

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Sydney Morning Herald

ABS responds to article "Mining push drives foreign farm ownership over 10%" (Sydney Morning Herald, 19 January 2012, page 5)

In response to David Wroe's article, "Mining push drives foreign farm ownership over 10%" (Sydney Morning Herald, 19 January 2012, page 5), the Australian Bureau of Statistics stands-by the quality and value of the Agricultural Land and Water Ownership Survey (ALWOS).

The ABS did not use land title information as the basis for selecting businesses for inclusion in ALWOS, as this would not have provided any additional information on foreign-owned businesses.

The ABS experience in conducting business-based collections has demonstrated that there are significant complexities in using land titles to select businesses for these collections as there is not a one to one relationship between land and business location. The resulting inefficiency of a land titles approach, compared to a business-based one, would have resulted in substantially less reliable estimates.

The ABS has agreed to undertake further Agricultural Land and Water Ownership Surveys in 2013 and 2018, with additional information to be collected from supplementary surveys to the 2016 and 2021 Agricultural Censuses.

While ALWOS was not voluntary, the ABS received great cooperation from the businesses selected, and we would like to thank them again for their cooperation.

Peter Harper

Acting Australian Statistician

Australian Bureau of Statistics

The Age

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This page first published 24 January 2012

