



# ABS CORPORATE PLAN

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Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975, Section 6(1), states that the functions are of the Australian Bureau of Statistics:

- (a) 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;
- (b) to collect, compile, analyse and disseminate statistics and related information;
- (c) to ensure co-ordination of the operations of official bodies in the collection, compilation and dissemination of statistics and related information, with particular regard to:
  - (i) the avoidance of duplication in the collection by official bodies of information for statistical purposes;
  - (ii) the attainment of compatibility between, and the integration of, statistics compiled by official bodies; and
  - (iii) the maximum possible utilization, for statistical purposes, of information, and means of collection of information, available to official bodies;
- (d) to formulate, and ensure compliance with, standards for the carrying out by official bodies of operations for statistical purposes;
- (e) to provide advice and assistance to official bodies in relation to statistics; and
- (f) to provide liaison between Australia, on the one hand, and other countries and international organizations, on the other hand, in relation to statistical matters.



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# FOREWORD

## INTRODUCTION

The ABS has a proud history. We are recognised as one of Australia's most important institutions. We are a key contributor to an effective Australian democracy as we support decision making among governments and the community. Our predecessors have left us a fine shoulder on which to stand. But, as in the past, there is a need to continually change if we are to remain a respected institution.

This Corporate Plan was adopted by the ABS Management Meeting, held in October 2005. It sets out the directions in which ABS senior management would like the ABS to move.

The main impetus for this revised version of the Corporate Plan was the review of the Bureau's strategic position and direction. The key messages from this review are incorporated in the next section on the ABS Environment. They suggest the need for some changes in the way the ABS works. While this is true, the real strength of the ABS comes from the continued application of, and adherence to, our core values. These are what bind us together. They are the key to the continued high performance and reputation of the ABS. Studies of our history show that these core values have been embraced over 100 years.

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE CORPORATE PLAN?

The Corporate Plan, which describes our working environment, outlines our mission and values, and sets the objectives and strategies to achieve them, is a key part of the strategic management process. In particular, it sets out the directions we want the ABS to take to meet our future challenges. The success of this process depends on how well these directions are understood, accepted and pursued by all employees.

The plan does not set out work plans in detail but provides a high level framework within which to prepare our three-year forward work program each year. It also provides a framework for individual work areas of the ABS to develop their own more detailed plans. These plans, of course, form the basis of individuals' performance agreements. Integrated planning means that each ABS employee should be able to identify their unique contribution to achieving the objectives of our organisation that are described in this Corporate Plan.

Taking a life-cycle approach to our strategic planning, what we do falls into four classes of activities. For some of our activities, the strategy will be stability and sound financial management; for others there will be

a growth strategy but it will be relatively orderly and without significant changes in resources; for other activities the strategy will be a concerted attempt to substantially upgrade the service to meet client needs; and for others the strategy will be to create a new future.

The objectives and strategies in this plan are essentially about the last three groups of activities. They are not about the 'business as usual' activities. This in no way should be seen to undermine the importance of our ongoing work which is core to our success and reputation.

## CONCLUSION

The Corporate Plan is intended to provide a sense of direction for the ABS as well as the key elements under which we operate, for example the mission, values and the mutual obligations that exist between the ABS and its employees.

The ABS must continue to move forward. Everyone has a role in this and the objectives and strategies provide a framework within which staff, particularly senior staff, can take initiatives consistent with these objectives. Some of these initiatives may not be as

successful as intended. What matters is that we learn from these experiences. But it is important that we create an environment where people feel they can take an initiative that is consistent with where the ABS wants to go.

This Corporate Plan will feel much the same as in the previous Plan. This is not surprising when the core purpose of the ABS has not changed much. But there have been some important changes, mostly in response to the review of the ABS' strategic position. For ease of reference, these are summarised in the Appendix.

A lot of people have contributed to this Corporate Plan. I would like to thank you all but most importantly Teresa Dickinson, Suzanne Hartshorn and the members of the Reference Group. The members who contributed to the development of this Corporate Plan are listed on page 25. These are the people who put the most effort into the development of the revised Corporate Plan. I commend this plan to each of you.

