**Gender Statistics Advisory Group**

**28 May 2014**

**Agenda item 2: Summary of last meeting**

**Questions for members:**

(i) Do members have any comments on the treatment of the action items?

**Introduction**

The previous Gender Statistics Advisory Group meeting was held in May 2013.

The minutes and presentations from the 2013 meeting were circulated to GSAG members in July 2013. A copy of the minutes is provided at Attachment 1. There were no comments received from members.

The status of action items arising from the previous meeting is outlined below in Table 1 – all items are actioned or will be updated during today’s meeting.

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| **Table 1: Status of action items from previous meeting** |
| **Action Item** | **Description**  |  **Status** |
| 1 | ABS to circulate the latest information on web hits for Gender Indicators when it is available. | Reported at Agenda item 6 |
| 2 | Consider funding options to bring forward collection of time-use data | Ongoing |
| 3 | ABS to include a one page Fact Sheet in each release of Gender Indicators to outlining the new content and points of interest. | Reported at Agenda item 6 |
| 4 | ABS to circulate final UNECE International Gender Taskforce report when it is available |  Reported at agenda item 9 |

**Attachment 1**

**Minutes from the previous meeting**

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| **Date & Time** | **Friday 17 May 2013, 9:30am-3.00pm** |
| **Location** | GS 112 Wilson Conference Room, ABS House |
| **Chairperson** | David Zago |
| **Attendees** | **Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA):** Mairi Steele**Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR**): Tina Connor**Australian Human Rights Commission**: Elizabeth Broderick**Work Equality Gender Agency (WGEA):** Dr Carla Harris**Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (SA**): Fiona Mort**Department of Human Services (Vic**): Jac Nancarrow, Sarah Gibbons (phone)**Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (ACT**): Colin Farlow**Social Policy Research Centre, University of NS**W: A/ Prof Lyn Craig**Latrobe University**: Kate Silburn**Economic Security4Women**: Dalma Jacobs**National Foundation for Australian Women**: Marie Coleman**Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS):** Caroline Daley, Beidar Cho, Margaret Dinan |
| **Observers** | **Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS):** Karen Moore, Kian McNeice, Javad Seyedi**Dept. of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR**): Ali Kirke |
| **Apologies** | **Dept. of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR):** Sue Haddrick**Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services (ACT):** Gemma Wood**School of Social and Policy Studies, Flinders University**: A/Prof Gerry Redmond**University of Newcastle**: Dr Richard Fletcher**University of Queensland**: Professor Gillian Whitehouse**Centre for Research in Applied Economics, Curtin University**: A/Prof Siobhan Austen**School of Politics and International Relations, Australian National University**: Emeritus Professor Marian Sawer**Australian Workplace Innovation and Social Research Centre University of Adelaide:** A/Prof John Spoehr |

1. Mr Zago, Assistant Statistician of the Social Conditions Statistics Branch, welcomed members. The draft agenda was agreed and no additional items were raised (see Attachment A). Members briefly introduced themselves and their roles.
2. Mr Zago sought comments from the last GSAG meeting held 14 May 2012. No comments were brought forward.

## Agenda Item 2: Update on action items from the previous meeting

1. Ms Daley introduced the paper and provided an update on action items from the previous meeting.
2. ABS has gathered some metrics on usage of earlier releases of Gender Indicators which will be presented at Agenda Item 5 and has also requested metrics on the most recent releases which will be circulated to members once they are available.
3. Members provided the following feedback:
* noted that the number of website hits seemed very low for such a comprehensive product and anecdotal evidence suggested the product was used more than indicated;
* agreed it is important to promote the Gender Indicators product by expanding the circulation list, making the product more accessible and cross referencing with other products.

