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## **Australia: Report on the Observance of Standards and Codes—Data Module**

This Report on the Observance of Standards and Codes on Data Module for Australia was prepared by a staff team from the International Monetary Fund as background documentation for the periodic consultation with the member country. It is based on the information available at the time it was completed on November 18, 2010. The views expressed in this document, as well as in the full assessment report, are those of the staff team and do not necessarily reflect the views of the government of Australia or the Executive Board of the IMF.

The Response by the Authorities to this report and the Detailed Assessments Using the Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF) are also included.

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AUSTRALIA

**Report on the Observance of Standards and Codes (ROSC)—Data Module  
Volume I**

Prepared by the Statistics Department

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November 18, 2010

The Report on the Observance of Standards and Codes (ROSC)—Data Module provides an evaluation of Australia's macroeconomic statistics against the *Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS)* complemented by an assessment of data quality based on the IMF's Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF) July 2003. The DQAF lays out internationally accepted practices in statistics, ranging from good governance in data-producing agencies to practices specific to datasets.

The datasets covered in this report are national accounts, consumer and producer price indices, government finance, monetary, and balance of payments and international investment position statistics. The agencies that compile the datasets assessed in this report are the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Australian Department of Finance and Deregulation, and the Reserve Bank of Australia.

The datasets to which this report pertains can be accessed on the Internet:

Australian Bureau of Statistics (<http://www.abs.gov.au>)

Department of Finance and Deregulation (<http://www.finance.gov.au>)

Reserve Bank of Australia ([www.rba.gov.au](http://www.rba.gov.au))

Some datasets are also available in print, although the Reserve Bank of Australia ceased print publication of statistics in January 2010.

This report is based on information provided prior to and during a staff mission from March 17-31, 2010 and publicly available information. The mission team comprised Charles Enoch, Sagé de Clerck, Pierre Papadacci, Mark Van Wersch (all IMF's Statistics Department, STA), David Fenwick and Cor Gorter (Experts), and Janice Irving (Senior Administrative Assistant, STA).

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## ACRONYMS

<i>1993 SNA</i>	<i>System of National Accounts, 1993</i>
<i>2008 SNA</i>	<i>System of National Accounts, 2008</i>
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ABSA	<i>Australian Bureau of Statistics Act, 1975</i>
ANZSIC06	Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification, 2006 edition
AOFM	Australian Office of Financial Management
APRA	Australian Prudential Regulation Authority
BOP/IIP	Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Statistics
<i>BPM6</i>	<i>Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual,</i> sixth edition
<i>BPM5</i>	<i>Balance of Payments Manual,</i> fifth edition
COFOG	Classification of Functions of Government
COICOP	Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose
CPI	Consumer Price Index
CPICC	Consumer Price Index Commodity Classification
CSA	<i>Census and Statistics Act, 1905</i>
DoFD	Department of Finance and Deregulation
DQAF	Data Quality Assessment Framework
DSBB	Dissemination Standards Bulletin Board
FISIM	Financial Intermediation Services Indirectly Measured
f.o.b.	Free on board
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFC	Global Financial Crisis
GFS	Government Finance Statistics
<i>GFSM 2001</i>	<i>Government Finance Statistics Manual, 2001</i>
GST	Goods and Services Tax
HES	Household Expenditure Survey
ISIC	International Standard Industrial Classification
IMF	International Monetary Fund
<i>MFSM 2000</i>	<i>Monetary and Financial Statistics Manual, 2000</i>
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
ODC	Other Depository Corporation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PPI	Producer Price Index
QNA	Quarterly National Accounts
RBA	Reserve Bank of Australia
<i>RBAA</i>	<i>Reserve Bank of Australia Act</i>
ROSC	Report on the Observance of Standards and Codes
SDDS	Special Data Dissemination Standard
STA	IMF's Statistics Department

## I. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

1. Australia's statistics are generally of a high quality. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has been among the pace-setters in the development and adoption of cutting-edge methodologies. The institutional framework for the provision of statistics is long standing, with the *Census and Statistics Act, 1905* providing the legal basis for statistical compilation and the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act, 1975* establishing the institutional arrangements. The ABS is the central statistical agency. Its responsibilities include the compilation and dissemination of national accounts, the consumer price index (CPI), the producer price index (PPI), government finance statistics (GFS), and balance of payments and international investment position statistics (BOP/IIP). Commonwealth financial statements are compiled by the Department of Finance and Deregulation (DoFD), while the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) is responsible for monetary statistics.

2. Australia has been a subscriber to the Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) since April 1996, and started posting its metadata on the Dissemination Standards Bulletin Board (DSBB) in September 1998, meeting the SDDS specifications in July 2001. Australia is in observance of the SDDS, meeting the specifications for coverage, periodicity, timeliness, and the dissemination of advance release calendars.

3. Australia is availing itself of flexibility options for:

- The periodicity of the production index data category (Australia compiles and disseminates quarterly data and not monthly data as required);
- The timeliness of the production index category (Australia disseminates the index no later than one quarter after the reference quarter and not within six weeks as required);
- The periodicity of the consumer and producer prices data categories (Australia compiles and disseminates quarterly data and not monthly data as required).

4. Australia is also availing itself of a targeted flexibility option for the timeliness of central government operations, where a three-month lag is allowed for the last month of the old fiscal year and a two-month lag for the first month of the new fiscal year, provided that quarterly general government data are disseminated with a one-quarter lag.

5. As Australia has migrated to the newest versions of the statistical manuals—the *System of National Accounts, 2008 (2008 SNA)*, the sixth edition of the *Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual (BPM6)*, as well as the more established *Government Finance Statistics Manual, 2001 (GFSM 2001)*, and the *Monetary and Financial Statistics Manual, 2000 (MFSM 2000)*—this Data Module of the Report on the Observance of Standards and Codes (Data ROSC) assesses Australia against the prescriptions of these methodologies. As a result, comparisons of this Data ROSC against such exercises for other countries in the past need to be treated with caution. The 2003 Data Quality Assessment Framework (DQAF), which underpins the Data ROSC, permits assessment against the prior international methodology in several of these topical areas. Thus Australia has arguably set

itself a higher bar for this assessment than have other countries. On the other hand, as additional countries migrate to the new methodologies, this Data ROSC for Australia may come to be the new benchmark.

