



**ABS CULTURE, SPORT AND RECREATION
STATISTICS:
CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND FUTURE STRATEGY**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the aim of providing an overview of the work of the ABS National Centre for Culture and Recreation Statistics (NCCRS), this paper provides information on the activities and strategies of the NCCRS in relation to culture, sport and recreation statistics. In particular, a number of achievements made by the ABS through NCCRS in recent years in relation to culture and recreation statistics are highlighted. These achievements include advancements in the range, accessibility and quality of data; in addition, progress has been made in relation to the standardisation and coordination of data efforts. We conclude this paper with a look at the planned future direction of NCCRS with regards to culture and recreation statistics, including work on information development plans; such a plan will describe data gaps and identify priority areas for attention.

INTRODUCTION

1. In recognition of the importance of culture, sport and recreation to Australia's development and progress, as well as to the social and physical wellbeing of individuals, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has developed a substantial body of data on these sectors in past years. A range of household and business surveys have been conducted to gather data about a range of topics of interest to the sectors, including participation, attendance, sponsorships, and the number and operations of relevant businesses. In addition, administrative by-product data have been used to collate data in areas such as government funding to culture and, more recently, to sport and recreation.

2. As an indication of its commitment to these fields of statistics, the ABS established the National Centre for Culture and Recreation Statistics (NCCRS) in 1991. The establishment of the NCCRS allowed the ABS to develop a centre of expertise regarding the collection and analysis of data related to culture and arts, as well as to sport and recreation. Through the NCCRS, the ABS has played a key statistical and research role in conjunction with various groups within these sectors. This is especially evident in relation to its work with the Cultural Ministers Council, through the Cultural Ministers Council Statistics Working Group (i.e., CMC SWG), and the Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport (SCORS), through the Recreation and Sport Industry Statistical Group (RSISG).

3. Joint funding agreements for the work undertaken by the ABS through the NCCRS have existed between the CMC and the ABS since the establishment of the NCCRS. In addition, such a partnership has also existed between SCORS and the ABS since 1994-95. The funds provided by these two groups are used by the ABS to undertake a mutually agreed program of statistical and research activities in the NCCRS. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, the ABS views these funds as an indication of support by the users of the data for the statistical work being done by the ABS. The current three-year agreement between the CMC and the ABS covers the period from July 2000 to June 2003, while a one-year agreement between the SCORS and the ABS covers the period from July 2002 to June 2003. Discussions about future MOUs will occur at the forthcoming SCORS meeting (to be held in early 2003) and at the forthcoming CMC SWG meeting (scheduled for November 2002).

4. In this paper, we highlight a number of achievements made by the ABS since the NCCRS was established in relation to culture, sport and recreation statistics. This involves both advancements in the range and quality of data, as well as in the standardisation and coordination of data efforts. We conclude this paper with a look at the future direction of the ABS with regards to culture and recreation statistics, especially in relation to identifying and prioritising data gaps.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN RELATION TO STATISTICAL LEADERSHIP

5. In recent years, the ABS has undertaken a number of activities that have provided statistical leadership to the culture, sport and recreation sectors as a whole. The major accomplishment to date in this area is the development of three classifications – relating to industries, products and occupations – which are collectively known as the *Australian Culture and Leisure Classifications (ACLC)* (ABS Cat. no. 4902.0).¹ The development of these classifications was strongly encouraged, and financially supported, by both CMC SWG and RSISG. These classifications, which provide a common framework for economic and employment culture, sport and recreation data, provide a basis on which to improve the comparability and complementarity of data sources. The ACLC is expected to be adopted widely by users of culture and recreation data in Australia, including those organisations outside of the ABS that need to design a survey, organise administrative data or otherwise collect or collate information. The ABS has already begun to make use of the ACLC; for example, output from the surveys on sport and recreation industries, which are being released progressively by the ABS in 2002, are aligned with the ACLC Industry Classification. In addition, the ACLC Product Classification influenced, and is broadly consistent with, the new Australian and New Zealand Standard Product Classification (ANZSPC) (ABS Cat. no. 1254.0.55.001).

