

## Research reveals patterns of internet use in Australia

ACMA has funded a joint research project with the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) examining patterns of internet use in Australia based on the results of the 2006 Census of Population and Housing. The findings were published by the ABS in November 2007.

The report, *Patterns of Internet Access in Australia*, provides information about the significance of socio-economic and location factors in influencing internet and more specifically broadband usage in Australia. The project is part of ACMA's broader communications research program, which meets statutory obligations and assists ACMA in making informed decisions as an evidence-based regulator.

Overall, the census research found that internet use in Australia has nearly doubled since 2001, up from just over a third (35 per cent) of Australian dwellings connected to the internet to 63 per cent in 2006.

The research also revealed some interesting facts that may form the basis for further inquiry. For example, proximity to population centres is not always a good predictor of internet connectivity. Income and education were key factors influencing people's internet use regardless of location.

Key research findings were:

- households with an income of \$2,000 or more per week were three times more likely to have broadband compared to households on less than \$600 per week

- families with children aged under 15 or dependent students were three to four times more likely to have broadband access than other families
  - people in low-skill occupations are about a quarter less likely to have broadband
  - people not in the labour force and the unemployed are 18 per cent and 12 per cent respectively less likely to have broadband
  - Indigenous households are about half as likely to have broadband as other households.
- The census provides an opportunity for detailed geographical analysis of internet usage. In major cities, 66 per cent of dwellings had internet

access, compared with 55–59 per cent for regional areas and 42–54 per cent for remote areas. Broadband is used by 46 per cent of dwellings in major cities, compared with 27–32 per cent in regional areas and 24–28 per cent in remote Australia.

The report is on the ABS website at [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au).

Occupied private dwellings with broadband connection by 2006 Statistical Division for Australia (percentage)

