

SESSION 1: PROGRESS REPORTS ON ACTIVITIES SINCE VG1998

REPORT FROM AUSTRALIA

DEVELOPMENTS FOR SERVICES INDUSTRIES AND THE USE OF THE CPC

The ABS conducts surveys of selected services industries which seek to provide a comprehensive statistical picture of particular services industries on a rotating, periodic basis. Each year different industries are chosen and in the years since 1991-92, when the program began, most industry sectors have been surveyed.

2. The past year's Program covered the following sectors: Retail Trade, Wholesale Trade, Selected Hospitality Industries, Selected Business Services, Motion Picture, Radio and TV Services, Gambling Industries, Selected Sport and Recreational Services, Accommodation Services, Private Medical Services and Community Services.

3. The most recent programs have repeated some of these industries and included some new areas such as Performing Arts, Cultural industries (Libraries, Museums, etc), Allied Health (Dentists, Physiotherapists, etc) and some new business services (such as Waste Management, Security, Market Research and Employment placement). A full listing of the industries covered in the past three years follows:

ABS' RECENT SERVICES INDUSTRIES PROGRAM

<i>Reference Year</i>	<i>Industry</i>
1996-97	Radio and Television Services Film and Video Production and Distribution Motion Picture Exhibition Sound Recording Studios Selected Performing Arts Industries Libraries and Museums Commercial Art Galleries Zoos, Parks and Gardens Travel Agencies Waste Management Services Telecommunications Services
1997-98	Allied Health Services (Dentists, Physiotherapists, Chiropractors and Optical and Optical Dispensing Services) Accommodation Services Clubs, Taverns and Bars Casinos Other Gambling Industries
1998-99	Retail and Wholesale Trade Cafes and Restaurants Telecommunications Services Computer Services Legal Services Real Estate Services Consulting Engineering Services Cleaning Services Market Research Security Services Employment Placement and Contract Services

4. In each case the survey is designed to provide detailed information about the structure and performance of the industry in question. Data items include sources of income, expenses, profitability and other performance ratios, employment characteristics and other measures of specific relevance to the particular industry.

5. Commodity data is collected also and the choice of commodity/product categories has been developed afresh as each new industry survey is undertaken. The commodity categories (ie the splits of income) have been based on the CPC (3 digit at the highest level) but in each case more detailed commodity information (down to 5 , 6 digit or even lower in some cases) has been collected. ABS has therefore devised a specific commodity classification for each industry where a survey has been conducted and has data about the income received by businesses for each of these categories.

OTHER IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS IN SERVICES

6. There have also been some new developments in the IT&T field in ABS. Our current Program includes two yearly 'demand' side collections from households, business and government alternating with a major two yearly 'supply' side collection from ICT related industries in the alternate year. Because of significant user demand we are proposing to upgrade this program to attempt to provide the most critical indicators more frequently and to increase the analytic capacity of the Science and Technology workgroup within ABS.

7. We are proposing to increase the frequency of the Business Use of IT surveys to annual and, as part of that new survey, to upgrade the information collected about E-commerce. We are also investigating the introduction of a collection (perhaps quarterly) from Internet Service Providers (ISPs). There are only a relatively small number of ISPs operating in Australia and it is hoped that we can gather new indicators relating to use of the Internet, WWW, E-commerce, etc using an e-mail/web survey from this important group of infrastructure providers. The increased analytic capacity will give the workgroup the resources to bring together the increasing range of ABS and other indicators so that access by users can be improved. The first output proposed is a compendium publication detailing the growth of IT&T in Australia.

SERVICES PRODUCER PRICE INDEX DEVELOPMENTS

(a) Recent developments

8. April 1997 - Publication of an information paper entitled *An Analytical Framework for Price Indexes in Australia* (6421.0) which articulated a new statistical framework, and family of price indexes, designed to support inflation studies.

9. March 1999 - Publication of an information paper entitled *Producer Price Index Developments* (6422.0) which:

(i) introduced experimental quarterly producer and international trade price indexes within a Stage of Production framework; and

(ii) presented experimental quarterly service industry producer price indexes for the output of a selection of ANZSIC classes within the Transport and Storage, and Property and Business Services, Divisions.

(b) Planned developments during 2000

10. Release of a new quarterly service industry producer price index publication to:
 - (i) update the experimental series released in March 1999; and
 - (ii) introduce series for the rest of the ANZSIC classes in the Transport and Storage, and property and Business Services, Divisions.
11. Release of a new quarterly publication containing the new economy-wide price indexes described in the March 1997 information paper, in particular:
 - (i) Stage of Production producer and international trade price indexes, and
 - (ii) an experimental Price Index of Domestic Final Purchases.
12. These two indexes will incorporate newly developed measures of the output of the construction industry. The indexes are described in more detail in the Voorburg Group paper: *Australia's Economy-wide Price Index Frameworks*.

(c) Planned developments up to 2001

13. Feasibility studies and development work in relation to producer price indexes for the output of complex industries such as communications, finance and insurance, and wholesale and retail trade.