

Session 1 Introduction to Data Integration:

Country Presentation - Australia

REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON DATA INTEGRATION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

About Australia



Population size:

- 25,649,985 (as at 31 March 2020)

Size of your statistical office:

- Currently 2800 staff, plus 400 interviewers.
- 10 offices across all 8 states and territories of Australia

One or two fun facts:

- The biggest ABS office is in Canberra, the capital of Australia, which has a population of 429,800
- Canberra was established as a new city, to settle a long running dispute over whether Sydney or Melbourne should be the capital of Australia.

Are you integrating data?

- Yes! Planning for person data integration commenced in 2005 with the 'Census Data Enhancement Project', to add value to data from the Census of Population and Housing by bringing it together with other data sources.
- In 2015, ABS partnered with other Australian Government agencies in MADIP – the 'Multi Agency Data Integration Project'. MADIP facilitates the use and re-use of Australian public data for research purposes.
- Between 2017 and 2020 the MADIP data asset was further developed through DIPA – the Data Integration Partnership for Australia.
- Today a range of integrated data is available in the MADIP data asset across several domains, including Health, Education, Migration, Taxation, and Social Services.
- ABS also has an integrated business data asset – the Business Longitudinal Analysis Data Environment (BLADE).

Examples of national data integration

- A large number of research projects access MADIP data. Following are two examples relating to social disadvantage. For a full list of MADIP projects, see: https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/statistical+data+integration+-+madip+research+projects
- **'Exits from Income Support'** – This project used data from the MADIP asset to better understand what happens when recipients of government income support payments ('social security') stop receiving payments.
- **'Intergenerational Welfare Dependence'** – This project used data from the MADIP asset linked to the 'transgenerational dataset' to examine the relationship between childhood disadvantage and pathways later in life.
- Both of these projects were led by the Australian Government Department of Social Services, and used a range of MADIP data including Social Security, Personal Income Tax, Medicare, Higher Education, and Census.

Challenges and solutions

What are the biggest challenges you face in integrating data?

- Working within our legal and governance constraints and those of our partner agencies.
- Securing timely data supply.
- Maintaining public trust.

What solutions have you developed or are considering?

- We have dedicated teams within our Data Strategy, Integration and Services Division focussing on governance and public trust.
- We are considering ‘Service Level Agreements’ with our key partner agencies to secure ongoing data supply arrangements.

Final word

We are looking forward to learning from our colleagues across the Asia-Pacific region as well as sharing our experiences and perspectives!