6. The Data ROSC assessment is taking place at a time when the ABS in particular is facing challenges. The migration to the new methodologies has been a multi-year undertaking, and has been largely successfully achieved. It has involved substantial efforts to introduce fundamental changes across much of the institution's macroeconomic statistical activities. All Commonwealth agencies are subject to a 1.5 percent annual efficiency dividend and the ABS is no different. However, in terms of its funding relative to other agencies, the ABS' position has improved as it is exempt from the additional whole-of-government departmental efficiencies savings (which apply to most other agencies) over the four years FY 2010 to FY 2013; the ABS has also suffered an unusual level of loss of expertise, with the retirement of a cohort of highly experienced staff and a salary scale that is below the median for public institutions in Canberra. Added to this has been the global financial crisis (GFC), which seems to have led to statistical outcomes that are difficult to interpret. To achieve cost savings, the ABS introduced, among other measures, a 24 percent cut in the sample size for the labor force survey. User concern to accurately track the impact of the GFC on employment subsequently led to the restoration of the sample. After an external review by the DoFD, the ABS was given some replenishment of funding, but continued to have to find savings through reducing staffing at all levels to provide resources to increase ABS salaries in line with public service wage movements. The September 2009 Quarterly National Accounts (QNA) had to be rereleased to correct compilation errors, with some loss of credibility amongst the user community. At this stage the worst of the transitional problems may be behind: the December QNA was issued successfully. However, a number of issues continue to defy analytical explanation—for instance, the divergent paths of the various estimates for GDP. Some users have also suggested a disconnect between growth in employment and that in the production based estimate of GDP; however growth in hours worked in this period is in line with growth in production and seems to reconcile the two series. Meanwhile, wage and other cost pressures are expected to continue, as the ABS strives to maintain its reputation for statistical excellence. While some of this is outside its control, careful management of its staff resources—including succession planning—will be important for its work program for the future.

7. As noted above, Australia's statistics overall are of a high quality. Insofar as issues are identified in this Report, they seem in large part related to one or more of three factors: first, the short-term legacies of the recent methodological transitions, where a number of "loose ends" remain to be tidied up; second, the continuing resource pressures, under which the ABS feels itself unable to introduce any initiatives without being provided with additional funding; and third, an emphasis on meeting domestic information requirements where the view is that domestic requirements demand data that are on bases that differ from the relevant international standards. This last factor is naturally a particular focus of this ROSC exercise. Deviations from international standards, where material, may cause problems, not so much because after careful consideration Australian statisticians adopt an approach different from that mandated by the international methodologies, but because in such an event lower priority seems to be given to mapping, or providing other means to ensure that Australia's figures can be interpreted on the same basis as those of the rest of the

world. Also, with Australia's statistics at the forefront of methodological innovation, the wider statistical community would hope to be able to draw on the lessons of Australia's statistical transition; this would be assisted if any deviations were explained and quantified. Studies of the GFC have recognized the importance of data, and the need for harmonized statistics in order to interpret international economic developments. Achieving international comparability is made more difficult by Australia implementing the *2008 SNA* and *BPM6* standards ahead of other countries. It is therefore problematic if Australia does not release figures in accordance with international standards as still applied elsewhere, and also does not provide the means to convert or link its data to the *2003 SNA* and *BPM5* basis. As regards monetary statistics, the RBA recently made the move towards the adoption of the *MFSM* and implemented the underlying standardized report forms developed by the IMF. As a result, monetary statistics are now posted on the RBA website in formats that allow for easy international comparisons. Nonetheless, there is still room for improvement in the accuracy of source data and institutional coverage.

8. Section III of this report provides summary recommendations. Some of the recommendations can be implemented very quickly, without needing significant additional resources, while others may require staff and financial resources.

9. In applying the IMF's DQAF, the remainder of this section presents the mission's main findings. The findings are presented at the level of the DQAF's quality dimensions, by agency for the first two dimensions, and across datasets for the remaining four.

#### 10. **Pre-requisites of quality and assurances of integrity.**

- National accounts, CPI, PPI, GFS, and BOP/IIP statistics are compiled by the **Australian Bureau of Statistics** in accordance with the *Census and Statistics Act, 1905*, which states (Part III, paragraph 9), that the Statistician ... "may from time to time collect such statistical information...as he or she considers appropriate." The *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act, 1975 (ABSA)* establishes the ABS as the central statistical agency in the country, and provides the Statistician, as the head of the ABS, with substantial independence, as well as discretion over all aspects of the collection and dissemination of statistics. The Statistician cannot be dismissed except on grounds of misbehavior, incapacity, or bankruptcy, and even then only on the vote in the same session of both houses of parliament. The *Statistics Determination Act, 1983* sets out confidentiality provisions, and conditions for disclosure of information. There is limited prior access to data in a lock-up, and any prior access is fully disclosed to the public. The ABS has traditionally been at the cutting edge of methodological development, and at the present time is the only major statistical agency in the world that has essentially fully migrated to the new methodologies in all the main macroeconomic datasets. It has traditionally been well resourced but has not been immune from budgetary pressures faced by all Commonwealth agencies. However, despite receiving some additional funding in the past year, the ABS undertook some staff downsizing, and has also lost significant expertise through retirements. The existence of diverse statistical interests and objectives has made it difficult for the ABS to undertake short-term reprioritization of statistical programs to achieve



economies; it is dependent on securing earmarked funding to take on additional statistical commitments.