6. Through the NCCRS, the ABS has an information dissemination role regarding statistics on the culture, sport and recreation sectors to support improved decision-making. For example, it has developed a culture and recreation theme page (which can be found on the ABS Web site²), which provides easy access to a range of culture, sport and recreation information, links and contacts. In addition, it has released the Directory of Culture and Leisure Statistics (ABS Cat. no. 1143.0.55.001), which is also available, free of charge, on the ABS Web site³ and provides information about a wide range of ABS data sources related to culture, sport and recreation.

7. The ABS, again through the NCCRS, has also worked closely with individual government and non-government organisations over the years to assist them in their collection and analysis of culture, sport and recreation data. As a result, the ABS has played an important consultancy role to the wider culture and sport sectors.

KEY DATA COLLECTIONS

8. Until the 1990s, few major collections of culture and recreation statistics existed and those which did were relatively fragmented, with data being collected by a variety of organisations on an ad hoc basis. Since that time, and at least partially because the NCCRS has served to provide a more coordinated approach to data collection, a range of data sets are now collected by the ABS that provide a relatively large body of data of relevance to the sectors.

¹ The ACLC can be found (free of charge) in the 'Concepts and Classifications' page under 'About Statistics' on the ABS Web site.

² The culture and recreation theme page can be found in the 'People' group under 'Themes' on the ABS Web site.

³ A link to the Directory of Culture and Leisure Statistics can be found under the 'General' heading in the culture and recreation theme page.

9. Given the extent of data collections that are now available, it is not possible, in this paper, to detail all ABS collections that provide data that may be of interest to those in the culture, sport and recreation sectors. Instead, this paper is limited to highlighting many of the key ABS data sources of relevance to these sectors.⁴

10. In addition to describing the scope and collection methodologies of the key data sources, this paper provides some comments about current plans for the timing of future surveys. However, none of these comments should be taken as a firm commitment by the ABS to future collection activities; instead these comments represent the state of play currently and plans may change in the future.⁵

11. Furthermore, the information provided in this paper was current as of September 2002. Regular updates about new key ABS data releases of relevance to culture and recreation can be found on the culture and recreation theme page on the ABS Web site or through the quarterly newsletter produced by the NCCRS.⁶

10. Data on culture and recreation from ABS collections can be found in a range of publications, which are produced and disseminated by the ABS. This includes overview publications on ABS sport and recreation data (ABS Cat: no. 4156.0) and ABS cultural statistics (ABS cat. No. 4172.0), both of which are being updated at the time of writing this paper. In addition, a number of ABS publications on the individual collections noted below are released to provide in-depth information on specific topics.

Censuses of Population and Housing

11. The culture, sport and recreation sectors comprise a variety of specialist occupations and industries; for some of these, only a small number of people are involved in them as their main job. ABS sample surveys are unable to provide detailed information which allows disaggregation by such specialist jobs. In contrast, because every household in Australia completes a Census form, a much finer level of industry and occupation detail is available. Thus the Census, which is conducted every five years, provides a source of information on the socio-demographic characteristics, hours worked, educational attainment and income of individuals whose main *occupation* is culture or recreation related, or who work in culture or recreation *industries*.

12. Despite the fine level of detail available from the Census, there are also some limitations associated with this data source for users of culture and recreation statistics. The Census does not collect information on second jobs or on work without pay; however, the culture, sport and recreation sectors are characterised by a large number

⁴ The ABS has also prepared a paper entitled 'ABS Directions and Data Collections in the Area of Sport and Recreation'. That paper provides more details about ABS collections that provide statistics of relevance to sport and recreation. A copy of that paper can be found in the 'General Sport and Recreation' section of the culture and recreation theme page on the ABS Web site.

⁵ The ABS maintains a three-year forward work program. The ABS planning process involves a cycle of planning, implementing and reviewing. Each year, relative priorities and competing resource requirements of all programs are formally and extensively considered by ABS senior management. The availability of data from alternative sources (such as a by-product of administrative processes and records) and the changing priorities and data needs, as anticipated by major users of ABS data, are significant influences in these review processes.

⁶ To subscribe to the quarterly NCCRS 'Culture and Recreation News' newsletter (which is available free of charge), send an email noting your request to nccrs@abs.gov.au. It is also available on the culture and recreation theme page.

of people who work in these sectors as their second job or without financial reward. Thus, because of its focus on main jobs, data from the Census potentially underestimate the number of people working in the culture, sport and recreation sectors.

