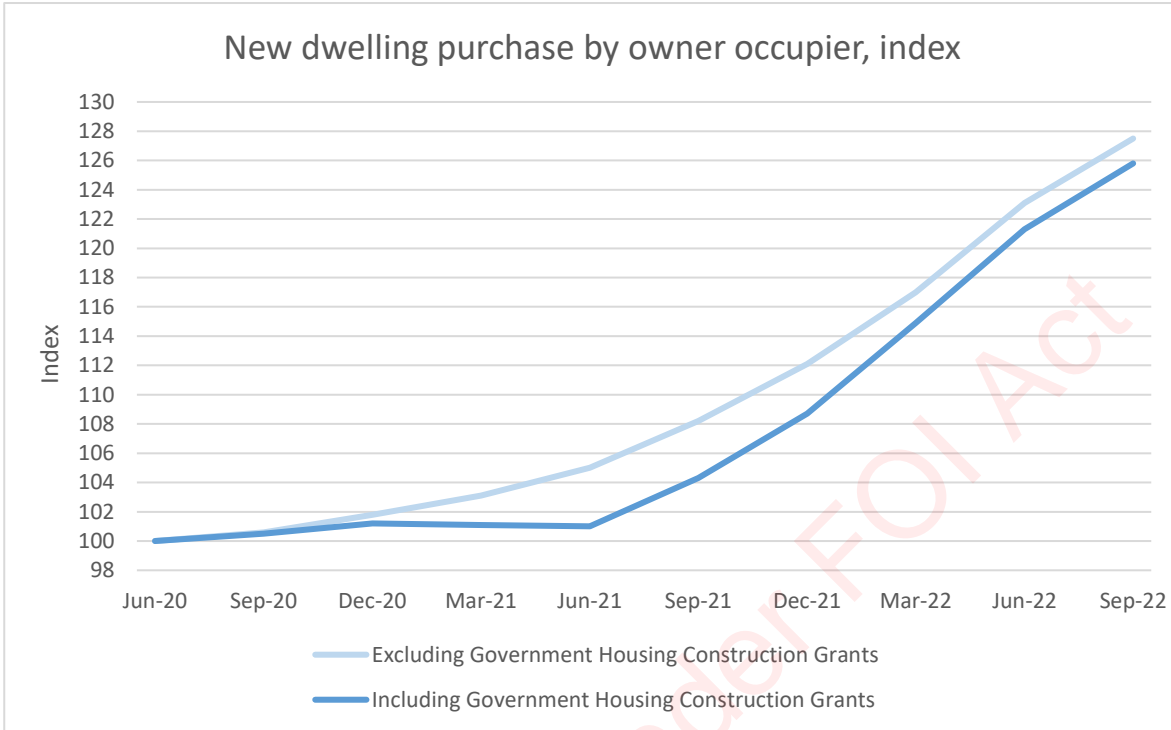
Talking Points

- The Homebuilder program has affected housing inflation as measured by the CPI directly as it has the impact of reducing the average price paid for new dwellings. Over time, fewer grants are being paid which (if nothing else changes) equates to an increase in the average price measured in the CPI.
- The ABS does not have information on what the indirect contribution to housing costs due to the Homebuilder scheme might have been. While the ABS has observed higher labour and material costs in the construction industry it is not possible for ABS to attribute the increases in new house prices to a particular cause. Shortages in the supply of materials and labour, increased activity and increased transport costs have all played a part in these price rises.
- It is expected that Government construction grants will continue to impact the measurement of new dwelling purchases up until April 2023 as applications are finalised and grants are paid.

EC22-000217

Facts and Figures

September 2022 quarter results



EC22-000217

Quarter	New dwelling purchase, Quarterly movement	New dwelling purchase, Annual movement
June 2020 quarter	0.1%	0.7%
September 2020 quarter*	0.5%	1.4%
December 2020 quarter	0.7%	1.7%
March 2021 quarter	-0.1%	1.2%
June 2021 quarter	-0.1%	1.0%
September 2021 quarter	3.3%	3.8%
December 2021 quarter	4.2%	7.5%
March 2022 quarter	5.7%	13.7%
June 2022 quarter	5.6%	20.3%
September 2022 quarter	3.7%	20.7%

* The HomeBuilder program was announced in June 2020 and measured in the New dwelling purchase series in the CPI from the September 2020 quarter onwards.

Index	Quarterly Movement (8 capital cities)	Annual Movement (8 capital cities)
CPI	September Quarter 2022	September Quarter 2022
CPI All Groups	1.8%	7.3%
Housing Group	3.2%	10.5%
<i>New Dwelling Purchase by Owner</i>		
<i>Occupiers</i>	3.7%	20.7%
Rents	1.3%	2.8%
Electricity	3.2%	3.2%
Maintenance and Repair of Dwellings	2.1%	6.7%
Property Rates and Charges	3.6%	3.6%
Water and Sewerage	2.6%	2.6%
Gas and other Household Fuels	10.9%	16.6%

Background

Treatment of the HomeBuilder program in the CPI

- The impact of the HomeBuilder program on household expenditure is measured in the *New dwelling purchase by owner occupier* series.
- The series measures the cost of net additions to the household sector, which includes new homes (excluding land) and major improvements.
- This aligns with the scope of the HomeBuilder program, which is available to eligible owner occupiers building a new home or substantially renovating an existing home.

General Manager Responsible: Elizabeth Williamson

Division: Prices and Economic Statistics Futures

Contact Officer: Michelle Marquardt

Telephone: Work (02) 6252 5913/ Mobile s22

EC22-000217

- The HomeBuilder grant is paid to those eligible consumers once they provide evidence that work has commenced, and payments have been made.
- The reduction in cost is shown in the CPI in the quarter in which payments are made to purchasers. This treatment is similar to how other 'rebates' are treated in the CPI.

Housing in the Consumer Price Index (CPI)

- Housing accounts for just over 23 per cent of the CPI basket of goods.
- This includes:
 - the purchase of new dwellings (around 9 per cent of all household spending);
 - rents (around 6 per cent of the total); and
 - maintenance and repair, property charges and utilities (including electricity, gas and water) account for about 8 per cent.

Released under FOI Act