Dennis Trewin  
Australian Statistician  
December 2005



# ABS ENVIRONMENT

## ABS ENVIRONMENT: WHAT REMAINS THE SAME

The ABS has adapted to many changes since 1905 when the concept of a national statistical office was first instituted, and we remain a relevant and respected organisation in Australia and internationally.

The mission of the ABS — to assist and encourage informed decision making, research and discussion by leading a high quality, objective and responsive national statistical service — is not fundamentally changing as we enter our next century. Quality and quantity of outputs remain high and those who provide data to us trust the ABS to keep their data confidential.

The values of integrity, relevance, service, access for all, professionalism and trust of providers that underpin our culture and approach to our work endure.

Support is strong for the ABS among our stakeholders: they want us to thrive. The ABS must continue to evolve, however, while retaining what is unique and best about our organisation: our sense of shared purpose, our values and our culture of excellence.

## WHAT IS CHANGING

The ABS has experienced a number of significant changes in the last three years. A review of our strategic position, undertaken in 2004, highlighted issues of fundamental importance to the effectiveness and sustainability of the ABS. The review noted that our key stakeholders felt that the ABS needed to engage better with them. This includes improving our understanding of their needs, being more responsive to those needs, and informing them about our decision-making processes. Strengthening our relationships with key clients and data providers

is critical to the success of the ABS as it enters its second century.

Our stakeholders want us to take a more overt role in leading Australia's statistical system to improve and expand the information available for decision making, regardless of its source. Developing this role, in a context where there is distributed custodianship of many data sets, is a key strategic direction and challenge for us.

Client demand for more detailed data over a wider range of topics continues to grow, as does the complexity involved in producing our current range of statistics. In parallel, Australia's statistical system is growing in size and scope and Australian governments are emphasising greater information sharing ('create-once, use-many').

This is happening at a time when there might be increasing concern about privacy issues. This is a tension that has to be managed carefully. Although our legislation provides excellent protection of the confidentiality of information provided to us, public perceptions may be different and it is perceptions that drive the behaviour of our respondents and clients.

We face continuing pressures to improve productivity and create a staff profile for the ABS more appropriate to our future skill needs. The technical environment for managing and communicating information is changing rapidly, offering us both challenges and opportunities.

The ABS needs to evolve its culture, work program and operations to meet the challenges it faces. This plan describes how we intend to address emerging issues in our environment and lead Australia's statistical system in the next 3 to 5 years. It describes what we are trying to achieve, how we will go about it and what success will look like.



# ABS MISSION STATEMENT



WE ASSIST AND ENCOURAGE  
INFORMED DECISION MAKING,  
RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION  
WITHIN GOVERNMENTS AND  
THE COMMUNITY, BY LEADING A  
HIGH QUALITY, OBJECTIVE AND  
RESPONSIVE NATIONAL  
STATISTICAL SERVICE

# ABS ROLE

## AND THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL SYSTEM

ABS is one of many providers of statistics (albeit the largest) that are used to inform research, discussion and decision making within governments and the community. The organisations and arrangements, formal and informal, which together provide such statistics, form Australia's national statistical system. The range of services that are collectively provided for Australia constitutes Australia's national statistical service.

Some organisations that form part of Australia's statistical system have institutional and legal arrangements which govern their operations.

ABS' enabling legislation, the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act (1975)*, establishes the ABS as Australia's central statistical authority, responsible for providing statistical services to all Australian governments, and the community more generally. It provides the ABS with the legal responsibility to lead the development and operation of the national statistical system, although we choose to do so through collaboration rather than direction.

This legislation describes the six functions of the ABS as being to:

- operate as Australia's central statistical authority and to provide services for the Australian and state governments;
- collect, compile, analyse, and disseminate statistics;
- co-ordinate the statistical operations of official bodies;
- develop standards for statistics and ensure that they are complied with;
- give advice and assistance on the production and use of statistics;
- liaise with international organisations on statistical issues.

