

**Senate Economics Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**Treasury Portfolio**  
Budget Estimates 2014  
3 June to 5 June 2014

**Department/ Agency:** ABS

**Question:** BET 3690

**Topic:** ABS Organisations Plan

**Reference:** Hansard Pg. 6, 3 June 2014

**Senator:** Bishop

**Question:**

3690. Senator MARK BISHOP: Given the fact that you are going to be losing 116 staff, can you advise us what services, if any, ABS will be cutting back on?

Mr Palmer: I can give you a general answer, and that is that we will be making adjustments to our work program. We will be cutting some or reducing some statistical outputs. We will also be making some changes to our levels of corporate services. The final composition of that work program adjustment is just now being finalised, and we anticipate announcing that in the next couple of days.

Senator MARK BISHOP: Will you put that on your website, or in a press release to staff?

Mr Palmer: We will make a media release shortly after we advise the bulk of our staff, and we will inform key stakeholders who are most affected by the adjustments. We will do them the courtesy of informing them ahead of the media release.

Senator MARK BISHOP: But I would assume that if you are going to do that in a couple of days your plan has been pretty well signed off at the most senior levels.

Mr Palmer: It is almost fully baked.

Senator MARK BISHOP: Can you, then, provide to the committee a document that outlines all of the detail of the changes or cuts that you plan to implement and the time period in which you plan to implement them so that we get a complete picture of the kinds of changes you are going to bring into place? I do not mean in the next 24 hours.

Mr Palmer: Thank heavens for that. Yes, certainly after we have announced it we would be very happy to share that.

Senator MARK BISHOP: I am not asking you to provide me a copy of the press release. I can get that myself. I am asking you to provide me a copy of the organisational plan that you are going to distribute to your line managers to implement and its impact on services and staffing levels and numbers.

Mr Palmer: Yes, we can do that.

**Answer:**

3690. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) announced planned work program reductions on 5 June. In announcing these changes the ABS stated that if funding could be provided for the work that was ceasing, it would be reinstated.

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Concurrent with these changes, the ABS also ran a Voluntary Redundancy (VR) program across Australian Public Service (APS) and Executive Levels (EL) from 5 March 2014 to 30 June 2014 which included 117 staff.

The ABS implemented a set of Human Resource and Business principles which supported staff in the affected work program areas to be placed into vacancies created by the VR program.

The services affected and timing of implementation is shown in the table below

<b>Service</b>	<b>Timing</b>
Discontinue Environment collections from Australian Households	1 July 2014
Discontinue Waste Account	1 July 2014
Discontinue Measures of Australia's Progress	1 July 2014
Discontinue Australian Social Trends	1 July 2014
Discontinue Survey of Tourist Accommodation	Funding has now been secured for 2014-15.
Discontinue ABS funded component of Culture, Sport and Recreation statistics	1 July 2014
Reduce Industry statistics research, development and reporting in selected areas	1 July 2014
Reduce Social conditions statistics research, development and reporting in selected areas	1 July 2014
Reduce State and territories statistical services engagement and analysis activities	1 July 2014
Reduce Regional statistics analysis and development	1 July 2014
Reduce External statistical capability development programs	1 July 2014
Reduce Macroeconomic research and development engagement in international activities	1 July 2014
Reduce National information and referral services response times	1 July 2014
Review the House Price Index, with the view to discontinuing it pending identification of alternative sources to meet the Australian National Accounts requirements	Review to begin August 2014