



**Statistics
South Africa**

Preferred supplier of quality statistics



Statistical release

P0041

Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

July 2007

**Embargoed until:
20 September 2007
09:30**

Enquiries

User Information Services
Tel: (012) 310 8600/4892/8390

Forthcoming issue	Expected release date
--------------------------	------------------------------

August 2007	18 October 2007
-------------	-----------------

Contents	Page
Key figures	2
Table A – Key figures for the month of July 2007	2
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: STATISTICS OF CIVIL CASES FOR DEBT (JULY 2007)	2
Key findings as at the end of July 2007	2
The number of civil summonses issued for debt decreases	2
The number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreases	2
The value of civil judgements recorded for debt increases	2
Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt	3
Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt	4
Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt according to business enterprises and private persons.	5
Table 2 – Number of civil cases recorded according to selected magistrates’ offices.....	6
Table 3 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons.	7
Table 4 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons	8
Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number and value of debts recorded between the current quarter and the corresponding quarter of the previous year.....	9
Table 6 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the total number and value of debts recorded for the current quarter and the corresponding quarter of the previous year.	9
Table 7 – Percentage change in the total number and value of debts recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year.	9
Explanatory notes	10
Glossary	11
General information	12

Key figures

Table A – Key figures for the month of July 2007

Actual estimates	July 2007	% change between July 2006 and July 2007	% change between May 2006 to July 2006 and May 2007 to July 2007
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	119 711	-3,0	-3,8
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	66 766	-11,2	-2,4
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	537,6	-5,7	2,3

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: STATISTICS OF CIVIL CASES FOR DEBT (JULY 2007)

Key findings as at the end of July 2007

The number of civil summonses issued for debt decreases

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended July 2007 decreased by 3,8% compared with the three months ended July 2006.

The major contributors to the decrease of 3,8% in civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended July 2007 compared with the three months ended July 2006 were civil summonses issued in respect of 'other' debts (-3,6 percentage points), goods sold on an open account (-2,9 percentage points) and 'other services' (-0,8 of a percentage point). There was, however, an increase of 4,7 percentage points with regard to civil summonses issued for promissory notes and other (see Table 6 column 2, page 9).

Note that the numbers and values relating to civil cases for debt were adversely affected by the civil service strike that affected the administration of justice in June 2007.

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt decreases

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended July 2007 decreased by 2,4% compared with the three months ended July 2006.

The major contributors to the decrease of 2,4% in civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended July 2007 compared with the three months ended July 2006 were civil judgements in respect of 'other' debts (-4,4 percentage points), goods sold on an open account (-4,3 percentage points) and 'other services' (-2,3 percentage points). There was, however, an increase of 6,6 percentage points with regard to civil judgements issued for money lent (see Table 6 column 3, page 9).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt increases

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended July 2007 increased by 2,3% compared with the three months ended July 2006.

The major contributors to the increase of 2,3% in the value of civil judgements for the three months ended 2007 compared with the three months ended 2006 was civil judgements recorded in respect of money lent (6,4 percentage points) and promissory notes and other (4,0 percentage points). There were, however, decreases of 7,1 percentage points with regard to civil summonses issued for 'other' debts, 1,3 percentage points with regard to instalment sale transactions and 0,5 of a percentage point with regard to professional services (see Table 6 column 4, page 9).

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for July 2007 decreased by 5,7% compared with July 2006.

During July 2007, 66 766 civil judgements for debt, amounting to R537,6 million, were recorded. The largest contributors to the R537,6 million were civil judgements relating to money lent (R143,3 million or 26,6%) and 'other' debts (R124,2 million or 23,1%) (see Table 4, page 8).

Figures 1 and 2 outline the number of civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded for debt from 2002 to July 2007 respectively. In figure 1 from January 2002 the trend estimates for the total number of civil summonses issued for debt showed an increasing trend until April 2003. The trend decreased from May 2003 to June 2005 but increased again to July 2006. The trend decreased for a short period whereas from February 2007 the trend started to increase again.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