*Action: ABS to circulate web analytics on the Gender Indicators product to members.*

## Agenda Item 3: Update on ABS survey work program

1. Ms Daley introduced the paper and commenced an overview of progress on selected ABS surveys with an update on the **Census** program including the Statistical Longitudinal Census Dataset (SLCD). Members noted:
* an SLCD workshop would be held in June. This provided an opportunity to present interests and views of GSAG members in the SLCD development. It was noted that FaHCSIA would be represented at the workshop and could provide a GSAG perspective;
* the Census Table Builder product was a useful resource and it was important to build capability to maximise its use by members and their agencies.
1. **Labour Household Survey Program** – the update highlighted that as a result of the re-benchmarking of estimated resident population measures, all time-series including Gender Indicator data would need revision during 2014 – however, no major changes were expected.
2. **Family Characteristics and Transition Survey 2012-13** – noted this survey is in the field until the end of June 2013 and a dissemination strategy is being developed to commence in late 2014, covering the survey content of divorce, separation, leaving home and expected fertility. With a repeat of the 2006-07 family’s transition topic, it will be possible to compare changes over time in family transitions between 2006-07 and 2012-13.
3. **Personal Safety Survey (PSS**) – after a number of unexpected delays, the field collection phase for PSS is complete. This delay in the field work has had flow-on impacts and additional analysis is now required to investigate the resulting data and ensure the quality and reliability of survey outputs. A dissemination strategy has been discussed with the PSS Survey Advisory Group including preparation of simple fact sheets to guide users of the data. Members provided the following feedback:

- agreed the fact sheets were a good idea as data had been misinterpreted in the past.

- Mr Zago acknowledged FaHCSIA’s support in providing funding for the survey.

- The survey had received positive attention at the recent 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in relation to the value of the content for informing discussion on personal safety issues. Please see attached link for further information. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/57sess.htm>

- For further information on PSS please contact Jessica Gourlay (jessica.gourlay@abs.gov.au)

1. **General Social Survey** (GSS) – the 2014 survey will be the fourth in the series, with results to be released in 2015. GSS 2014 will include a new mental health module, an expanded voluntary work module and a question on sexual identity. A Dress Rehearsal will be conducted in September/October 2013 to assist in finalising content.
2. **National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey** (NATSISS) – the 2014 survey content is being considered and is expected to include a question identifying 'Carers' and a short module on Disability.
3. **Sex and gender standards** - Mr Peter Marion from ABS’s Standards and Classifications section, provided an update on the ABS review of the sex standard, noting that there have been 17 submissions supporting the collection of gender information from the community. He reported that the Attorney General's department is issuing new guidelines for Gender collection, effective 1 July 2013. The guidelines will recommend that questions on sex/gender should only be asked if required for a specific purpose. Where required to be collected, all Commonwealth agencies will be asked to collect gender (or sex if required) using three possible responses: Male/Female/Other. Members were invited to provide assistance with the review of the ABS Sex standard including exploring the potential for a Gender standard.
4. Members discussed the review and the guidelines, providing the following feedback:
* agreed that collection of ‘Sex’ remains highly relevant for the work of GSAG members;
* ABS confirmed an ongoing need for collection of 'Sex’ as many surveys are disaggregated by sex based on user demand and there is an essential requirement in demographic statistics;
* noted that members could contact the Attorney General’s department if they had queries concerning the guidelines.
1. **Work, Life and Family Survey** - Ms Daley provided an update noting plans to combine content from the previous 2006 Time Use Survey and the 2007 Survey of Employment Arrangements, Retirement and Superannuation into the new Work, Life and Family Survey. Following the cancellation of the 2013 survey cycle due to the tight fiscal environment, ABS plans to collect additional information relating to superannuation in the next Survey of Income and Housing 2013-14 and is considering options to bring forward other key components before the next planned cycle in 2019. One option that could be considered would be collecting time use data in the 2015-16 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES), subject to the identification of new funding. HIES will have a sample of approximately 18,000 households of which approximately 9,000 will be asked to complete the household expenditure diary. It may be possible to ask the other 9,000 households (or part thereof) to complete the time use diary.
2. Members agreed WoLFS was a key dataset and acknowledged the need for additional funding to bring the collection forward:
* some members noted existing tight financial situations in their agencies;
* agreed it was unlikely that sufficient funding would come from jurisdictions;
* proposed further consideration was needed of funding options, for example, a New Policy Proposal (NPP);
* members supported the HIES option in principle.