- Commonwealth monthly and annual financial statements are compiled by the **Department of Finance and Deregulation**, under provisions of the *Financial Management and Accountability Act, 1997*. The integrity of GFS compilation is further strengthened by the *Charter of Budget Honesty Act, 1998*, which requires among others things, regular fiscal reporting based on external reporting standards, defined as Australian GFS, and public sector accounting standards developed by the Australian Accounting Standards Board. From 2008-2009 onwards the Australian government also adopted the *Australian Accounting Standards Board 1049* which requires the adoption of ABS GFS across the face of financial statements for the whole of the government and general government sectors, where it does not conflict with Australian accounting standards. Where differences exist, the reconciliation of accounting with key GFS aggregates is required.
- Monetary statistics are disseminated by the **Reserve Bank of Australia**—albeit the *Reserve Bank of Australia Act, 1959* does not include specific provision in this regard—with data from the banking sector collected by the Australian Prudential Regulation Agency under the *Australian Prudential Regulation Authority Act, 1998*. The RBA does not carry out users’ surveys beyond the circle of its correspondents in the financial sector.

11. All agencies seek to maintain a high level of professionalism, and transparency. All follow a *Code of Conduct*, which staff are made aware of at induction and periodically thereafter. Staff in all agencies follow the precepts of the Australian Public Service, which stresses professionalism and integrity. In all cases, choice of techniques is based solely on statistical considerations. There is no pre-release of information, except for limited lock-up access by the ABS that is explained to the public.

12. The **methodological soundness** of Australia’s statistics has been for many years amongst the highest in the world. Australia continues in this lead position, being the first country to essentially fully adopt the *2008 SNA* and the *BPM6*, as well as the more established *GFS 2001* and the *MFSM 2000*. Most practices are in line with these new, and hence demanding, standards, but there are some deviations, no doubt at least in part because the full transition is not yet complete. Annual and quarterly national accounts are essentially on the new basis, but a few categories of data are not yet worked out: these include the value of growing crops, databases, valuables, and illegal activities. As regards the CPI, the treatment of deposits and loans is an issue, but international guidelines in this area are not prescriptive and the practical problems of compilation faced by the ABS are common to other countries. Coverage embraces household final monetary consumption, with minor departures, such as the exclusion of second hand cars. However, for the CPI, the target population is restricted to the six State capitals plus Darwin and Canberra, which together cover only 64 percent of the population, far fewer than in other developed countries. The Household Expenditure Survey (HES) covers all households, but use of expenditure data for the weights is restricted to the main cities. The same geographic restriction applies to price collection. Published PPIs cover the minimum requirements for manufacturing, construction

and mining, but not for services. The use of ANZSIC06 for the PPI allows a closer concordance with International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) than its predecessor and there are no conceptual differences. The classifications are broadly consistent at higher levels of aggregation. The latter is also the case, but to a more limited extent, for the Consumer Price Index Commodity Classification (CPICC) used for the CPI. Despite differences between the CPICC and Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose (COICOP), including conceptual differences, there is a reasonable concordance at a higher level which, with some manipulation of the lower-level data facilitates international comparisons on a comparable basis. The GFS are produced on nationally derived concepts, definitions, and presentational framework; where differences exist from *GFSM 2001*, source data are sufficiently detailed to allow linkage to *GFSM 2001*. The scope of GFS is consistent with *GFSM 2001*, but a stocks-and-flows data breakdown between domestic and foreign financial assets and liabilities, and between banks and nonbanks, is lacking. Recently, the RBA adopted the *MFSM* methodology for the compilation of monetary statistics. Nevertheless, the institutional coverage of monetary statistics—currently central bank, banks, credit unions, and building societies—could be further improved to include money-market corporations and cash management trusts as they already are in other financial aggregates disseminated by the RBA. In the BOP/IIP statistics the recording of repos is not in line with the recommendations of the *BPM6* and *2008 SNA*, as is the use of the creditor approach for interest on debt securities, as well as the use of fair value for debt other than securities.

13. Australia's statistics generally demonstrate **accuracy and reliability**, with sound practices regarding source data, assessment of source data, statistical techniques, and revision studies. All agencies conduct periodic reviews on the various elements of accuracy and reliability. However, there are some areas, particularly as regards source data, where enhancements should be considered. As regards national accounts, many source statistics are good, but the Annual Integrated Collection suffers from a small sample size and limited product detail. The HES is now conducted only every six years, as against an international guideline of five years; past empirical evidence suggests that this may not be a big issue in terms of measured inflation. The ABS is reviewing the frequency of weights updating as part of its ongoing 16<sup>th</sup> Series review and is considering a number of options for updating weights more frequently. For monetary statistics, source data lack accuracy as the split between transactions in national currency and transactions in foreign currency is not available at the requested level of detail. Also, holdings of certificates of deposits issued by banks are not sectorized; consequently the total outstanding amount is allocated to broad money.

14. The **serviceability** of Australia's statistics is in many cases excellent, as a result of the Australian agencies making considerable efforts to meet users' needs. As noted above, the ABS is currently undertaking a major review of the CPI—formally the 16<sup>th</sup> Series review—soliciting users' views. On the other hand, Australia maintains five flexibility options within the SDDS—more than most countries—and has made no progress in addressing the country's need for them since Australia first subscribed to the SDDS more than a decade ago. As regards periodicity, for a number of series Australia disseminates on a quarterly basis while the SDDS mandate is for monthly. This seems particularly problematic as regards the CPI, which was by some distance the category for which the users in the informal survey expressed most dissatisfaction. The RBA and some sector users contend that a monthly CPI would serve to enhance the central bank's ability to operate monetary policy

because of better timeliness; also greater availability of data points would enable better analysis on, for instance, turning points, and could thus help avoid mistakes in economic management. The ABS is one of only two OECD country statistical institutions that do not compile a monthly index: this is one of the issues being considered in the 16<sup>th</sup> Series review. Overall, timeliness of Australia's statistics is good, in some cases significantly exceeding SDDS requirements. However, as noted above, Australia still maintains flexibility options on timeliness. The production index is disseminated not later than one quarter after the reference period, as against the six-weekly requirement with one month encouraged. Also, Australia uses the option of less timely dissemination of central government operations at year end that is available to countries using the *GFSM 2001* methodology. Consistency checks are not always applied appropriately across datasets.