Consistent with the first two functions, the ABS has responsibility to provide the range of official statistics that serve the needs of governments. It also has a responsibility to provide information on how Australia is changing. Provision of such statistics is a key element of the democratic process.

The ABS also has the lead role in avoiding duplication in the collection of statistics, attaining comparability between collections undertaken by different agencies and maximising the utilisation of statistics; regardless of which member of the national statistical system has produced them.



# ABS VALUES

WHAT WE BELIEVE AND HOW WE BEHAVE



As an Australian Public Service agency, ABS employees abide by the APS values. In addition we hold the following values that are material to our role as an independent provider of information for Australia.

## INTEGRITY

- our data, analysis, and interpretations are independent and objective
- we publish statistics from each survey that we conduct
- we operate in a way that encourages trust — we publish the dates for release of our statistics and early access to our statistics is strictly controlled under publicly known arrangements
- our methodologies and approaches are based on sound statistical principles and practices and are open to scrutiny
- the integrity of our statistics is built on the integrity of our employees — we are honest about our mistakes and take prompt action to correct them

## SERVICE

- we understand that our role is to provide a service to the Australian community and governments
- we work to understand how clients use our statistics so we can respond more effectively to their needs
- we provide assistance to help clients make effective use of our statistics
- we build client trust by responding to requests in a timely fashion and provide explanations when we are unable to satisfy requests

## PROFESSIONALISM

- we strive for the highest professional standards in all aspects of ABS activities
- we develop our employees to ensure that the ABS has the leadership capability and skills it needs now and in the future
- we collaborate on the development and adoption of national and international standards
- we endeavour to achieve quality that is 'fit for purpose'

## RELEVANCE

- we work to meet Australia's information needs
- we collaborate with stakeholders to identify and address the most important data needs to inform policy and research
- we plan so we can respond effectively to statistical requirements
- we explain our decisions on statistical matters and work priorities
- our statistics are timely and we provide information about their quality to assist with their interpretation
- our statistics are reliable because they are developed in line with relevant nationally and internationally recognised statistical frameworks and standards

## TRUST OF PROVIDERS

- we respect the contribution made by data providers to help us achieve the ABS mission
- we explain why information is being collected and how it will be used
- we protect the confidentiality of information provided to us
- we seek to minimise the burden on providers
- we consider the privacy implications of our collections and make this information publicly available

## ACCESS FOR ALL

- our statistics are available to all
- we present information in a way that is understandable
- we work to reduce barriers to accessing our statistics by improving their availability and useability
- we support intermediaries to make statistics more readily available
- we strive for accurate and widespread media coverage, and discussion of our information



# ABS PEOPLE



The ABS values its employees. We understand that the only way we will deliver on our mission is through the combined efforts of capable and motivated employees.

The ABS needs people who can understand Australia's evolving information needs, and help the ABS satisfy those needs. We need people who understand the changes to the environment in which the ABS operates, and help the ABS adapt to those changes. We need people who bring to their work both professional competence and a commitment to ABS values.

The ABS has obligations to its people, and ABS employees in turn have obligations to the ABS.

## WHAT THE ABS WILL DO

The ABS will provide a good working environment by:

- ensuring ABS people work in safe and healthy environments
- ensuring all employees are treated with fairness and respect
- valuing the different perspectives a diverse workforce offers

- consulting ABS people about the issues that affect them and explaining the reasons behind decisions
- fostering a culture that values excellence, trust and effective communication.

The ABS will nurture the people who work here by:

- working with employees to design satisfying careers
- offering opportunities to develop and apply skills
- recognising high performance and acknowledging the contribution ABS people make to the success of the ABS.

The ABS will support its people by:

- providing employment arrangements that help balance work-life demands
- supporting employees in times of organisational change
- providing processes, systems and resources that allow employees to be productive
- developing and using leadership abilities at all levels
- providing training that assists employees carry out their work
- encouraging innovation and intelligent risk-taking
- managing poor performance effectively.

