



ABS supports evidence-based policy making (Sydney Morning Herald, 10/3/03)

I agree with Andrew Leigh and Justin Wolfers (SMH, Page 15, 5/3/03). Evidence-based policy making makes sense.

This is right in line with our mission to "assist and encourage informed decision-making, research and discussion within governments and the community."

However, they have greatly understated the amount of Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data readily available to support research.

Through an agreement that ABS has with the Australian Vice Chancellor's Committee, Australia's academic community has ready access to all of ABS' public data holdings, including extensive time series, data cubes and confidentialised unit record files (CURFs).

Between 2000 and 2002, researchers downloaded over 480,000 data files on time series, data cubes and ABS publications from the ABS on-line AusStats service. In 2001/2002 alone, ABS provided nearly 150 CURFs to universities for statistical research, leading to a large number of publications by researchers.

While the ABS is required to recover the dissemination costs for products and services beyond those considered a "public good", there is a substantial amount of "public good" information available on the ABS web site and through the 500 ABS Library Extension Program libraries located throughout Australia.

Signed,

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