15. Australia's statistics have generally exemplary **accessibility**. All the disseminating agencies have put considerable efforts into developing their websites and making them user friendly. The ABS provides substantial amounts of free data on its website for the areas that it covers. Requests for customized additional data are charged. Publications also include abundant metadata, although these seem not always well customized for different types of user, and not for all data categories. Data releases also include analytic descriptions of developments. National accounts data are available on the website with series available back to September 1959. The CPI release covers a range of indices, with explanation of the factors contributing to inflation. The PPI release covers the headline figure and a range of sub-indices. Contact persons for assistance are identified at the front of most ABS data releases. For GFS, consistent data series on an accrual basis are available from 1998-1999, while some cash-based data are available from the ABS from 1961-1962. The DoFD provides a contact point for further assistance. The RBA ceased its hard-copy statistical publication in January 2010. It provides a wide range of monetary data covering a long time period on its website. Metadata are provided in an accompanying methodological note. The RBA does not identify a contact person for further assistance, but has a general contact point for users. All agencies provide a catalog of publications concerning the data. All disseminate information about future data release dates, although the DoFD on occasion has not released data on the specified date as administrative and internal clearance procedures determine the actual release date.

16. Section II provides a summary assessment by agency and dataset based on a four-part scale. This is followed by staff recommendations in Section III. Practices compared to the SDDS are summarized in Appendix I. The authorities' response to this report and a volume of detailed assessments are presented in separate documents.

## II. ASSESSMENT BY AGENCY AND DATASET

17. An assessment of the quality of six macroeconomic datasets—national accounts, the consumer price index, the producer price index, and government finance, monetary, and BOP/IIP statistics—was conducted using the DQAF, July 2003. In this section, the results are presented at the level of the DQAF elements and using a four-point rating scale (Table 1). Assessments of the prerequisites of data quality and the assurances of integrity (Dimensions “0” and “1” of the DQAF) are presented in Tables 2a–c. For the various datasets, the assessment of methodological soundness, accuracy and reliability, serviceability, and

accessibility (Dimensions “2” to “5” of the DQAF) is shown in Tables 3a–f. The analysis was carried out on the basis of a self-assessment by the compiling agencies, discussions during the mission, and an informal users’ survey.

**Table 1. Data Quality Assessment Framework July 2003—Summary Results**

Dimensions/Elements	Datasets					
	National Accounts	Consumer Price Index	Producer Price Index	Government Finance Statistics	Monetary Statistics	BOP/IFP Statistics
<b>0. Prerequisites of quality</b>						
0.1 Legal and institutional environment	O	O	O	O	O	O
0.2 Resources	LO	LO	LO	LO	O	LO
0.3 Relevance	O	O	O	O	LO	O
0.4 Other quality management	O	O	O	O	O	O
<b>1. Assurances of integrity</b>						
1.1 Professionalism	O	O	O	O	O	O
1.2 Transparency	O	O	O	O	O	O
1.3 Ethical standards	O	O	O	O	O	O
<b>2. Methodological soundness</b>						
2.1 Concepts and definitions	O	O	O	O	O	O
2.2 Scope	O	LO	LO	LO	LO	O
2.3 Classification/sectorization	O	O	O	O	O	LO
2.4 Basis for recording	LO	O	O	O	O	LO
<b>3. Accuracy and reliability</b>						
3.1 Source data	LO	O	O	O	LNO	O
3.2 Assessment of source data	O	O	O	O	O	O
3.3 Statistical techniques	O	O	O	O	O	O
3.4 Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs	O	O	O	O	O	O
3.5 Revision studies	O	O	O	O	O	O
<b>4. Serviceability</b>						
4.1 Periodicity and timeliness	O	LNO	LO	LO	O	O
4.2 Consistency	O	O	O	LO	O	O
4.3 Revision policy and practice	O	O	O	O	O	O
<b>5. Accessibility</b>						
5.1 Data accessibility	O	O	O	O	O	O
5.2 Metadata accessibility	O	O	O	O	O	O
5.3 Assistance to users	O	O	O	O	LO	O

Key to symbols: O = Practice Observed; LO = Practice Largely Observed; LNO = Practice Largely Not Observed; NO = Practice Not Observed; NA = Not Applicable

**Practice observed:** Current practices generally meet or achieve the objectives of DQAF internationally accepted statistical practices without any significant deficiencies. **Practice largely observed:** Some departures, but these are not seen as sufficient to raise doubts about the authorities' ability to observe the DQAF practices. **Practice largely not observed:** Significant departures and the authorities will need to take significant action to achieve observance. **Practice not observed:** Most DQAF practices are not met. **Not applicable:** Used only exceptionally when statistical practices do not apply to a country's circumstances.