13. Data on employment from the most recent Census – conducted in 2001 – were released in September 2002. With financial support from CMC SWG and RSISG, the NCCRS will be preparing two publications (one for culture, and one for sport and recreation) using these employment data.

Survey of Work in Selected Culture and Leisure Activities

14. As noted above, people working in the culture, sport and recreation sectors often do this work as a second job, for no pay or for payment in kind. Such forms of work are not identified in the Census or the Labour Force Survey – which is a key ABS survey vehicle for the collection of labour force data. Because of the importance of these forms of work to culture and recreation, a ‘Work in Selected Culture and Leisure Activities Survey’ is conducted by the ABS on the Monthly Population Survey.

15. This survey, which was most recently conducted in 2001, provides information on both the cultural work (ABS Cat. no. 6281.0) and sporting involvement (ABS Cat. no. 6285.0) of people aged 15 years or more over a 12-month period. The survey collects details on: the types of cultural activities people undertake; the role (e.g., as a player, coach or official) played by those who participate in sports and physical activities; whether those who were involved were paid for their work; and the amount of time spent in these roles. The survey was also conducted in 1993 and 1997. The future frequency is currently being considered by the ABS.

Survey of Attendance at Selected Culture and Leisure Venues

16. Data on attendance at selected cultural venues and activities (e.g., museums, botanic gardens, libraries, music concerts, theatre, opera and cinema) (ABS Cat. no. 4114.0) and at sports events (e.g., football, cricket, tennis, basketball and horse-racing) (ABS Cat. no. 4174.0) are collected by the ABS periodically through the Attendance at Selected Culture and Leisure Events Survey. This survey provides the demographic characteristics of attendees and obtains details on the number of times each type of cultural or sporting venue or event was attended by each individual.

17. Most recently, these data were collected on the 2002 General Social Survey. Results of that survey will be published in 2003. Collection on this multi-topic vehicle will mean that attendance data can be analysed against data on sports participation, and a range of other characteristics, such as self-assessed health status, feelings of safety at home, and contact with family and friends.

18. Prior to this, the Attendance topic was conducted on the Monthly Population Survey in 1991 (culture only), 1995 and 1999 (see Cats. No. 4114.0 and 4174.0). Beyond 2002, the timing and frequency of future collections of data on this topic have yet to be determined.

Survey of Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities

19. In the past, data available on participation in culture, sport and recreation activities were limited to those aged 15 years and over. In order to fill a recognised gap, the ABS conducted a survey on children's participation in culture and recreation activities in April 2000 (ABS Cat. no. 4901.0) on the Monthly Population Survey. This survey provides data on participation by children aged 5 to 14 years outside of school hours in selected culture activities (e.g., singing, dancing and drama), organised sport, and selected recreation activities (e.g., skateboarding, bike riding, watching TV). The survey provides details on the characteristics of children who participated in these activities as well as the frequency and duration of their participation.

20. The ABS is planning to next collect these data, again on the Monthly Population Survey, in April 2003. The frequency thereafter is under consideration.

Survey of Participation in Sport and Physical Activities

21. From August 1993 until November 2000, data on adult participation in sports and physical activities were collected on a quarterly user-funded ABS general household survey vehicle – the Population Survey Monitor (PSM). Since 1995–96, the four quarterly surveys undertaken each financial year have been compiled into annual files and the resulting estimates have been published each year (ABS Cat. no. 4177.0). In each survey, data were collected on participation in sport or physical activity in the previous 12 months including whether the activity was organised or not, in what capacity individuals participated (e.g., player, coach, referee, etc.) and frequency of the activity.

22. Changing user requirements and ABS procedures led to changes in methodology over the years, with the result that comparable data on participation in organised sport and physical activities are available from 1996–97 to 1999–2000, and comparable data on participation in any (organised or non-organised) sport and physical activities are available for 1998–99 and 1999–2000.

23. The ABS is no longer conducting the PSM. Instead, this topic was included as a supplement to the 2002 General Social Survey (GSS) and the data will be available in 2003. This means that sports participation (and non-participation) can be analysed alongside a range of other characteristics measured in the GSS, such as self-assessed health status, feelings of safety at home, contact with family and friends, sports attendance and attendance at cultural venues such as libraries, museums and cinemas.

