Australian Government Statistical Forum (AGSF)

Summary Record

Monday 30 May 2016

Meeting theme: Strategic management of data across Australian Government agencies

Archer Board Room, Ground Floor, ABS House, 45 Benjamin Way, Belconnen

Time	Item	Discussion Opener	Paper/Presentation
2:00pm – 2:05pm (5 mins)	1. Welcome	Gemma Van Halderen ABS	
2:05pm – 2:20pm (15 mins)	2. Chair's update	Gemma Van Halderen ABS	*Standing item* Verbal Report
2:20pm - 2:40pm (20 mins)	3. Presentation – Progress on digitising the Australia and New Zealand Foundation Spatial Data Framework.	Helen Owens Prime Minister and Cabinet and Simon Costello GeoScience Australia	Presentation
2:40pm - 3:00pm (20 mins)	4. Presentation - Development of the National Principles for Environmental Information	Andre Zerger Bureau of Meteorology	Presentation
3:00pm - 3:20pm (20 minutes)	**Afternoon Tea**		
3:20pm - 3:40pm (20 mins)	5. Presentation – Strategic management of cross jurisdictional health data	Geoff Neideck Australian Institute of Health and Welfare	Presentation
3:40pm – 4:10pm (30 mins)	6. Around the Table: Statistical Matters of Significance	AGSF Members	Verbal briefings for information and comment
4:10pm - 4:30pm (20 mins)	7. Other Business	AGSF Members	Verbal briefings for information and comment
4:30pm	Meeting Close *Next AGSF Meeting is Thursday 6 October Theme: Confidentialisation Guidance.*		

Attendees

Chair	Ms Gemma Van Halderen (ABS)
Members	Dr Phillip Gould (ABS) Ms Milly Lubulwa (ABARES, proxy for Mr Walter Shafron) Mr Geoff Neideck (AIHW) Ms Julie Neville (ATO) Mr Glen Malam (BITRE, proxy for Dr Gary Dolman) Mr Andre Zerger (BoM, proxy for Dr Louise Minty) Ms Helen Owens (PM&C) Ms Robyn Shannon (Employment) Ms Karen McGuigan (DIBP, proxy for Mr Jason Russo) Mr Nick Yazidjoglou (Industry, proxy for Mr Andrew Lalor) Dr Helen Rogers (Social Services, proxy for Mr David Dennis) Dr Mette Creaser (NCVER, proxy for Dr Craig Fowler)
Apologies	Mr Walter Shafron (ABARES), Dr Gary Dolman (BITRE), Dr Louise Minty (BoM), Mr Andrew Lalor (Industry), Dr Craig Fowler (NCVER), Mr David Denis (Social Services), Mr Jason Russo (DIBP), Mr Geoffrey Armitage (BREE), Mr Mike Maslen (Environment), Mr Nicky Antonius (Health)
Presenters	Ms Helen Owens (PM&C) and Mr Simon Costello (GeoScience) Mr Andre Zerger (BoM) Mr Geoff Neideck (AIHW)
Observers	Mr Martin Brady (ABS)
Minutes	Ms Cassy Short (ABS), Ms Frances Eberbach (ABS)

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome

1.1   Ms Gemma Van Halderen (ABS) opened the meeting and introduced herself as the Chair of AGSF and acknowledged the traditional owners of the land and paid respect to their elders, past and present. She welcomed attendees, noted member apologies and invited attendees to introduce themselves.

1.2   Ms Van Halderen provided a brief overview of the ABS fora, including the Australian Statistical Advisory Council and the State Statistical Forum.

Agenda Item 2 – Chair's Update

2.1   Ms Van Halderen provided an update on the ABS transformation program and goals.

- ABS is one year into transformation following the investment from government last year that recognises ABS' frail and ageing infrastructure. This investment allows ABS to improve its microdata access tools, enhance data warehousing tools and capacity, and digitise front end applications e.g. e-forms. The investment also supports development of infrastructure more broadly across government, in particular, around microdata and trusted access.