**Table 2a. Assessment of Data Quality—Dimensions 0 and 1—Australian Bureau of Statistics**

<p><b>0. Prerequisites of quality</b></p>	<p><b>1. Assurances of integrity</b></p>
<p><b>Legal and institutional environment.</b> The ABS is established as the central statistics agency of Australia under the <i>Australian Bureau of Statistics Act, 1975 (ABSA)</i>. The <i>Census and Statistics Act, 1905</i> provides the Statistician (the head of the ABS) with the authority to collect and disseminate statistics in a wide range of areas including national accounts, consumer price index, producer price index, government finance statistics, balance of payments and international investment position statistics, and monetary statistics. Section 6 of the <i>ABSA</i> mentions amongst the functions of the ABS “to constitute the central statistical authority for the Australian Government and, by arrangements with the Governments of the States, provide statistical services for those Governments.” While the Statistician has wide authority over the collection of statistics, he/she is required to appear before the Senate Estimates Committee roughly twice a year, and to answer questions publicly on anything to do with the work of the ABS.</p> <p><b>Resources.</b> Human, computing, and financing resources would in general be adequate for the compilation and dissemination of the macroeconomic statistics, but the present environment is imposing strains. In particular, loss of expertise, recruitment and retention issues, the ambitious program to adopt new methodologies, and issues arising with regard to the GFC mean that the ABS has to make difficult choices as regards management of its program. Introduction of new statistical activities requiring resources is linked by the ABS to obtaining earmarked funding.</p> <p><b>Relevance.</b> The ABS has in place a number of arrangements that provide priorities and feedback. The Australian Statistics Advisory Council is an independent body that provides advice on priorities and performance on the statistics work program generally. More specific advice and feedback is provided by the Economic Statistics User Group that represents key economic constituents.</p> <p><b>Other quality management.</b> The ABS mission statement mentions explicitly various dimensions of quality. The ABS Corporate Plan also sets values and objectives that are highly relevant from a quality management point of view.</p>	<p><b>Professionalism</b> Under the <i>ABSA</i> the Statistician and the ABS form an independent statutory authority for the purposes of the <i>Australian Public Services Act, 1999</i>. All appointments are based on merit, and are competitive, in line with the policies of the Australian public sector. Professional qualifications and professional enhancement are encouraged. The Statistician is appointed for seven years (with eligibility for reappointment) and cannot be removed, other than on grounds of misbehavior, incapacity, or bankruptcy.</p> <p><b>Transparency.</b> The terms and conditions under which statistics are collected, processed, and disseminated are made widely available to the public, in particular through the Internet, most completely on the website of the ABS, which includes also documents such as the ABS work program and corporate plan. Statistics are available free of charge to users through the Internet. All statistics are made available simultaneously at 11:30 a.m. on the day of their release. Pre-embargo access is given to a small number of ABS publications by authorized staff for up to two hours under “lock-up” arrangements. National accounts are provided to designated officials in the Treasury, under similar lock-up arrangements the day prior to release. These arrangements are well publicized.</p> <p><b>Ethical standards.</b> All staff are subject to the <i>Code of Conduct</i> as set out in section 13 of the <i>Australian Public Service Act</i>. In addition, the ABS Corporate Plan includes obligations employees have to the ABS. Staff are made aware of ethical standards at induction, and have to sign an undertaking to abide by them. Staff are periodically reminded of ethical standards, for instance through in-house webpage announcements.</p>

**Table 2b. Assessment of Data Quality—Dimensions 0 and 1—Department of Finance and Deregulation**

<p><b>0. Prerequisites of quality</b></p>	<p><b>1. Assurances of integrity</b></p>
<p><b>Legal and institutional environment.</b> The Department of Finance and Deregulation (DoFD) is responsible for the compilation and dissemination of monthly and annual financial statements of the Commonwealth Government, while the Australian Office of Financial Management (AOFM), which is part of the Treasury portfolio, is responsible for the management and dissemination of monthly securities debt data of the Commonwealth. These data, disseminated as independent reports and serving as source data for the GFS compilation, are largely governed by the <i>Financial Management and Accountability Act, 1975</i>, which is available on the DoFD website. It sets requirements for the annual preparation and audit of Commonwealth financial statements. The <i>Charter of Budget Honesty Act, 1998</i>, requires, among others things, regular fiscal reporting. From 2008-2009 onwards the Australian government also adopted the <i>Australian Accounting Standard Board 1049</i>, which requires the adoption of ABS GFS across the face of financial statements for the whole of government and general government sector, where it does not conflict with Australian accounting. Where differences exist, reconciliation of accounting with key GFS aggregates is required. Procedures are in place to ensure adequate coordination and working arrangements among the Commonwealth agencies, and with the ABS. Data provided by individual reporters are held in confidence and not released to the public.</p> <p><b>Resources.</b> Staff, computing, and financing resources are deemed to be broadly commensurate with the needs of data compilation. A program of in-house training is in place, and the involvement of contractual accounting professionals support the work program. Staff are appraised twice a year. The budget of the area producing statistics is subject to an efficiency dividend each year, so that exclusive of other changes, marginal reductions are applied each year to promote increased efficiency.</p> <p><b>Relevance.</b> The DoFD maintains a high level of ongoing contacts with key users of GFS statistics both internally (reporting agencies of the Commonwealth, National Accounts and GFS at the ABS) and externally (the Commonwealth Treasury, and Commonwealth Grants Commission, etc.).</p> <p><b>Other quality management.</b> There is focus on quality at the DoFD. Staff are aware of the importance of maintaining high standards, and accounting systems have imbedded quality controls.</p>	<p><b>Professionalism.</b> There is a high level of professionalism throughout the Australian public service. All appointments are competitive and in line with the policies of the Australian public sector. Staff at the DoFD are subject to the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct. This requires, amongst other things, that staff do not make improper use of inside information. Decisions about dissemination of data are informed by legal requirements and statistical considerations.</p> <p><b>Transparency.</b> Detailed information on the concepts, sources, and methods used in compiling GFS can be found in <i>Australian System of Government Finance Statistics: Concepts, Sources, and Methods</i>, which is available on the ABS website. The accounting standards, financial statements, annual reports, and other publications also disseminate information on the methods underlying the compilation and dissemination of the financial statements. There is no pre-release of the data. Data releases are subject to internal clearance processes.</p> <p><b>Ethical standards.</b> All staff are subject to the Australian Public Service Values and <i>Code of Conduct</i>, as set out in Sections 10(1) and 13 respectively of the <i>Australian Public Service Act</i>. Staff are made aware of the <i>Code of Conduct</i> at induction, and are reminded of it periodically.</p>