24. Beyond 2002, the timing and frequency of collection of data on this topic have yet to be determined.

Time Use Survey

25. A Time Use Survey was conducted by the ABS in 1992, and again in 1997, to obtain information about the way people aged 15 years and over allocate time to different kinds of activities, including culture and recreation activities such as: visiting entertainment and cultural venues; attendance at sports events; sport and outdoor activities; games, hobbies, arts and crafts; and reading. Average time and total time

spent on these activities can be analysed against numerous other data items related to the participants.

26. The Time Use Survey (ABS Cat. no. 4153.0) also provides an estimate of the number of participants in any particular activity on an average day. The survey does not provide a participation rate within a specified reference period. The estimate of the number of participants will be fairly accurate for activities which are undertaken daily, but does not provide an accurate representation of the number of participants over time in activities which tend to be undertaken occasionally or irregularly, such as attendance at amusement parks.

27. The ABS is currently considering the timing of the next Time Use Survey, with a view to running it in respect of 2005-06 if budget and other priorities permit.

Arts and Craft Purchases

28. A national survey was conducted in 1997 (on the Population Survey Monitor) which collected information on the purchase of hand made art and craft items in Australia. The survey collected data on the types of items purchased, whether they were Australian made of Indigenous origin, where they were purchased and their cost. Funding for the collection was provided by the (then) Department of Communication and the Arts (DOCA) and results were published in *Art and Craft Purchases 1997* (published by DOCA). The ABS currently has no plans to collect these data in the future.

Service Industries Surveys

29. Through its Service Industries Surveys (SIS) program, the ABS regularly conducts industry surveys that collect data on the economic activities of businesses in the culture and recreation sectors, thus extending coverage of culture and recreation issues beyond those related to individuals' involvement. Included in these industry surveys are data on the income, expenses and number of people employed by the businesses, as well as details on specific aspects of business operations.

30. *Cultural industries* — Surveys have been conducted covering selected cultural industries for the reference years 1993-94, 1996-97 and 1999-2000. Results from these surveys have been published for businesses or government institutions involved in the operations of libraries, museums, zoological and botanic gardens, television services, commercial art galleries or performing arts venues and those undertaking film production and distribution, motion picture exhibition and video hire services have all been the subject of these surveys at various times.⁷

⁷ The publications which present the results from these collections are as follows:

- Public Libraries, Australia (ABS Cat. no. 8591.0)
- Museums, Australia (ABS Cat. no. 8560.0)
- Zoos, Parks and Gardens Industry, Australia (ABS Cat. no. 8699.0)
- Botanic Gardens, Australia (ABS Cat. no. 8563.0)
- Television Services, Australia (ABS Cat. no. 8559.0)
- Commercial Art Galleries, Australia (ABS Cat. no. 8559.0)
- Performing Arts Industries, Australia (ABS Cat. no. 8697.0)
- Film and Video Production and Distribution, Australia (ABS Cat. no. 8679.0)
- Motion Picture Exhibition, Australia (ABS Cat. no. 8654.0)
- Video Hire Industry, Australia (ABS Cat. no. 8562.0)

31. The current intention is that the service industries covered by the SIS program be surveyed either every three years or every six years, depending on the relative importance of the data and the available resources to conduct the surveys. Those industries that are undergoing major change or are likely to be affected by government policy are expected to be surveyed more frequently than those industries where activity is relatively static. Frequency of collection is also dependent on whether the data will impact on decisions regarding expenditure by government on the industry.

32. The following cultural industries are currently expected to be surveyed with respect to 2002-03 (and again in 2005-06):

- music and theatre production;
- performing arts festivals;
- television services; and
- film and video production.

33. Museums and libraries are currently expected to be surveyed with respect to 2003-04 and then 3- or 4-yearly thereafter.

34. *Sport and recreation industries* — Surveys on sport and recreation industries have been conducted for reference years 1994-95, 1997-98 and 2000-01. While surveys of the gambling, hospitality clubs, pubs, taverns and bars industries have been conducted for each of these three years, businesses or government institutions involved in the operations of sports and services to sport, sports grounds and facilities, and other recreation services have been surveyed in respect of 1994-95 and 2000-01.

