

**Senate Standing Committee on Economics**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Treasury Portfolio**

Supplementary Budget Estimates

20-21 November 2013

**Question:** SBT 84-85

**Topic:** ABS Product Catalogue

**Hansard Page:** pages 16 & 17, 21 November 2013

**Senator BUSHBY asked:**

84-85. CHAIR: Mr Ewing, I have a couple of questions about your product catalogue. How many statistical series does the ABS produce?

Mr I Ewing: I would have to take the precise number on notice, but it is in the thousands.

CHAIR: A number of these questions you might want to take on notice. If you could provide a list of that catalogue on notice, that would be appreciated. Do you work out a cost for each series? Do you apportion costs to each of those that you do?

Mr I Ewing: Not on a regular basis. We can calculate the costs of producing particular series, but broadly we allocate costs, at the broad work program level, within the ABS budget.

CHAIR: But you do have the ability to go down deeper if you need to?

Mr I Ewing: We can develop an estimate of the cost around a particular series if required.

CHAIR: And what would cause you to do that? Do you do that from time to time for various reasons?

Mr I Ewing: We would do that when we had issues around us having to make changes to our work program and we had to calculate what we might save by stopping a particular series. Or if we were proposing to undertake a new series of work, then we would develop those costs, specific to those proposals.

CHAIR: In doing that, what costs would you allocate? I presume staff and office technology? What sort of aspects would you include in those calculations?

Mr I Ewing: We would look at the direct costs of running the collection. Most of the costs in the ABS relate to people, and then on top of that there are the technology costs, which would be apportioned across the collections. In addition there is the allocation of overheads, like rent and so on.

CHAIR: So there would be an apportionment of those other administration costs as well?

Mr I Ewing: Yes. ....

CHAIR: Given that variability, is it possible to compile a list of the top 20 most popular series, or is that too difficult because it varies with the types of factors you highlight?

Mr I Ewing: I think it would be a very subjective judgement. We could compile a series based on what gets the most hits on the website, at a higher level. You could provide an indicative idea of what are the more popular sets of data.

CHAIR: If you could take that on notice and provide an indicative list of, say, the top 20 series, that would be interesting.

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**Answer:**

84-85. There were approximately 684 catalogue products released to the ABS website in the 2013 calendar year.

**Note:**

- The total includes all catalogue releases, so a monthly publication such as Labour Force would count as twelve in the total.
- The total also includes additional information releases.
- Each catalogue product release can include of a number of components for example a product can have a publication PDF, datacubes, Time series and HTML pages.

The following statistical products were the most visited on the ABS website from 1 June 2013 - 1 December 2013.

1	Census
2	Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations
3	Population Clock
4	Consumer Price Index
5	Australian Demographic Statistics
6	Average Weekly Earnings
7	Australian Social Trends
8	Census @ Schools
9	Australian Health Survey
10	Key Economic Indicators
11	Statistical Literacy
12	Causes of Death
13	Population Pyramid
14	National Regional Profiles
15	Profiles of Health
16	Regional Population Growth
17	Australian National Accounts
18	Migration, Australia
19	Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification
20	Labour Force