**Table 2c. Assessment of Data Quality—Dimensions 0 and 1—Reserve Bank of Australia**

<p><b>0. Prerequisites of quality</b></p>	<p><b>1. Assurances of integrity</b></p>
<p><b>Legal and institutional environment.</b> The <i>Reserve Bank of Australia Act, 1959</i> (RBA Act) does not include a specific mandate for the dissemination of official monetary statistics for Australia, although the RBA has performed this role for many years. The Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA) has responsibility for supervision, and authority under <i>The Financial Sector (Collection of Data) Act, 2001</i> to collect data from the sector. The <i>Australian Prudential Regulation Authority Act, 1998</i> (APRA Act) provides APRA with the legal authority to provide protected data collected under the <i>Financial Sector (Collection of Data) Act, 2001</i> to the RBA. A <i>Memorandum of Understanding</i>, (1998 between the RBA and APRA sets out the respective responsibilities of the two agencies, and mandates the sharing of information pursuant to their objectives. Under the RBA Act and the <i>Banking Act, 1959</i> data are published by the RBA only at an aggregate level. Confidentiality of data is protected at all times by the RBA in accordance with the provisions of the <i>APRA Act</i>, with access to individual banks' data only given to staff with specific need to know for their statistical duties.</p> <p><b>Resources.</b> Human, computing, and financing resources are adequate to collect, compile, and disseminate monetary statistics. Significant amounts of training are provided to new staff. Salaries are adequate, and staff turnover is manageable. The RBA has an annual performance management program. Resources used to compile the statistics are routinely assessed, at least once a year, and evaluated against alternatives.</p> <p><b>Relevance.</b> Data users have detailed information on developments and changes to the monetary statistics through the RBA website. Feedback is encouraged through publicized communications, such as the RBA media office. The RBA meets with APRA and the ABS on a six-monthly basis to discuss data issues such as new reporting forms and response burden. The RBA is in regular contact with industry groups and companies across the country to gain feedback and information on economic issues, but users outside the industry are not surveyed or consulted. The RBA is actively involved in identifying potential new data requirements and evolving its data provision to meet its needs.</p> <p><b>Other quality management.</b> All staff are aware of the emphasis on achieving the highest level of quality. The importance of quality is emphasized, and management is responsible for achieving quality.</p>	<p><b>Professionalism.</b> There is a high emphasis on professionalism at the RBA. Most staff have university degrees in economics. Recruitment is open and competitive. Extensive on-the-job training is provided to new staff. The compilation of monetary statistics relies on comprehensive accounting data for all transactions and positions by reporting institutions. Staff are encouraged to undertake research and analysis. Staff contributions to speeches and publications are recognized.</p> <p><b>Transparency.</b> All legal documents constituting the basis of the RBA's statistical activities are available from the RBA website. Information on statistical sources is also available on the website. Major methodological changes are announced prior to their implementation and in the media release when the relevant dataset is posted on the website. There is a biweekly briefing of the Treasury on recent credit developments; this briefing sometimes involves unpublished preliminary estimates.</p> <p><b>Ethical standards.</b> The RBA <i>Code of Conduct</i> provides strict guidelines for all staff, mandating honesty and integrity in all dealings. Staff are required to be mindful of the confidentiality and sensitivity of the information that they handle, and to avoid any conflict of interest. Staff are made aware of the <i>Code of Conduct</i> upon recruitment and thereafter at least annually. The <i>Code of Conduct</i> is encapsulated in the form used as a support for the discussion of goals during the annual performance appraisal cycle.</p>



**Table 3a. Assessment of Data Quality—Dimensions 2 to 5—National Accounts**

<p><b>2. Methodological soundness</b></p>	<p><b>3. Accuracy and reliability</b></p>	<p><b>4. Serviceability</b></p>	<p><b>5. Accessibility</b></p>
<p><b>Concepts and definitions.</b> The overall structure of the national accounts follows the 2008 SNA.</p> <p><b>Scope.</b> Annual and quarterly GDP are compiled at current prices and in chain volume measures. Sector accounts are published annually and financial accounts are published quarterly. Input-output tables are released about 3½ years after the reference year. Detailed estimates are not available for all categories; including the value of growing crops, databases, valuables, and illegal activities, but information on these categories is included in higher level GDP aggregates.</p> <p><b>Classification/sectorization.</b> Economic activities are classified according to the ANZSIC06, which is consistent with the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) rev4 at the divisional level. COICOP and Classification of Functions of Government (COFOG) are used to classify household and government final expenditure, respectively. Nonprofit institutions are included in the household sector. Interest on securities is recorded on the basis of the creditor approach.</p> <p><b>Basis for recording.</b> The valuation of GDP, expenditure, and imports and exports is in accordance with the SNA. Transactions are recorded on an accrual basis as far as possible. However, the accrual of interest and the valuation of debt instruments other than securities deviate from the 2008 SNA standards. Gross recording is generally followed, but intrasectoral property income, financial flows, and financial stocks are consolidated in the sector accounts.</p>	<p><b>Source data.</b> Annual GDP is estimated according to the income, expenditure, and production approaches. The business register that produces survey frames for most economic collections is built up from units known to the Australian Tax Office and a population maintained by the ABS. Many source statistics are good, but the Annual Integrated Collection suffers from a small sample size and limited product detail. The HES is conducted with six-year intervals. The Quarterly Business Indicators Survey provides useful information. Source data approximate national accounts definitions and are generally timely.</p> <p><b>Assessment of source data.</b> Appropriate measures are used to validate source data.</p> <p><b>Statistical techniques.</b> The estimates are compiled at a sufficient level of detail. Double deflation is used for about a third of the activities. Headline GDP is calculated as the average of the three independent measures. Quarterly data are benchmarked on the annual data. Quarterly series are seasonally adjusted.</p> <p><b>Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs.</b> Supply-and-use tables are used to verify the independent data sources. Discrepancies are followed up if material.</p> <p><b>Revision studies.</b> Revision analysis is carried out as part of the regular quality assessment of published data.</p>	<p><b>Periodicity and timeliness.</b> Periodicity and timeliness of the national accounts follow the SDDS requirements.</p> <p><b>Consistency.</b> Various statistical discrepancies are shown, thus giving an indication of the inconsistency of the estimates. Movements in analytical series such as productivity measures and average compensation per employee can also be used to check the reasonableness of the accounts. Consistent time series for key aggregates are maintained back to 1959. Consistency is maintained between the quarterly and annual series. The national accounts statistics are reconcilable with the BOP and GFS. Banking and insurance data are reconcilable with prudential supervision data.</p> <p><b>Revision policy and practice.</b> Revisions to previously published data can be made with each issue of the quarterly national income, expenditure and product accounts following fixed procedures. Long-term revisions to the level of chain volume measures are made in the September quarter issue when all chain volume series are rereferenced to the new financial year. Periodic formal studies of revisions are conducted and published.</p>	<p><b>Data accessibility.</b> Data are published on the Internet. The ABS website gives free access to a wide range of information, including all ABS publications from 1998 onwards in Adobe Acrobat, and partially in spreadsheet or database formats. Requests for customized data may incur a charge. Data are accompanied by analysis and are presented clearly. Publications provide the dates on which the next two issues will be published. The data are made available to all users at the same time. Strict embargo procedures are in place.</p> <p><b>Metadata accessibility.</b> Publications include notes with metadata. Many stand-alone detailed metadata publications are released. No publication covers the current methodology of the quarterly estimates. The revisable character of data is not clearly indicated.</p> <p><b>Assistance to users.</b> Client contact details are included on the front page of publications. A referral service channels enquiries to relevant officers. The ABS website contains links to all data releases together with the terms and conditions of supply.</p>

