21st Century Leadership in the Public Sector and Learnings of Census 2016

IPAA Tasmania AGM
13 September 2017
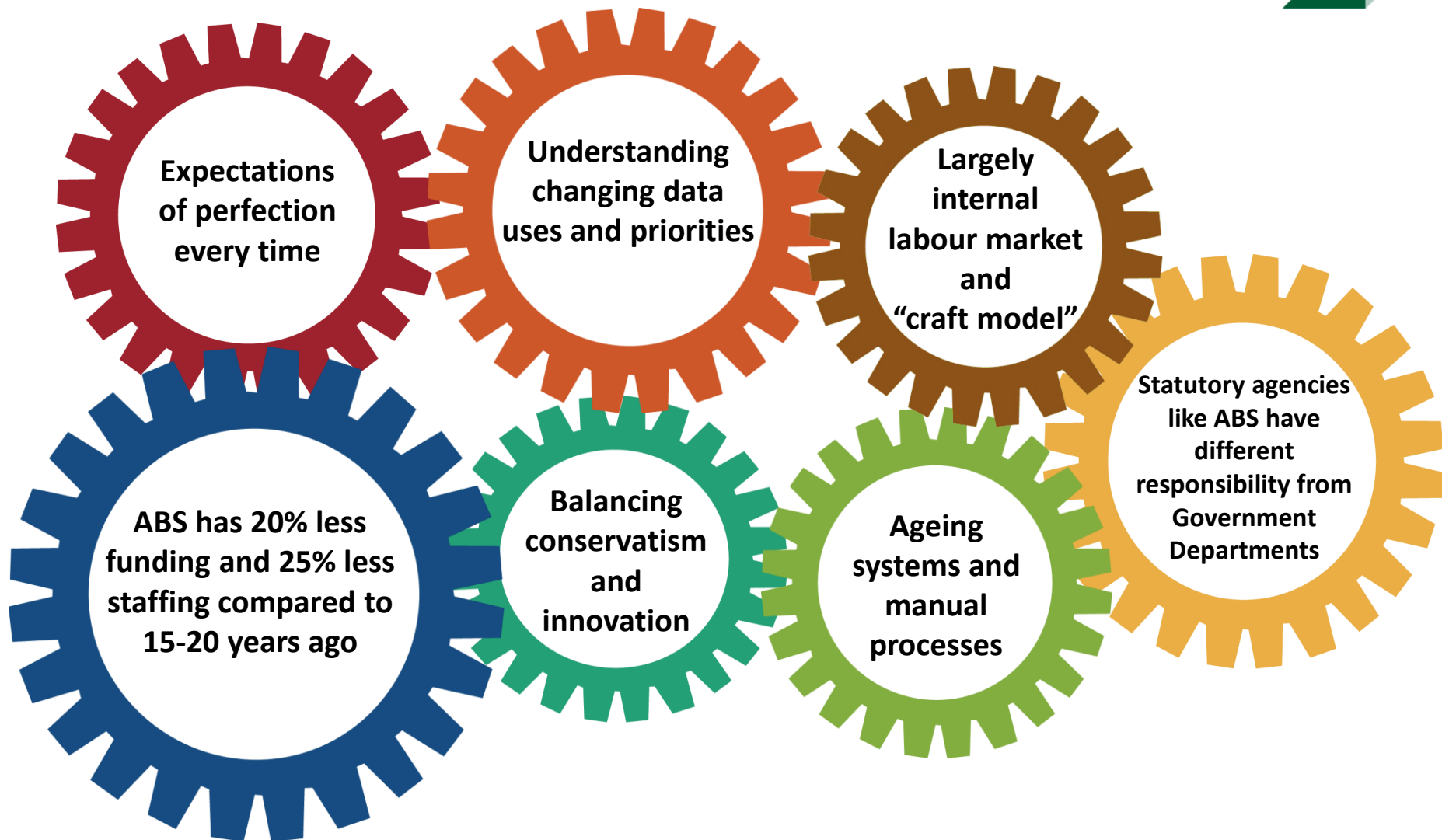
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www.abs.gov.au

Features of the ABS

- Iconic, professional national organisation with international reputation

- ABS provides an essential service and our statistics are priceless

- Produce more than 500 statistical releases annually

- Community and informed user trust in ABS

- Fragile, ageing statistical infrastructure and reduced resources

- Operating national lines of business from nine locations – most staff outside Canberra

Challenges facing the ABS

Expectations of perfection every time

Understanding changing data uses and priorities

Largely internal labour market and "craft model"

ABS has 20% less funding and 25% less staffing compared to 15-20 years ago

Balancing conservatism and innovation

Ageing systems and manual processes

Statutory agencies like ABS have different responsibility from Government Departments

Transforming for the future

ENVIRONMENT

We collaborate with stakeholders to understand and respond better to the current and future external environment

STRATEGY

Our strategies enable rigorous statistics, strong partnerships, and effective use of resources

GOVERNANCE

Our governance supports responsive decision making, prioritisation and management of enterprise risk

TRANSFORMATION GOALS

INFRASTRUCTURE

Our infrastructure is effective, efficient and adaptable

CULTURE

We are high performing, aligned, engaged, innovative and accountable

PEOPLE

We have a diverse, expert, motivated and agile workforce

Scale/features of the Census

Census of Population and Housing

The Census is Australia's largest logistical exercise; it takes seven years from commencement to final data release.