35. The publications resulting from the 2000-01 collections are progressively being released, with 'Clubs, pubs, taverns and bars industries' (ABS Cat. no. 8687.0) released in June 2002, 'Gambling industries' (ABS Cat. no. 8684.0) released in July 2002, and 'Sport industries' (ABS Cat. no. 8686.0) due for release in late October 2002.

36. The clubs, pubs, taverns and bars industries, and the gambling industries are currently expected to be surveyed with respect to 2003-04 (and again in 2006-07). Meanwhile, current draft plans indicate that the entire series of sport and recreation SIS surveys that were conducted in respect of 2000-01 will be repeated again with respect to 2006-07.

Book Publishers and Book Retailers Surveys

37. The ABS has been commissioned to undertake, as part of the Commonwealth Government's Book Industry Assistance Plan, five surveys of book publishers and four surveys of book retailers.

38. The scope of the Book Publishers Survey, which collects economic statistics about the book publishing industry, is all public and private businesses in Australia employing staff that have a predominant activity of book publishing and those businesses which have significant levels (defined as \$2 million or more) of book publishing activity. Similar to other economic surveys conducted by the ABS, the survey collects data on the income, expenses and employment of businesses; in addition,

details on specific aspects of book publishing operations – such as the number and value of books sold – are collected.

39. Data from the first two of the five Book Publishers Surveys, which were in respect of 1999-2000 and 2000-01, have been released (ABS Cat. no. 1363.0).

40. The Book Retailers Survey collects data from those businesses responsible for the majority of book sales in Australia; that is, data for this survey are collected primarily from employing bookshops and news agencies, as well as the larger department stores and supermarkets. This survey asks for details of employment, expenditure, income and the value of inventories, as well as book industry specific information such as the number of books purchased and sold and the value of book purchases and sales. Given the apparent importance of new technology to this industry, details are also sought on the use of computers and the Internet.

41. Data from the first survey in respect of 2000-01 will be released later this year (ABS Cat. no. 1371.0).

Business Generosity Survey

42. The Business Generosity Survey (ABS Cat. no. 8157.0), which was commissioned by the Prime Minister's Community Business Partnership, was conducted in 2001. This survey collected information on the value and type of donations, sponsorships and 'business to community projects' made to a range of activities, including 'arts and culture' and 'sport and recreation'. Because this survey was undertaken in conjunction with the Economic Activity Survey, the data set will include structural information regarding the type of businesses which undertake these activities, which industries, the size of the businesses and other business characteristics.

43. The survey is intended to be a one-off initially but depending on the usage of the data and funding availability, it may be repeated.

Government Cultural Funding

44. With financial support from the Australia Council initially and then later CMC, the ABS has compiled a regular series of data on cultural funding by the three levels of government (ABS Cat. no. 4183.0). Estimates of cultural funding by government are obtained from a number of sources including the authorities themselves, annual reports, budget papers and data collections conducted by the ABS. The data have been published annually by the ABS since 1993-94. Information is available by type of activity funded (e.g., libraries, museums, art galleries, radio and television broadcasting) and on whether funding is for capital or recurrent projects.

Government Sport and Recreation Funding

45. The ABS has recently commenced the development of a collection of data on funding provided by the three levels of government to support sport and recreation, with the reference period for the first collection being 2000-01. This collection is being funded by SCORS. As per the cultural funding collection, information will be available by type of activity funded (e.g., sport and physical recreation administration; venues,

grounds and facilities; participation programs and special events; etc.) and on whether funding is for capital or recurrent projects. Whether this collection is repeated is dependent on the availability of user funding.

Other data sources

46. There are a number of other ABS data sources that can provide valuable information to those in the culture and recreation sectors. For example, the Household Expenditure Survey collects information on expenditure of cultural, sporting and recreation items (ABS Cat. no. 6535.0). The Voluntary Work Survey provides information on volunteers in the culture and the sport and recreation sectors (ABS Cat. no. 4441.0). The Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey, which was most recently conducted in 2001, provides data on the sporting facilities located in Indigenous communities with a population of 50 people or more (ABS Cat. no. 4710.0). The Disability, Ageing and Carers Survey provides some data on the cultural and recreational activities undertaken by older people and people with disabilities (ABS Cat. no. 4430.0). Those interested in finding out about additional data sets such as these or in gaining more detailed information about the collections described in this paper can contact the NCCRS.