## WHAT ABS EMPLOYEES WILL DO

ABS people will:

- uphold both APS and ABS values and policies, and contribute towards fulfilling the ABS mission
- be accountable for meeting agreed goals and performance standards
- take responsibility for developing skills necessary to perform their work well
- demonstrate adaptability and willingness to change.

As a member of a team, employees will:

- treat colleagues with fairness and respect and avoid behaving in ways that may cause offence or distress
- work constructively with their team, and contribute to cooperative effort across the ABS

- look for opportunities to innovate and improve work processes
- provide, and be receptive to honest, timely and constructive feedback.

As a representative of the ABS, employees will:

- uphold the integrity and reputation of the ABS
- understand how their work contributes to achieving the ABS mission
- maintain the confidentiality of provider information and data
- understand the needs of providers and clients and build strong working relationships with them.





# ABS OBJECTIVES

1. AN EXPANDED AND IMPROVED NATIONAL STATISTICAL SERVICE
2. ABS SERVICES THAT ARE TIMELY, RELEVANT, RESPONSIVE AND RESPECTED FOR THEIR INTEGRITY AND QUALITY
3. INFORMED AND INCREASED USE OF STATISTICS
4. A KEY CONTRIBUTOR TO INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO AUSTRALIA OR OUR REGION
5. AN ORGANISATION THAT BUILDS CAPABILITY TO CONTINUALLY IMPROVE ITS EFFECTIVENESS
6. THE TRUST AND COOPERATION OF OUR PROVIDERS
7. ABS IS A RESPECTED AND STRONGLY SUPPORTED ORGANISATION

## 1. AN EXPANDED AND IMPROVED NATIONAL STATISTICAL SERVICE

Consistent with its legislated responsibilities, the ABS will lead Australia's statistical system through collaboration with others. While the ABS will continue to be Australia's main provider of statistics, we will work in partnership with other organisations to expand and improve the quality and awareness of statistical services available.

### Strategies:

ABS will develop and communicate a shared understanding of Australia's statistical service and lead the implementation of this vision. To achieve this we will:

- work in partnership with other organisations to develop an agreement on how the national statistical system should operate
- build support within government for a national statistical policy and lead the policy's development and implementation.

ABS will ensure that statistical priorities are directly linked to stakeholders' needs, including policy directions of governments. To achieve this we will:

- collaborate with stakeholders, including ASAC<sup>1</sup>, to agree on Australia's statistical priorities and agree on how these priorities will be met
- identify the national datasets that are essential economic and social indicators for Australia and ensure that the national statistical system makes these data available.

ABS will develop a strong community of those interested in statistics within government. To achieve this we will:

- lead the development of networks of statisticians working in government
- develop statistical skills across the national statistical system, particularly through the activities of the ABS National Statistical Training Institute

- develop and promote statistical standards for use in the national statistical service
- promote good statistical and data management practices
- support statistical forums and conferences which discuss statistical issues
- ensure our employees working on national statistical service activities have the necessary skills to do this work.

ABS will continue to work with our partners to implement the National Data Network (NDN).

To achieve this we will:

- establish principles, protocols and procedures to guide operation of the NDN
- collaborate to produce tools which will aid statistical professionals in improving the quality and accessibility of their data
- build the trust of other agencies to contribute their data and services to the NDN
- incrementally increase the data content and services available through the NDN
- actively encourage the use of administrative data for statistical purposes.

### We will be successful when:

- a national statistical policy exists that is adopted across the national statistical system
- there is a collaborative approach across the national statistical system to meeting Australia's statistical needs
- there is strong capability among all the providers of statistical services
- ABS expert advice is sought by other providers of statistics
- there is an agreed set of standards and protocols in use across the range of statistical and information management activities
- users have access to a wider range of data of relevance to issues being considered.

<sup>1</sup> Australian Statistics Advisory Council.

## 2. ABS SERVICES THAT ARE TIMELY, RELEVANT, RESPONSIVE AND RESPECTED FOR THEIR INTEGRITY AND QUALITY

Producing statistics for informed decision making, research and discussion remains a core role of the ABS. We aspire to deliver statistical services and internal support services that are timely, relevant, responsive and of high integrity and quality.

