

Submission to the Australian Bureau of Statistics

Essential Statistical Assets for Australia



### **About us**

The Australian Library and Information Association [ALIA]<sup>1</sup> is the professional organisation for the Australian library and information services sector. We provide the national voice of the profession in the development, promotion and delivery of quality library and information services to the nation, through leadership, advocacy and mutual support.

### **Purpose of our submission**

Our submission has two purposes. The first is to establish ALIA's interest in being involved in further discussion and consultation around the choice of Essential Statistical Assets for Australia; the second is to make the case for the inclusion of an additional statistic, and for the retention of two of the Category D "possibly out" statistics.

We are happy for our submission to be made public.

### **Further consultation**

We would welcome the opportunity for further involvement in the discussions around the choice of Essential Statistical Assets for Australia. Our contact is Sue McKerracher, executive director, [sue.mckerracher@alia.org.au](mailto:sue.mckerracher@alia.org.au) t: 02 6215 8222.

### **Response to specific questions**

1. Do you think this is a useful initiative?

Yes, we understand the need to focus limited resources on the collection of statistics which are of genuine benefit to policymakers.

2. Are the criteria adequate in identifying what is essential?

Yes, we are particularly supportive of the criteria "application in public policy and service delivery" and "importance to key national progress measurement".

3. Are there any essential statistics you feel we have omitted? If so, why?

We would like to see 4150.0 Time Use Survey included in the list of essential statistics. This survey provides a valuable picture of the changing way we live, the time we have available for work and leisure, and how we choose to spend that time. This is especially useful for service planning in libraries.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.alia.org.au/>

4. What are your views on the statistics identified in the “possibly in” and “possibly out” categories?

We are concerned about the potential loss of figures about cultural participation and attendance. These figures are not available through other channels and they are often used by libraries to help build their business case for funding by state/territory and local government.

We are also concerned about the potential loss of statistics referring to the literacy of the adult population (foundation skills). The Adult Literacy and Life Skills survey (2006) results underpinned the federal government-funded National Year of Reading 2012<sup>2</sup> campaign. The figure of 46% of Australians failing to meet Level 3 literacy standards has been widely reported as part of this initiative and we would argue strongly that our nation’s future performance needs to be monitored and reported on in order to track our progress.

5. Are there any statistics you feel we should remove from the list? If so, why?

We are less concerned about the loss of statistics on the literacy and numeracy of school students and on child development. Our members are able to use NAPLAN figures to inform themselves about the literacy and numeracy of school students, and the Australian Early Development Index provides the statistics members need relating to early childhood development, particularly in the area of literacy.

14 September, 2012

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<sup>2</sup> [www.love2read.org.au](http://www.love2read.org.au)