THE FUTURE

47. While the ABS, in partnership with CMC and SCORS, has achieved much in the past decade to advance culture and recreation statistics, there is still a clear need to continue to enhance the accessibility, utility and quality of data which is of highest priority in the culture and recreation sectors. The ABS believes it can play a key part in this process, through the NCCRS taking on an expanded statistical leadership role. This aligns closely with the strategic directions of the ABS overall, as detailed in the ABS Corporate Plan released in 2000. Thus, the NCCRS work program has been revamped in a number of ways to ensure a more strategic focus.

Standardisation

48. While there has been significant statistical activity in the fields of culture and recreation over the past decade, particularly within the ABS but also within other organisations in Australia, many of the existing data collections lack a common underlying contextual or conceptual structure. Thus it is difficult to integrate existing information into a coherent body of data. In turn, there is growing demand for a shared understanding of culture and recreation and how it contributes to society, both economically and in terms of people's wellbeing.

49. One major contribution to this goal has been the release of the Australian Culture and Leisure Classifications (ACLC) (ABS Cat. no. 4902.0). As noted earlier, the ACLC allows for greater alignment and comparability of data sets and is already in use by the ABS. Nonetheless, further work is needed to encourage and support the use of these standards throughout the culture and recreation sectors. In addition, a number of other classifications, beyond the three developed to date, could be useful. For example, some clients have expressed the need for a standard classification of culture and recreation *activities*. The ABS will continue to assess and prioritise the need for further

development of classifications and, as funding allows, work towards meeting priority needs in this area.

50. Further, there is also a recognised need for an information model that would provide the necessary structure for all data collections (be they collected via a survey or from administrative by-product data). Among other benefits, an information model can serve as a reference point to encourage the standardisation of data drawn from diverse sources, as well as indicate how information that is gathered on the sectors should be organised. The NCCRS is currently at the early stages in developing such a model for culture and recreation data. Once completed this information model will provide a broad 'map' of the key entities (e.g., individuals, organisations, resources, inputs, etc.) and relationships between these entities (e.g., participation, supply, consumption, etc.) within the culture and recreation sectors. This work is building on the simplified culture and recreation framework that was recently published by the ABS in *Measuring Wellbeing* (ABS Cat. no. 4160.0).

Information development plans

51. There is also the need for a strategic information development plan. Such a plan would serve the role of describing the degree to which current information needs are met either through the ABS or other organisations and the type of information needed to address deficiencies and gaps. The information plan would then identify the priority areas for attention, the gaps that should be addressed and the methods by which such information could best be gathered.

52. Examples of gaps which might be identified and then prioritised through such a process include: regional data on culture and recreation; an understanding of the interlinkages between participation in culture and recreation, and other factors; a satellite account; the social impact of culture and recreation; the value of Indigenous cultural product; and the extent and value of cultural and sport tourism. The plan would then go on to discuss, after consultations with those in the sectors, how these data gaps might be filled and who would have responsibility for doing so.

53. The ABS is giving priority to developing information development plans, in partnership with other relevant agencies, for all fields of statistics. The NCCRS is advancing work on such a plan for culture and recreation statistics and this work will be undertaken in conjunction with users. For this to be achieved, it is essential that significant users of the data take a strategic and medium to long term view of their current and emerging statistical needs and that these needs are well-articulated. In this context, the ABS will look particularly to the DCITA, SCORS and CMC and their statistical working groups, as well as individual major users.

Data coordination

54. At present, a range of Government, industry and other organisations collect data and/or have access to administrative by-product data on Australia's culture and recreation sector. However, there is a lack of awareness across governments and the wider sectors of the existence and nature of these data sources, despite the fact these data sources may significantly contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of this nation's culture and recreation activities, and to the development of related policies and

programs. In addition, the creation of an information development plan (as discussed above) depends on an understanding of all available data, not just ABS data.

55. For this reason, the ABS, through the NCCRS, is directing more effort to gaining and disseminating information about relevant Australian statistics regarding culture and recreation. By way of example, the NCCRS is currently in the early stages of collecting information on non-ABS data sources of relevance to culture and recreation via RSISG and CMC SWG.