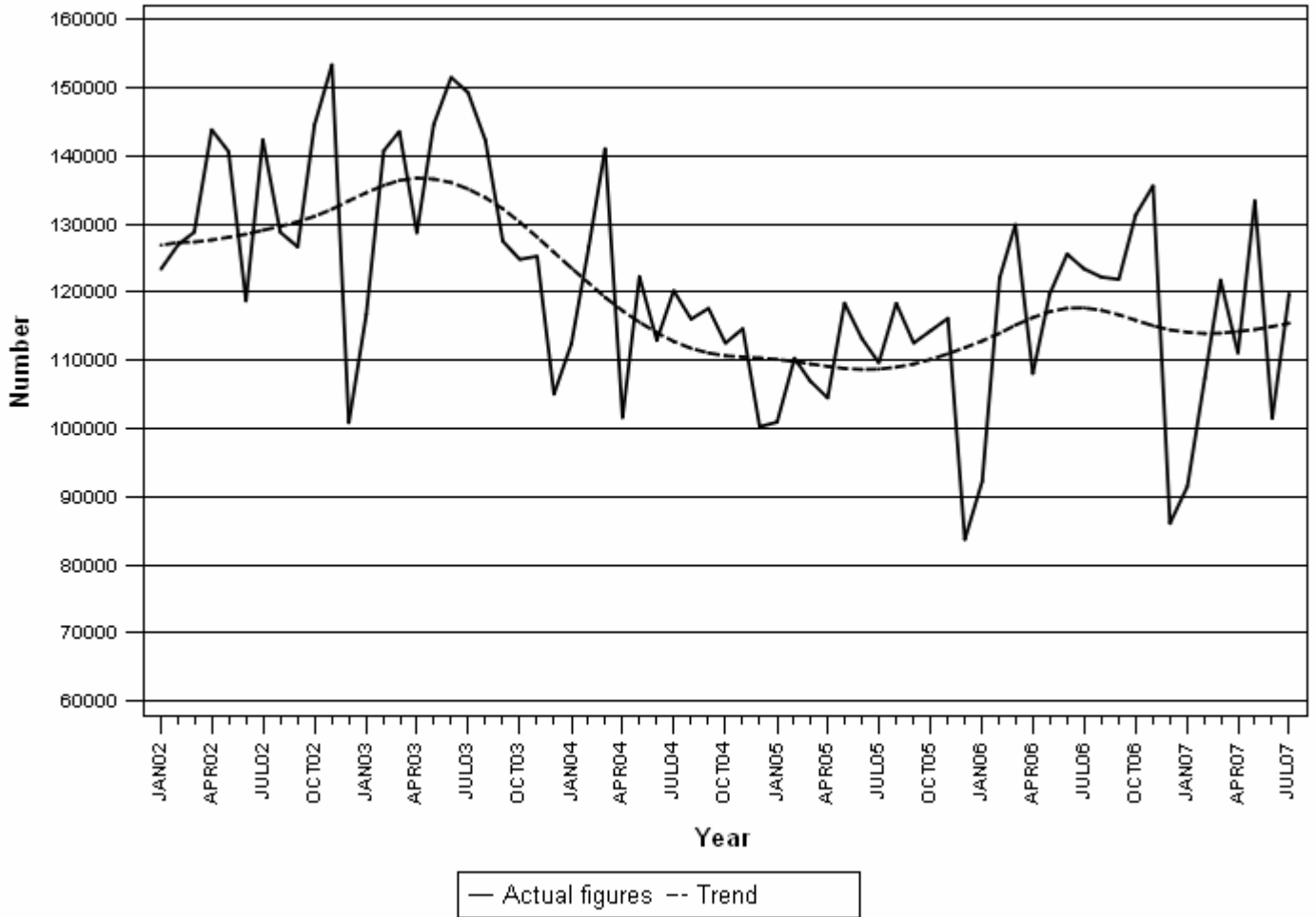
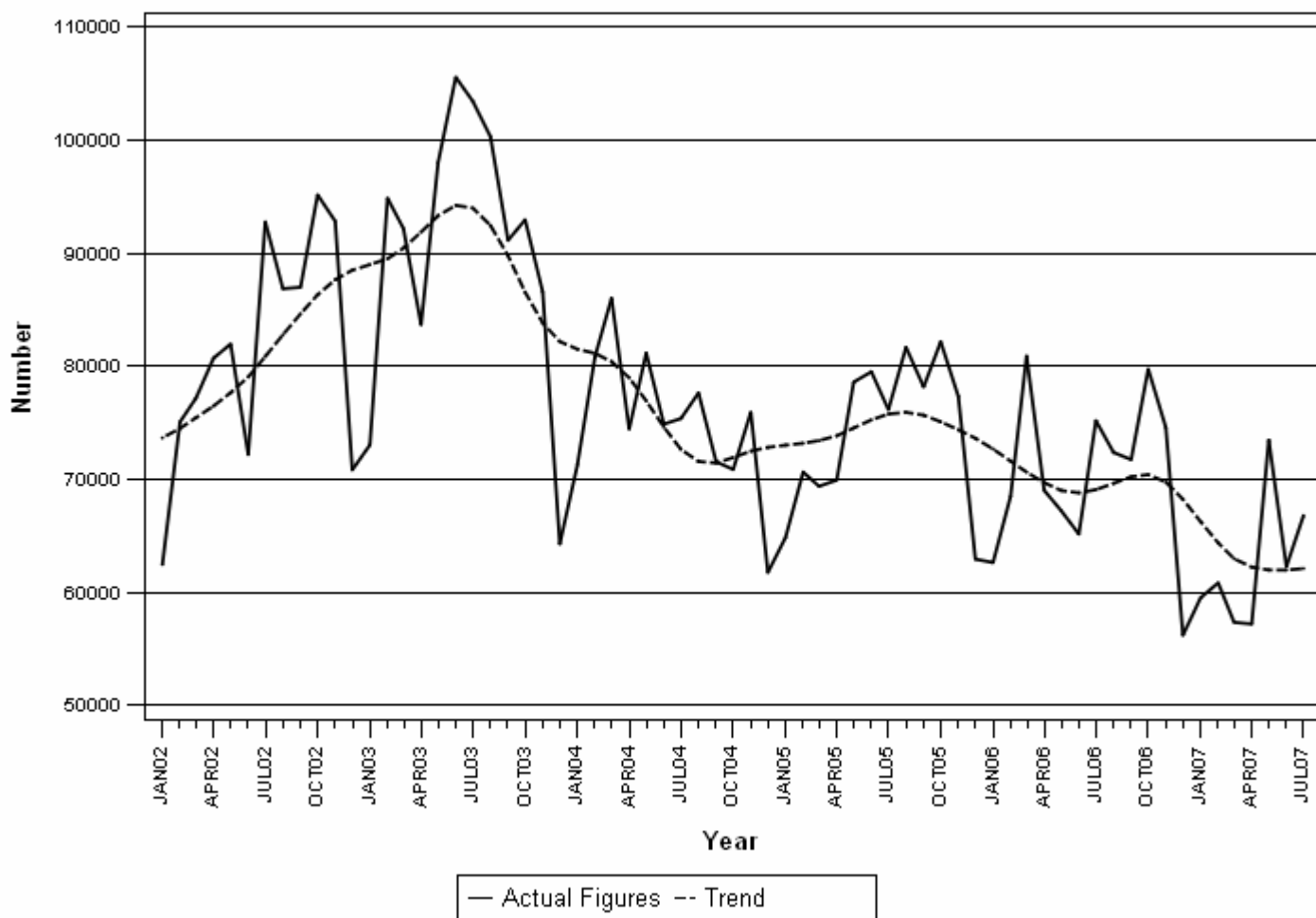


