

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Additional Estimates

10 – 11 February 2010

Question: aet 55

Topic: ABS - Staffing, Budgets & Projects

Hansard Page: Written

Senator EGGLESTON asked:

1. How many people currently work for the ABS?
2. How many people worked for the ABS in each of the last two years?
3. What is the current ABS budget and each of the two preceding financial years of 07/08 and 08/09?
4. Has the ABS had to cut any staff, projects, programs or reduce the amount of statistical information it provides over the last two years due to budget cuts.
5. (If so) What has been the reduction in staffing levels?
6. What projects, programs or information have been ended or cut back.

Answer:

1. As at 31 January 2010, there are 3,030 people currently working for the ABS. This is on a headcount basis.
2. In the last two financial years, the staffing numbers as at 30 June (headcount) were:

2008-09:	2,740
2007-08:	2,873
3. The current and two preceding financial year appropriation budgets for the ABS are:

2009-10:	\$327.9m	Budgeted Departmental Expense Appropriation
2008-09:	\$282.6m	Actual Departmental Expense Appropriation
2007-08:	\$302.3m	Actual Departmental Expense Appropriation
4. The ABS budget situation for 2008-09 and beyond involved insufficient funds to sustain continuation of the ABS's current work program. As a result the ABS reduced its work program in 2008-09 to stay within its budget allocation. Savings were identified across the organisation in both statistical and administrative areas. As a result of increased funding from the Government in the 2009 Budget, and after an extensive consultation process with users, the ABS reinstated or expanded the 2009-10 statistical and analytical work program for most of the work programs that were affected by cuts made in 2008-09.

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5. In 2008-09, staffing levels were managed by redeployment, natural attrition and a temporary recruitment freeze to reduced staffing levels by approximately 180 people. However, as a result of increased funding from the Government in the 2009 Budget, the ABS reinstated or expanded the 2009-10 statistical and analytical work program for most of the work programs that were affected by cuts made in 2008-09 and staffing levels have since increased.
6. As a result of increased funding from the Government in the 2009 Budget, and after an extensive consultation process with users, the ABS reinstated or expanded the 2009-10 statistical and analytical work program for most of the work programs that were affected by cuts made in 2008-09. The table below summarises the changes that were made to the 2008-09 and 2009-10 work program.

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Initiative	2008-09 work program	2009-10 work program
Employee Earnings and Hours Survey	Survey to proceed on partially user funded basis	Reinstate funding for the survey
Job Vacancies Survey	Cancel 08-09 collection	Reinstate survey for the November 2009 reference period
Labour Force Survey	Reduce sample by 22%	Reinstate full sample by January 2010 reference period
Measures of Australia's Progress	Decrease frequency of major refresh from 3 yearly to 5 yearly, maintain annual update	Reinstate the frequency of major refresh as 3 yearly. Timing of the next release to be confirmed
Prices work program	Cease selected research or development work	Funding reinstated for research and development work
Retail Survey	Reduce frequency with which firms are surveyed	Full monthly sample was reinstated for the November 2008 reference period. The full sample will continue in 2009-10 onwards
State and Territory Statistical Service	Reduce work program	Reinstate the funding that was cut in 2008-09
Survey of Motor Vehicle Usage	Cancel 08-09 collection	Reinstate survey for the 2009-10 reference period. This survey will run biennially after this release. Additional funding will be provided to utilise administrative data to produce estimates in intervening years
Trade Margins	Cancel 08-09 collection	Funding reinstated for research work which will include investigations into the Trade Margins survey
Major Labour Costs	Deferred in 2008-09.	To be conducted in 2009-10
National Information and Referral Service	Reduction in service levels	Restore service levels
Annual Integrated	Reduce range of	Partially reinstate the

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Collections	information collected	funding that was cut in 2008-09. Users will be consulted on the priorities for the program. The Information Communication Technology Industry Survey is to be conducted as part of the Annual Integrated Collections, with no additional funding for this component
Indigenous Administrative Data Project	Reduce work program for 08-09	Partially reinstate the funding that was cut in 2008-09
Regional & Rural Statistics	Reduce spending on local Regional Statistics Program initiatives	Partially reinstate the funding that was cut in 2008-09
Private Hospitals	Cancel 08-09 collection	Continue ABS funding for this survey to be run biennially. User funding previously has allowed it to be run annually
IT work program	Rationalise IT development program	IT environment development recommenced after 12 month delay
2009 Yearbook	Cancel 2009 Yearbook	Change annual frequency to 2 yearly
Agriculture Surveys	Reduction to sample size and/or content for 07-08 surveys	Priorities to be determined in consultation with users
Demography National Statistics Centre work program	Reduce work program	Reduce work program by deferring some research activities
Household use of IT	Change frequency from annual to every second year	The next collection will be conducted for the 2010/11 reference year, with results expected to be released in December 2011
Information Communication Technology Industry	Cancel 08-09 collection	To be conducted as part of another collection, the Annual Integrated

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Survey		Collection. Funding not reinstated
Labour Market National Statistics Centre work program	Reduce work program	Reduce work program by deferring some research activities.
Macroeconomics National Statistics Centre work program	Reduce work program	Reduce work program by deferring some research activities
Not for Profit Institution Satellite Account	2008-09 compilation to be conducted with user funding	No change to the work program in 2009-10 as this is an irregular survey and was not planned to be conducted in 2009-10
Population Census	Undertake the content of the 2011 Census on same basis as 2006 Census	Undertake the content of the 2011 Census on same basis as 2006 Census. Savings will occur in 2009-10 and 2010-11
Social Statistics National Statistics Centre work program	Reduce work program	Reduce work program by deferring some research activities
Venture Capital Survey	Survey to be conducted with user funding	Fully user funded for the 2008-09 reference period. A decision on the future of this survey will be made at a later date
Farm Use of IT Survey	No change to the work program in 2008-09 as this was an irregular survey with the next expected collection to be for the 2009-10 reference year	Cancel the survey
Government use of IT	Cancel 08-09 collection	Cancel the survey