40,000 employees enumerating

24 million people

10 million dwellings

Up to 6 months to print paper forms

3,500 kg of ink

13,500 litres of glue

20 million items mailed

40,000 employees, including 100 Remote Area Mobile Teams visiting remote communities, 1,000 staff interviewing the homeless, 1,000 Address Canvassers, 30,000 door-to-door Census Field Officers, 1,000 staff scanning & processing the data

2 million+ phone calls

200+ different countries of origin

300+ different languages spoken

SPECIAL STRATEGIES FOR:

- Seniors
- Homeless
- Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
- Urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- Remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders
- Snowfields and Holiday Areas

- School Camps
- Hospitals and Care Facilities
- Defence
- Shipping, Migratory and Offshore
- Mining
- Prisons and Detention Centres

- Intersex
- Youth
- Transient Workers
- Domestic and International Travellers, including remote travellers
- International Students

Key Census learnings

Manage a big program commensurately

- Seek external expertise

- Beware past successes, tuned to changing context

- Plan for things to go wrong

Innovation and risk

Communicate, communicate, communicate

Privacy and Better use of positive data

Fix the problem

Not just resilience but anti-fragile ABS

Personal learnings

Importance of pursuing transformation early and hard, before you face major issues, helped us better deal with Census issues

Leadership that genuinely cares for your people and their wellbeing matters and pays dividends

Support networks count in times of extreme stress and you find out quickly who your friends are

Leadership needs to also keep learning, and contributes to a developing organisation

Census response - Forecast and Actual
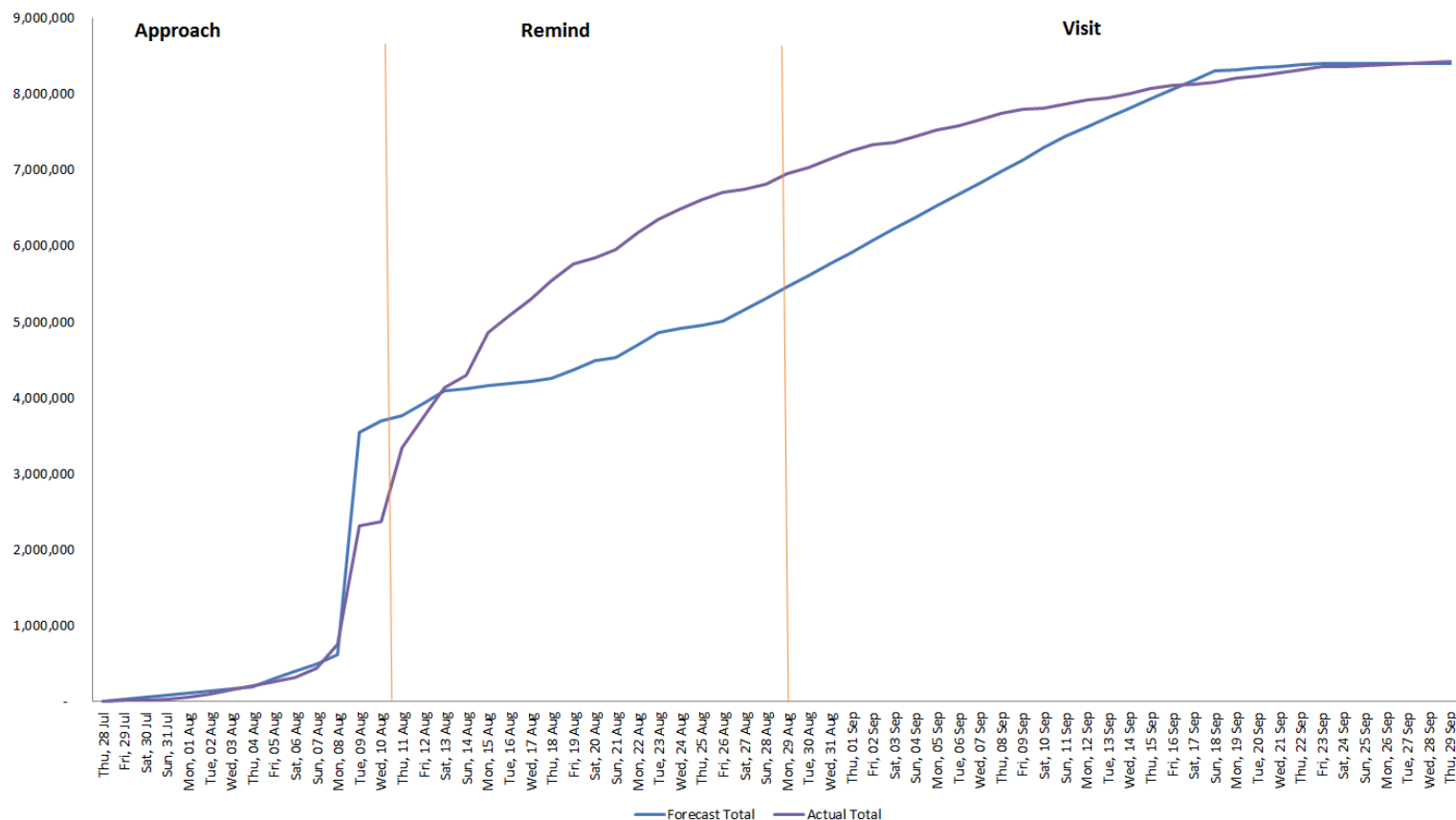
High quality Census

95.1% Overall response rate

63.3% Online response rate

1.0% Net undercount

Thank you.

Questions?

www.abs.gov.au