### Strategies:

ABS will deliver services that are of high quality.

To achieve this we will:

- establish clear objectives for producing ABS services
- develop quality guidelines and standards for our services
- provide sufficient information to enable users to make their own assessment of the quality of ABS services
- increase the consistency and reliability of ABS data from different collections
- ensure that our internal support services deliver to ABS the organisational capability to deliver high quality statistical services
- measure service delivery performance and output quality.

ABS will improve the relevance of our services to meeting the key information needs of government and the community. To achieve this we will:

- improve our analytical capabilities so that we can add value to data and increase the re-use of existing data
- work collaboratively with key stakeholders to identify and prioritise gaps in statistical requirements

- develop an understanding of policy drivers and interact with agencies early in the policy development process so that relevant data will be available in a timely fashion
- develop partnerships with key stakeholders to create innovative solutions to statistical priorities
- review existing statistics and eliminate services that are now less useful.

ABS will improve the responsiveness of our services.

To achieve this we will:

- ensure our culture, structure and processes support increased responsiveness
- develop supporting systems, databases and processes to enable us to be more responsive
- improve support for researchers while maintaining respondent trust
- take an active role in supporting data linking initiatives for statistical analysis purposes
- reduce the time taken to commission new surveys
- sustain healthy working relationships between key clients and the ABS.

### We will be successful if:

- we maintain the quality and integrity of our services
- clients perceive that the ABS provides the services that are required
- we are able to respond to statistical information needs more quickly.



## 3. INFORMED AND INCREASED USE OF STATISTICS

The ABS makes a valuable contribution to informed decision making, research and discussion by encouraging the use of statistics to support these activities. We ensure that our statistics are accessible and understandable to users in government and the broader community.

### Strategies:

ABS will improve awareness of the range of statistics and services that are available. To achieve this we will:

- increase the visibility of ABS statistics and make information about statistics easy for users to find and understand
- use the facilities of the web to improve notification services for statistics and information to users
- use the media to promote awareness of new statistics and services
- use the opportunities offered by conferences to publicise ABS statistics and services, particularly among the business community.

ABS will continue to improve access to our statistics.

To achieve this we will:

- investigate how new technologies, particularly web-based services, can improve access and dissemination of ABS data
- develop mechanisms that support 'self help for users' to access and analyse ABS data
- collaborate with other data providers to increase the range of statistical information and services that are accessible
- improve processes that allow users to manipulate our data to create their own solutions
- increase access to detailed data for research purposes.

ABS will increase the usefulness of our statistics.

To achieve this we will:

- provide analysis and explanation of the information represented by our data
- release information on concepts, sources and methods that explain how our statistics are created
- improve user understanding of our statistics, including providing information about their quality and fitness for purpose, and how to interpret and use them
- improve the availability and usefulness of metadata that describes our data
- enhance employees' knowledge of statistical processes, products and services so we can give better advice to our clients.

ABS will encourage the increased use of statistics.

To achieve this we will:

- increase our understanding of how clients use our data
- identify areas where, and the reasons why, statistics are not being used to support research, discussion and decision making
- actively promote the effective use of statistics
- increase statistical literacy in the community, with a special focus on the schools sector.

### We will be successful:

- if we increase the use of our statistics
- when users have a better understanding of the uses and limitations of our data
- if statistics are used more effectively for decision making and research.

#### 4. A KEY CONTRIBUTOR TO INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO AUSTRALIA OR OUR REGION

The ABS is an active member of the international statistical community. We contribute our expertise to build the capacity of developing countries' statistical systems, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, and to develop international statistical standards and approaches.

##### Strategies:

ABS will contribute to strengthening statistical systems of countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

To achieve this we will:

- build statistical capacity in the Asia-Pacific region, and other selected countries, in line with Australia's identified priorities for assistance
- participate in regional statistical bodies that work effectively and represent the interests of the Asia-Pacific region internationally
- coordinate our statistical activities in the Asia-Pacific region with relevant agencies.