*Action: members to consider funding options to bring forward collection of time use data.*

## Agenda Item 4: Gender Pay Gap

1. Ms Leslie presented an overview of potential sources for reporting on gender pay equity issues. Considering the various options, ABS recommends using the two-yearly survey of Employees, Earnings and Hours (EEH) for reporting gender pay equity in the Gender Indicators product because it:
* provides a picture of the earnings distribution in addition to averages (medians and percentiles);
* enables derivation of an hourly measure to account for differences in hours worked (more women work part-time hours than men);
* as a business survey it provides more robust industry and earnings estimates;
* provides ordinary time measures, removing the compositional effect from differences in overtime worked (more men work overtime than women).
1. Members provided the following feedback:
* The two-yearly EEH do not provide the regular updates to pay equity measures which are currently available more frequently through the Average Weekly Earnings (AWE) survey;
* ABS noted that the trends observed in AWE and EEH wages measures are consistent, the measures change very slowly over time and the benefits of EEH tend to outweigh its two yearly frequency;
* overall support for retaining EEH as the data source to inform the gender pay gap in the Gender Indicators product.
* The ABS Labour Market Section is also conducting a review of EEH and the discussion paper is attached.



1. ABS is preparing a summary article to explain earnings statistics for release on the ABS website which can be circulated to members when available.

## Agenda Item 5: Future plans for Gender Indicators

1. Ms Daley presented members with a summary of the development of the Gender Indicators product to date and plans for continuing six monthly releases. Members provided the following feedback:
* agreed with the change of release dates to February and August each year;
* agreed that the low number of website page views of the publication present a challenge to maximise the usage of the product;
* agreed that members would consider options to increase the awareness and use of the product;
* noted that many people may not understand how to use the data. The commentaries were seen as important in this regard: many people rely on them as they don't have the confidence to interpret the detailed data cubes;
* the Mother's Day summary media release was seen as a useful format to provide the summary findings and enable users to interpret stories of particular interest.

*Action: ABS to include a one page fact sheet in the Gender Indicators product highlighting new content and points of interest in latest release.*

## Agenda Item 6: Workplace Gender Equality Agency

1. Dr Carla Harris provided a presentation about the role and responsibilities of the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA), the new Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 and their future data collection plans.

## Agenda Item 7: Census 2016 submission from GSAG

1. Ms Sue Taylor from ABS’s 2016 Census Data Section gave a presentation about the key aims of the 2016 Census and the public consultation process that is taking place prior to the 2016 Census. Submissions close on 31 May and members were encouraged to consider their Census requirements and their need for topics for the purposes of policy development, planning and program monitoring. ABS will consider all submissions in the development of recommendations for Census 2016 content for consideration by ABS management and the Australian Statistician. An information paper will be released in late 2013 outlining Census 2016 plans.
2. Members discussed the draft Census submission compiled from members’ input received to date. Members agreed to provide any further feedback as soon as possible to the secretariat. Ms Jacobs offered to send in the collective submission from the EconomicSecurity4Women alliance on behalf of GSAG, which was accepted by members with thanks.

## Agenda Item 8: Update on UNECE International Gender Taskforce

1. Mr Dean Adams presented an update on the work of the UNECE international gender taskforce in preparing an internationally agreed suite of indicators on a range of gender equity issues. The final report by the Taskforce is expected to be available in 2014.
2. Reflecting on the domains considered by the Taskforce, members suggested that entrepreneurship indicators would be a worthwhile addition to the Gender Indicators product when resources become available, recognising that this is increasingly seen as a flexible work option for women. In response, ABS noted the current difficulties with limited data available on entrepreneurship in either ABS business or household surveys.

*Action: ABS to circulate the final report of the UNECE International Gender Taskforce to members.*

## Agenda Item 9: Other Business

1. Ms Mort advised that a select council on women's issues is developing a gender equality framework across COAG processes. The COAG Reform Council is preparing a gender report for release later this year.
2. Members enquired about the timetable for actions regarding the future collection of time use data in light of the cancellation of WoLFS. In response, Mr Zago advised it will need to be progressed this year and he will approach GSAG members for assistance as needed.

## Meeting close

1. Mr Zago closed the meeting, thanking members for their attendance and contributions. The next GSAG meeting would be organised in approximately May 2014 or as needed.