**Table 3b. Assessment of Data Quality—Dimensions 2 to 5—Consumer Price Index**

2. Methodological soundness	3. Accuracy and reliability	4. Serviceability	5. Accessibility
<p><b>Concepts and definitions</b> The CPI follows an acquisitions approach.</p> <p>Some analytical living cost indices based on an outlays approach for subpopulation groups such as pensioner households are also published.</p> <p>The treatment of deposits and loans is an issue for some users, but international guidelines are not prescriptive and the measurement issues are not unique.</p> <p><b>Scope</b> The CPI is restricted to six State capitals plus Canberra and Darwin (representing 64 percent of households). More minor departures include the exclusion of second-hand goods, tourist expenditures, and institutional households.</p> <p><b>Classification/sectorization</b> The Australian CPI Commodity Classification (CPICC) groups items together that are substitutable. It is conceptually different to the COICOP but there is a broad correlation which facilitates international comparisons.</p> <p><b>Basis for recording</b> Recording follows international best practice. Consumption expenditures are measured and purchaser prices collected, net of discounts but including Goods and Services Tax (GST) and any additional charges, such as delivery costs.</p> <p>Purchase price relates to the price at time of acquisition.</p>	<p><b>Source data</b> The HES is now conducted only every six years. The current weights will thus be seven years old before being updated. However, studies suggest that the potential upward bias in the CPI may not be significant. The ABS is considering the frequency of updating of weights as part of its 16<sup>th</sup> Series review.</p> <p>Price collection is also restricted to the main cities.</p> <p><b>Assessment of source data</b> The HES is reconciled with other data and adjusted for underreporting. There is interactive editing in the field using hand-held computers and ongoing sample maintenance for outlets and items.</p> <p><b>Statistical techniques</b> A Laspeyres-type index is computed mostly using the geometric mean elementary aggregates. Appropriate techniques are used for quality adjustment and for the imputation of missing prices.</p> <p><b>Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs</b> Internal consistency checks and comparative analysis with selected PPI items and market expectations are regularly conducted.</p> <p><b>Revision studies</b> The CPI would only be revised in “exceptional” circumstances, i.e., when “significant” errors are found, although such circumstances have so far never occurred.</p>	<p><b>Periodicity and timeliness</b> The CPI does not conform to the SDDS requirement for periodicity. It is published quarterly although some users have expressed a strong preference for a monthly series. The periodicity of the CPI is one of the issues under consideration in the 16<sup>th</sup> Series review.</p> <p>The CPI is released within a calendar month of the end of the reference period.</p> <p><b>Consistency</b> The CPI is part of a family of indices within a national accounts framework.</p> <p>Aggregation at any level leads to the same result.</p> <p>A consistent all-items series goes back to 1948.</p> <p><b>Revision policy and practice</b> Revisions are rare and are only made when a “significant” error occurs, although such circumstances have so far never occurred. In view of their incidental occurrence, no written procedures exist.</p>	<p><b>Data accessibility</b> All data which are of publishable quality are available free of charge from the easily navigable ABS website together with the associated metadata.</p> <p>The CPI release is available to all at time of first publication in electronic and paper form. It gives all the main indices and an explanation of the main factors contributing to inflation. It also includes a number of analytical series e.g., a series excluding volatile items. Back-series are also available to users.</p> <p>Each quarterly CPI publication announces the publication dates for the subsequent four quarters.</p> <p>Pre-release embargoed access for two hours under lock-up conditions is given to selective government officials. This arrangement is publicized.</p> <p><b>Metadata accessibility</b> The ABS puts all CPI methodology on its website and in detailed technical notes accompanying the release of statistics. The metadata are extensive and cater to a wide variety of audiences.</p> <p><b>Assistance to users.</b> Client contact details are included on the front page of publications. A referral service channels enquiries to relevant officers. The ABS website contains links to all data releases together with the terms and conditions of supply.</p>