ABS will play a leadership role in the international statistical community with a focus on the availability of international data and their comparability across countries. To achieve this we will:

- maintain strong links with effective international statistical organisations
- contribute our expertise to the development of relevant international statistical standards and promote the use of those standards

- cooperate with the international statistics community to identify and implement best practice statistical processes and methods
- improve our collaboration with Australian Government agencies on international statistical issues
- contribute to the development and accessibility of internationally comparable datasets.

ABS will collaborate with like organisations to build capability through the exchange of know-how.

To achieve this we will:

- work collaboratively with other statistical offices where there are mutual benefits
- provide opportunities for ABS staff to share knowledge with our peer organisations
- participate in international conferences or meetings that work effectively
- hold bilateral meetings with Statistics Canada and Statistics New Zealand on a regular basis, and other offices as the opportunity arises.

##### We will be successful:

- if we are able to influence the development of international standards
- if we are sought out to provide input on statistical issues at international forums
- when there is a demonstrated improvement in the statistical capacity of the Asia-Pacific region.

#### 5. AN ORGANISATION THAT BUILDS CAPABILITY TO CONTINUALLY IMPROVE ITS EFFECTIVENESS

The ABS supports learning, innovation and high performance to build an organisation that will meet the challenges of the future.

##### Strategies:

ABS will encourage employee learning. To achieve this we will:

- ensure we have a capability framework that provides a clear specification of the skills expected of employees
- support ABS employees to acquire new skills and knowledge throughout their career with the ABS
- ensure learning and opportunities support the development of required capabilities
- provide opportunities and support for ABS employees to develop leadership abilities
- aim to continually improve our learning and development systems and processes.

ABS will support innovation in the delivery of our statistical and support services. To achieve this we will:

- provide an environment of trust and support that encourages employees to question how things are done and contribute ideas for improvement
- share knowledge and learn from each other, our stakeholders and peer organisations
- invest in research activities to ensure we have good understanding of the opportunities that arise
- make use of advances in technology and methodology to improve our effectiveness.

ABS expects high performance from its employees.

To achieve this we will:

- align recruitment and employment practices with corporate objectives and values
- ensure employees know what is expected of them and give them the resources and support necessary to perform well
- build skilled and motivated teams that work cooperatively to produce results
- recognise achievements of our employees and the organisation
- deal effectively with poor performance.

ABS will improve organisational processes.

To achieve this we will:

- continually evaluate work practices and processes so that they are both efficient and effective
- develop indicators of our performance in key areas, including corporate objectives, and review the outcomes on a regular basis
- reinforce good project management practices to ensure they are integrated with ABS planning and review processes
- improve the ways we store and share our knowledge and expertise
- seek additional resources to support improvement of our processes and outputs where the benefits justify the cost of these improvements.

##### We will be successful:

- if we deliver a high standard of performance in all areas of our business
- when the performance of employees delivers the required organisational capability
- if we continually implement improvements to work practices and processes.



## 6. THE TRUST AND COOPERATION OF OUR PROVIDERS

ABS requires the trust and cooperation of our data providers to ensure we obtain the data required to deliver timely and high quality statistics.

### Strategies:

ABS will maintain good relationships with providers.

To achieve this we will:

- ensure providers understand the value of the information we seek from them
- improve processes and systems for managing our relationships with our providers
- develop the skills of ABS employees to relate to providers and respond to their concerns
- comply with the Business Surveys Charter.

ABS will continue our strong track-record in maintaining the confidentiality of data we obtain.

To achieve this we will:

- provide secure technical and physical environments for collecting and storing data
- ensure that employees maintain the confidentiality of data and know why it is important to do this
- promote awareness among providers of our ongoing commitment and strong record of achievement in maintaining confidentiality.