- Fifty individuals are currently testing the trusted access model across government. Partners such as the Dept. of Education have provided positive feedback. ABS is looking to extend this trusted access model across government to better enable data integration,

access, infrastructure and governance. ABS is also working on a number of public sector data projects and recognises the importance of an Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) similar to the approach of Statistics New Zealand.

2.2   The ABS will be subject to a Functional and Efficiency Review this year.

2.3   Ms Van Halderen provided an update on the 2016 Census. ABS is aiming for over 60% online completion. ABS has used behavioural economics work to more effectively encourage the population to respond. ABS will be able to process, and release, data more quickly than previously.

2.4   Ms Van Halderen addressed a query on using 2016 Census responses to prepopulate forms in the future. Discussion included acknowledgement of related Prime Minister and Cabinet work on digital identity.

Agenda Item 3 – Progress on digitising the Australia and New Zealand Foundation Spatial Data Framework (Ms Helen Owens, Prime Minister and Cabinet & and Mr Simon Costello, Geoscience Australia - Presentations)

Ms Owens' and Mr Costello's presentations have been made available to attendees.

3.1   Ms Helen Owens provided an update on the public sector data agenda. Prime Minister and Cabinet are currently working through recommendations of the public sector data report with good progress against recommendations. The legislative space is being examined by Productivity Commission Inquiry – Martin Parkinson has encouraged all Heads of Agencies to submit to the Inquiry. There was discussion on the timeline for release of the draft paper (November).

3.2   Ms Owens highlighted ongoing initiatives to make data openly available e.g. over 1,100 downloads of GNAF (to date). Work continues to build the world's leading public data infrastructure e.g. re-engineering data.gov.au and others.

3.3   Mr Simon Costello provided a presentation on the progress on the Foundation Spatial Data Framework. He addressed 3 concepts: Users depend on the same spatial information for decision making; building a framework is an important pre-cursor to building effective infrastructure; information obsolescence vs technological obsolescence.

3.4   The framework currently contains nearly 1,000 datasets (Commonwealth and state/territory), which aims to provide authoritative state and territory borders and administrative areas. The quality of data and user needs are current areas of focus. Beta release is intended for 2018.

3.5   Next steps for the Framework include talking to the Commonwealth and private sector through consultation in 2016; understanding national user needs (expanding user consultation this year); clarifying the future state of the framework – for some datasets, identifying what needs changing.

3.6   Following the presentation, discussion addressed a range of topics, including: how states/territories understand the use of their data within the life cycle; how the data is kept up to date, and; how the framework will adapt to agencies streamlining their data.

Agenda Item 4 - Development of the National Principles for Environmental Information (Mr Andre Zerger, Bureau of Meteorology - Presentation)

Mr Zerger's presentation has been made available to attendees.

4.1   Mr Zerger provided an overview of the history of the National Plan for Environment Information (commenced in 2011). In 2015, National Principles were produced.

4.2   Mr Zerger outlined a case study that demonstrates the principles in action: a Bio-regional Assessment Programme involving a number of agencies. All the data that came from the program has been hosted on data.gov.au – some 200 datasets from 4 years of work is now publicly available (including some datasets previously not publicly available).

4.3   A number of challenges and emerging drivers were outlined. One particular emerging driver is how to interact with states/territories given their role as data providers; the group discussed identifying the value to states/territories to contribute their data. In addition, the international context highlights the need to make data interoperable.

Agenda Item 5 - Strategic management of cross-jurisdictional health data (Mr Geoff Neideck, Australian Institute of Health and Welfare - Presentation)

Mr Neideck's presentation has been made available to attendees.

5.1   Mr Neideck provided an overview of health data in Australia - it crosses Commonwealth and state/territory governments, non-government organisation and the private sector. National Minimum Datasets have been very helpful (under COAG) to understand performance across Australia. Currently, the data doesn't identify cross sectoral or cross border flows for health care.

