

**Statistics agencies' relationships with other government statistical producers: an interview study in Australia and the United Kingdom**

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*Abstract*

Statistical agencies face rising expectations and new challenges. Among these is the growth in many countries of government statistical producers operating outside traditional statistical agencies. This paper draws upon semi-structured interviews with senior government statisticians in Australia and the United Kingdom to explore how statistical agencies are trying to develop relationships with and influence other government producers. Although the two case study countries have structurally different statistical systems, central statistical authorities in both jurisdictions have struggled to influence producers over whom they have no direct authority. The paper suggests that recent efforts to build relationships and establish influence were least successful when statistical agencies were perceived to be trying to control other producers. Agencies were more successful when they emphasized 'soft governance' strategies such as consultation, education and network building. The paper concludes that a mixture of hard and soft governance strategies is required for the effective governance of dispersed government statistical production.