

## Member profile: The Australian Bureau of Statistics

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is the national statistical agency aiming to 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 (NSS). ABS not only collects and disseminates a very wide range of information, but develops and supports a wide range of statistical standards, classifications and other statistical infrastructure that supports the work of others in compiling and using official statistics. ABS products have become a vital part of the national infrastructure and a critical resource for decision makers at all levels of Australian Society.



ARACY was founded in 2001 and since inception has been involved with the ABS, which is a foundation member. ABS shares ARACY's purpose of advancing evidence-based action, in particular surfacing the evidence that already exists. An early collaboration between ABS and ARACY involved exploring the technological possibilities for a national data network, intended to be low-cost infrastructure that would provide a distributed library of data holdings relevant to policy analysis and research, and with a children and youth portal as an early pilot of the project. While that demonstration project has been largely overtaken by other initiatives across government, the visions of both ABS and ARACY in accessing and sharing of data are still very much alive. ABS is engaging with those driving the newer initiatives to look for opportunities to collaborate in ways that will achieve their objectives, while also furthering those of the NSS.

Recently (September 2009), the ABS released figures showing the not-for-profit sector contributed almost \$43 billion, or 4.1 percent of GDP, to the nation in the 2006-07 financial year. Deputy Australian Statistician, Macro Economics, Ian Ewing, said there is great importance in measuring the non-profit sector.

"The sector makes a significant contribution to the market economy, but a wider contribution to the wellbeing of Australians," he said. "The measurement and subsequent publication of this sort of data allows people to discuss the significance of the not-for-profit sector's contribution with evidence, rather than relying on anecdotal discussion."

More information on the ABS and its publications can be found at [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au).