ABS will manage reporting load. To achieve this we will:

- wherever possible, obtain data from alternative sources in preference to direct statistical collection
- lead work to reduce duplication of requests for statistical data across government
- offer more convenient ways for respondents to provide data to the ABS
- provide the option of electronic transfer of data within a secure environment
- ensure that the data we seek does not place unreasonable costs on providers
- use best practice in survey design and development
- measure and report on provider load and take account of the impact of statistical demands on providers.

### We will be successful:

- if we obtain ongoing high response rates and willing compliance by providers
- if we enjoy cordial and productive relationships with our providers
- if the burden on providers of statistical information is managed, and reduced where possible
- when our providers understand the value of their data to the users of statistics.





## 7. ABS IS A RESPECTED AND STRONGLY SUPPORTED ORGANISATION

ABS has a reputation as being an organisation of high integrity that delivers quality outputs for clients. If the ABS is to continue to enjoy strong support from decision makers and the community this reputation must be maintained.

### Strategies:

ABS will manage our reputation for integrity and quality among decision makers and the community. To achieve this we will:

- manage ourselves well and ensure that our work is of high quality
- manage risks to the quality of our work
- be transparent about all we do, and ensure that changes are publicised well in advance
- deal openly with any errors in our statistics and work to quickly address any problems
- work closely with relevant stakeholders on privacy matters relating to ABS operations, making the findings of privacy investigations available to the public.

ABS will build support among decision makers and the community. To achieve this we will:

- promote awareness of our mission, role and achievements
- have an open relationship with the media and make ABS experts available to them
- provide excellent service to Parliament, ensuring relevant Ministers are well briefed on ABS performance and issues
- build close relationships with other key stakeholders including the senior staff of other government agencies at both the Australian Government and the state/territory government levels.

### We will be successful if:

- we maintain our reputation for quality and integrity
- there is continued support for the ABS among key stakeholders
- we enjoy cordial and productive relationships with media.

## APPENDIX: EXPLAINING THE CHANGES TO THE ABS CORPORATE PLAN

In summary, the following describes by section what has changed in this Corporate Plan.

### ABS Environment

This section has been added to provide a context for the Corporate Plan.

### ABS Mission Statement

We have replaced “*providing*” with “*leading*” a *high quality, objective and responsive national statistical service*. This reflects the stronger role we want to play within the national statistical system.

### ABS Role Statement

The terms “national statistical service” and “national statistical system” cause some confusion and uncertainty within the ABS. Given its importance in our mission, there was strong demand for a description of the national statistical system and our role in the system. There was also demand for a high level role statement that explains, briefly, what the ABS does.

### ABS Values

The title has changed to more accurately reflect that these are values that the ABS holds rather than principles. A value on ‘Service’ was added as we are an organisation with a highly developed ethos around provision of service.

### ABS People

The essence is the same — it has been updated to reflect the current environment.

### ABS Objectives/Strategies

At the objective level, there has not been great change. The seven objectives look very similar to those in the 2000 Corporate Plan. However, we have added a section to each objective reflecting the outcomes we would expect if we are successful in meeting these objectives.

However, at the strategy level there has been considerable change. Some of the main changes are reflected in the following paragraphs.

#### Objective 1

We have tried to build on our experience with developing the national statistical service. The strategies reflect a much stronger leadership role in developing national statistical priorities, a community of statisticians across all agencies and the National Data Network. If successful, this will create a new future for official statistics in Australia.

#### Objective 2

The main changes are to reflect the strategic review recommendations for improved engagement and increased responsiveness. If successful, the ABS’ reputation will be significantly enhanced.

#### Objective 3

The main changes are to more fully exploit the opportunities provided by the web, and technologies surrounding the web, to further informed and increased use of statistics.

*Objective 4*

The main change is to put more emphasis on 'things that work' in our international relations activities.

*Objective 5*

The main change is the emphasis placed on building capability.

*Objective 6*

There are no substantial changes to the strategies compared with the 2000 Corporate Plan.

*Objective 7*

There are no substantial changes to the strategies except that the emphasis is on balanced engagement across a range of stakeholders.

In summary, the main changes in this plan are in response to the recommendations of the strategic review.

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The Reference Group members who contributed to the development of this plan were:

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