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Session 7: Quality and Coverage of Statistical Business Registers

Developing an Integrated Point of Contact Coding Service for Industry Classification

Abstract

All Australian businesses undertaking production are required to register for an Australian Business Number (ABN) for inclusion on the Australian Business Register (ABR) owned by the Australian Taxation Office. Registrants are required to self-code their intended industry to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) at the point of registration. This has been facilitated through a single, online portal using an ANZSIC Point of Contact Coder (PoCC) that is maintained by the ABR. Business registrations through the ABR are the primary source for identifying new or cancelled businesses for the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Business Register and form the basis for the majority of its business survey frames and business demography program. Over many years the ABS and the ABR have worked collaboratively to ensure the PoCC is effectively maintained to ensure high quality industry coding.

As part of a government initiative, the ABR portal will be decommissioned and replaced by several other registration options, including through a single Australian Government business portal and accounting software packages. The risk to industry statistics under this development is that multiple organisations, including another government department and software vendors will develop and maintain their own ANZSIC coding solutions. The use of multiple coders would lead to a quality degradation of industry data and undermine the quality of important national economic statistics, including the National Accounts.

This paper describes the problem faced by the ABS, the strategy implemented and the coding solution developed for an ABS hosted Industry PoCC to be made available to all organisations facilitating the registration of ABNs, as well as other interested users (eg. other government departments).