5.2   Mr Neideck outlined the current state of data linkage access and approvals within AIHW e.g. flexible access options including the AIHW data lab and SURE. AIHW have also implemented streamlined data custodian and ethics committee approvals.

5.3   Bringing together state/territory hospital data with MBS/PBS is a major milestone. AIHW is now embarking on enduring arrangements where states/territories provide data and AIHW provides linkage keys to the states/territories for use in analysis.

5.4   Following the presentation, attendees discussed the opportunity to extend the work to other datasets e.g. cause of death; longitudinal data. There was also interest in understanding the variables used by AIHW for linkage and whether the linked data will build into a longitudinal resource.

Agenda Item 6 – Around the Table: Statistical Matters of Significance

The Chair invited members to share statistical updates:

- Ms Milly Lubulwa (ABARES) advised that ABARES is undertaking a transformation project (acting as a pilot for the whole Department of Agriculture). All data is stored in one warehouse, accessed in one way.

- Mr Glen Malam (BITRE) advised that BITRE, ABS and Industry are undertaking a joint project on sharing freight data using GPS data and other datasets held by private sector freight operators.

- Ms Karen McGuigan (DIBP) advised that DIBP are using the ABS data quality framework to assess their datasets, looking first at high risk or high interest datasets. DIBP will be recreating the Settlement Database – expanded to include all migrants with the aim to make it accessible for research. Once established, will open to a data lab scenario.

- Mr Nick Yazidjoglou (Industry) advised that Industry has established a taskforce on data management issues across the department to improve data capability to enable sophisticated analysis. This work may take 3 years or more. It will highlight data

governance and stewardship and internal data sharing to overcome silos and extend purpose of collection to include research.

- Ms Julie Neville (ATO) advised that the ATO's longitudinal file is due at end of year at the earliest. ATO is currently managing politically contested data such as negative gearing.

- Ms Robyn Shannon (Employment) advised that Employment has commenced ten key projects to build capability of staff; Ernst and Young are engaged to assist with a new interface for employment programs through web with metadata coming. Employment are partnering with Department of Social Services on JASON.

- Dr Mette Creaser (NCVER) advised that NCVER will be moving from annual to quarterly collection of training information updates to student enrolment details. To achieve real time reporting, there will be a move to an API service so that providers supply data on students on an ongoing basis.

- Mr Andre Zerger (BoM) advised that BoM is having a Functional and Efficiency Review at the same time as ABS. Release in June of a national environment monitoring database describing capability/data e.g. networks for water monitoring. New weather app to be released shortly – both Android and Apple.

- Dr Helen Rogers (DSS) advised that JASON is a priority at the moment. An external review of longitudinal data (gaps, overlaps, how it is accessed, how national datasets are managed across government) is underway. New data for long term payments is now available.

- Mr Geoff Neideck (AIHW) advised that AIHW is undertaking a substantial amount of data integration work and will be undergoing a merger with NHPA. The new Director is Barry Sanderson.

Agenda Item 7 - Other Business

7.1   Ms Van Halderen raised the issue of selecting a topic for the next meeting – there was general support for 'confidentialisation'. There is specific interest in the tools available, data sharing within a legislative framework and the changing environment for data access.

7.2   Ms Van Halderen raised the ABS decision to retain name and address for 2016 Census. She informed attendees that information was released today on the ABS website in response to a Freedom of Information request in relation to name/address retention. Ms Van Halderen also referenced related studies on data integration. ABS will provide attendees with links to this information.

7.3   Prime Minister and Cabinet data workshop will be held next week (8th June, 2016) at Data61 to discuss publication of data in open data environment. Interested attendees should contact Mr Nick Yazidjoglou (data champions would have been informed).

Meeting Close

Action items from 30 May 2016 meeting

Action Item	Description	Responsibility	Time-frame	Minute reference
1	Circulate links to information published on ABS website re: name and address retention and data integration studies.	AGSF secretariat	Immediately Completed	7.2