



#### ***A proposed method of estimating regional migration in Australia***

**Andrew Howe**, *Australian Bureau of Statistics, Adelaide* (andrew.howe@abs.gov.au)

The major problem in preparing better quality regional demographic data in Australia is the absence of frequent data on one of the most fundamental of demographic processes: migration. While the census provides a good snap-shot of regional migration every five years, demographers and practitioners need more - in particular more frequent and more consistently-defined migration data. The absence of adequate migration data below-state/territory is the main reason why the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) does not estimate population at this level using the 'fundamental demographic equation' - where population estimates are updated by adding births, subtracting deaths, and adding/subtracting migration over time. The ABS uses data on Medicare enrolments, supplied by Medicare Australia, to estimate regular movements of people across broader (state/territory) boundaries. This data has not been deemed suitable for smaller regions mainly because it is supplied to ABS by postcode, which is not directly compatible with the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC). The ASGC is the boundary set to which the ABS is required to prepare estimates of population and its components. However, the ABS has invested considerable time in recent years developing postcode to ASGC concordances, based on estimated population distribution across postcodes. Can this concordance be successfully used to convert migration data? This paper summarises a method to convert postcode-based migration data to ASGC boundaries using a population-weighted concordance, and discusses potential pitfalls of this approach. In order to assess the suitability of this method, the paper includes a derived historical data series for testing the accuracy of the migration conversion.