**Table 3c. Assessment of Data Quality—Dimensions 2 to 5—Producer Price Index**

2. Methodological soundness	3. Accuracy and reliability	4. Serviceability	5. Accessibility
<p><b>Concepts and definitions</b></p> <p>The ABS publishes quarterly input and output PPIs for selected industries plus economy-wide indices using a stage of production framework. Indices generally conform to international standards.</p> <p><b>Scope</b></p> <p>Published PPIs cover the minimum requirements of manufacturing, construction and mining but PPIs for some services are not available.</p> <p><b>Classification/sectorization</b></p> <p>ANZSIC06 results in some loss of international comparability, but ANZSIC and ISIC broadly correspond and there are no conceptual differences. Different versions of ANZSIC are used for the component indices versus the economy-wide indices. Once suitable weighting data are available all indices will be on the same basis. There is a broad correspondence to ISIC.</p> <p><b>Basis for recording</b></p> <p>Specification pricing at market prices is used. Ex-factory prices are used for output indices and prices including nondeductible taxes, transport and trade margins are used for input indices. GST is excluded.</p> <p>Purchase price relates to the price at time of collection—where this is no production period, producers are asked the current production cost.</p> <p>All PPIs are produced on a gross basis.</p>	<p><b>Source data</b></p> <p>Indices are reviewed periodically. More regular input-output data will lead to more frequent updates. New products are introduced independent of the timing of weight updates. There are no PPIs for a significant proportion of services.</p> <p><b>Assessment of source data</b></p> <p>Judgemental sampling is used. There is some continuous sample maintenance based on industry feedback.</p> <p><b>Statistical techniques</b></p> <p>A Laspeyres-type index is computed. Elementary aggregates use the weighted average of price relatives and, for some services, the geometric mean. Appropriate quality adjustments and imputations are used, e.g., using valuation data from manufacturers and price movements for similar specifications.</p> <p><b>Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs</b></p> <p>Results are assessed against other price indices and industry sources, also, coherence with national accounts.</p> <p><b>Revision studies</b></p> <p>Revisions are rare. The index is corrected and the publication is reissued as soon as is practical.</p>	<p><b>Periodicity and timeliness</b></p> <p>PPIs are produced quarterly, as against the SDDS requirement for monthly indices.</p> <p>Quarterly indices fulfill the needs of national accounts deflators. Users do not seem to be pressing strongly for monthly data.</p> <p>The indices are published within four weeks of the end of the reference period.</p> <p><b>Consistency</b></p> <p>The all items PPI is consistent internally when aggregated from different levels of the classification.</p> <p><b>Revision policy and practice</b></p> <p>Revisions are published in the next available press notice.</p> <p>Revised figures are given an appropriate label (R = revision).</p>	<p><b>Data accessibility</b></p> <p>All publishable PPIs and related material are put on the website free of charge.</p> <p>The PPI release gives the headline figure, sub-indices, and commentary. It also provides methodological notes. Hard and electronic copies of the release are available at the time of first publication. The next four publication dates are given in the press release.</p> <p>Prerelease embargoed access for half an hour under lock-up conditions is given to selected government officials for briefing purposes. This arrangement is publicized.</p> <p><b>Metadata accessibility</b></p> <p>PPI methodology is put in the public domain via the ABS website and various paper publications. Different publications, going into differing levels of detail, address the differing needs of different users</p> <p><b>Assistance to users.</b></p> <p>Client contact details are included on the front page of publications. A referral service channels enquiries to relevant officers. The ABS website contains links to all data releases together with the terms and conditions of supply.</p> <p>The complete catalog of PPI and related publications is on the ABS website.</p>

**Table 3d. Assessment of Data Quality—Dimensions 2 to 5—Government Finance Statistics**

<p><b>2. Methodological soundness</b></p>	<p><b>3. Accuracy and reliability</b></p>	<p><b>4. Serviceability</b></p>	<p><b>5. Accessibility</b></p>
<p><b>Concepts and definitions.</b> The overall structure of GFS follows nationally developed concepts, definitions, and presentational frameworks, based on 1993 SNA and harmonized with <i>GFSM 2001</i>. Differences are fully reconciled.</p> <p><b>Scope.</b> The GFS scope is consistent with <i>GFSM 2001</i>, but some components of the statements are incomplete due to the lack of a breakdown between domestic and foreign financial assets. A breakdown between holding gains and volume changes for State and local governments is also not available.</p> <p><b>Classification/sectorization.</b> Sectorization is in accordance with the <i>GFSM 2001</i>. Full data are compiled for the public sector and sub-sectors. National aggregates are broadly classified consistent with the <i>GFSM 2001</i>. Some terminology differences in detailed classifications exist; these can be moved to the <i>GFSM 2001</i> at the detailed level.</p> <p><b>Basis for recording.</b> Flows generally follow market prices, stock data are valued according to accounting standards, indicating market prices for traded instruments and nominal value for nontraded. Accrual accounting, and appropriate grossing/netting is used.</p>	<p><b>Source data.</b> Annual data are now sourced from accounting records harmonized with GFS reporting requirements. Full institutional and geographical coverage is reached. For quarterly data, sample surveys supplement these data sources, primarily for local governments and public nonfinancial corporations.</p> <p><b>Assessment of source data.</b> Source data are routinely assessed against other sources. Automated procedures monitor and validate data, while staff assess data for trend deviations, misreporting, and consistency.</p> <p><b>Statistical techniques.</b> Statistical techniques for aggregation and consolidation are embedded in the electronic system. Sound statistical techniques are used to estimate missing data. Quarterly data are annually benchmarked to final outcomes, but the focus is only on the data most important from a national accounts perspective. Preliminary data are replaced with more accurate data when these become available. Processes and procedures are well organized and documented.</p> <p><b>Assessment and validation of intermediate data and statistical outputs</b></p> <p>Regular assessments and validations against entity level financial statements, annual reports, budget documentation, and mid-year reviews take place. The media are monitored.</p> <p><b>Revision studies.</b> The annual data are not subject to major revisions. Revisions to quarterly data are documented as part of the output clearance process.</p>	<p><b>Periodicity and timeliness.</b> Quarterly and annual GFS meet SDDS periodicity requirements. Quarterly general government data exceed SDDS timeliness requirements. For central government operations, Australia avails itself of a targeted flexibility option. Monthly central government debt data exceed the SDDS requirements.</p> <p><b>Consistency.</b> Annual GFS are consistent within the dataset and over time. Quarterly GFS data as published do not sum to the annual data. Consistency with the national accounts is compromised due to some documented differences in concepts and methodology between national accounts and GFS. Since GFS do not distinguish between domestic and foreign, and bank-nonbank financing, assessment of consistency with BOP and monetary data cannot be made. Reconciliations with national accounts and financial statements are routinely made.</p> <p><b>Revision policy and practice.</b></p> <p>Revisions to quarterly data are made as required. Quarterly data for previous years are benchmarked to final annual data for national accounts purposes. Although available in the database, the revised benchmarked quarterly data are not disseminated.</p>	<p><b>Data accessibility.</b> ABS GFS data for the latest reference period are released in quarterly and annual publications. Ten-year consistent time series are disseminated. Historic data starting in 1962 are available on request. Monthly financial statements for the Commonwealth are released for the latest period. These data are not available in a time series, comparable data are available to the public in archived publications, albeit not in time series format.</p> <p><b>Metadata accessibility.</b></p> <p>Comprehensive sources and methods documents, and SDDS summary methodologies, are published and updated regularly. All data publications provide brief notes on the data. Metadata are appropriately cross referenced and well publicized. Metadata are highly technical and could benefit from summaries adapted to needs of various audiences (e.g., journalists).</p> <p><b>Assistance to users.</b></p> <p>Client contact details are included on the front page of publications. A referral service channels enquiries to relevant officers. The ABS website contains links to all data releases together with the terms and conditions of supply.</p>



































































































































































































































































































































































































































































































































