



The development of statistical capability in New South Wales under the National Statistical Service initiative

statistics for informed

decision making

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USS Montana movie

What has this film got to do with this topic??

- The role of the ABS is :
 - To assist and encourage **INFORMED DECISION MAKING**, research and discussion within governments and the community by building a high quality, objective and responsive **National Statistical Service (NSS)**
- Well the decision maker clearly wasn't well informed!

What is the NSS?

- Our job is to ensure that the information and the capability that surrounds decision makers doesn't let this happen and we do this through a NSS, which is :
- The community of government agencies, led by the [ABS](#) as Australia's national statistical organisation, building a rich statistical picture for a better informed Australia. It aims to develop and improve a statistical system that ensures providers and users of statistics have the confidence to trust the statistics produced within it

This presentation covers :

- Using NSW as a case study discussing the elements of building the NSS
- What is the value proposition?
- What are our respective roles?
- What are the key ingredients?
- What are the pitfalls?
- What will it look like in the end?

Situation Analysis NSW

- NSW is the oldest and largest State in Australia – population ~7m
- The longstanding public sector has evolved largely in functional silos
- Recent reforms have created 13 super agencies from about 150 other bodies
- Through ongoing budget pressures contingent capability in areas like planning and statistics have been eroded
- There is still heavy (but disparate) spending on ‘research’
- Senior officials continuously say that they don’t have the right information to make critical decisions and a lot of time is wasted debating sketchy numbers
- Additional pressure comes from a Federal government with a strong emphasis on ‘evidence based policy’
- There has been a strong emphasis on cross government approaches to policy and delivery through ‘COAG’ and national partnerships
- NSW has not been seen (in NSW at least) to have been getting an appropriate deal in shared arrangements

The NSS value proposition

- What's in it for the NSW government?
 - Rebuilding a critical capability in the public sector
 - Being able to appropriately plan and make decisions – with the relevant facts
 - Assisting their general reform by getting super agencies on a common knowledge base
 - Interacting across States and the Commonwealth on a level information field
 - Getting connected to all governments through the NSS
 - Saving money – by sharing information infrastructure and investment across the whole of NSW government
- Budget bottom Line – better outcomes in shared arrangements for NSW

Respective roles

- ABS
 - The NSO – informed decisions by all governments
 - Producing the best set of official statistics for the nation
 - Co-ordination and the development of appropriate metadata
 - Using whole of government reforms to assist in building NSS
 - Building statistical capability
 - Having an efficient and effective statistical system for Australia

Respective Roles

- NSW Central Agencies
 - Premiers Department
 - Treasury
- An effective public sector that appropriately informs elected officials
- Long term planning
- Co-ordination of NSW government agencies
- Interacting with other governments
- Building public sector capability
- Efficient and effective public administration

Respective Roles

- Super Agencies
 - Deliver effective and efficient services to the community
 - Plan and build appropriate business cases for services and infrastructure
 - Contribute to the development of national policy and delivery
 - Build appropriate capability

The areas of commonality

- Informed decisions
- Effective and Efficient delivery
- Building Capability
- Co-ordination

Where are we at in NSW?

- At the highest level we have signed a MOU to progress the NSS and capability development
- A high level (Deputy/Director) steering group has been set up to progress – reports to CEOs group
- A high level statistical plan has been drafted to address the high level work – infrastructure, capability and metadata
- ABS outposted officers are strategically placed in 6 of 13 agencies with others coming on line progressively – a business plan underpins these
- ABS is linking agencies and NSW Government with national working groups and technical and other developments
- At Commonwealth level various approaches are happening (some of which Trevor will touch on) to create a wider enabling environment for NSS initiatives
- The pieces have been put in place – we need now to take the next step

The key ingredients

- Trust – working in partnership for a better outcome
- High-level and overt support for these outcomes
- Governance – getting a senior enough group together to send the message that we are serious about this
- Commit to a whole of government approach in areas such as metadata (standards) and having the authority to go through with it
- Being prepared to make tough decisions about the best use of resources – eg shared standards, systems and infrastructure
- Patience – this type of reform will take time

What are the pitfalls?

- The current situation employs many people – change will inevitably be seen by some as a threat
- Biting off too much – these are significant reforms coupled with wider reforms – we need to work through it together and join the dots
- Marrying the concept with the political realities and working with it

What will it look like?

- Decision makers will have the right information at the right time to make decisions
- The debate will be about the policy and the outcomes and not about the numbers
- Our total spend on information and research may well be less but will be far more effective