Figure 2 shows that the trend in civil judgements for debt generally declined from mid-2003 and this long-term decrease continued in 2007.

Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



P J Lehohla
Statistician-General

Detailed results: Tables

Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt according to business enterprises and private persons.

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private Persons			
	2006	2006	2007		2006	2006	2007	
		July	* June	1/ July		July	* June	1/ July
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 603 709	139 386	113 739	133 514	1 442 388	124 564	100 692	121 604
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		135 177	110 732	130 135		120 991	101 359	118 725
2 Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	159 476	14 971	11 156	10 196	137 314	13 135	9 423	8 569
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	35 514	3 282	2 135	2 470	28 794	2 449	1 811	2 086
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	138 310	11 616	10 581	10 967	117 768	9 959	9 022	9 574
2.2.2 Other	200 992	16 365	16 668	14 636	178 084	14 006	14 461	13 165
2.3 Rent	50 894	4 244	3 416	4 338	39 914	3 143	2 683	3 331
2.4 Money lent	407 106	36 564	27 276	31 837	387 509	34 765	24 611	30 222
2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	148 099	11 862	12 738	23 427	133 964	10 559	11 516	22 349
2.6 Other debts	277 740	24 518	17 516	21 840	242 332	21 506	15 284	19 154
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 418 131	123 422	101 486	119 711	1 265 679	109 522	88 811	108 450
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		118 300	97 788	115 431		105 015	88 761	104 610

1/ Preliminary.

* Revised.

Table 2 – Number of civil cases recorded according to selected magistrates' offices.

Year or month		Cape Peninsula	Port Elizabeth	East London	Kimberley	Pietermaritzburg	Durban	Johannesburg	East Rand	West Rand	Pretoria	Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark	Bloemfontein
2005	Year Total	165 535	69 776	38 487	9 248	20 091	77 468	156 641	58 486	58 984	138 300	27 437	59 361
2006	Year Total	147 564	69 334	50 557	5 922	18 095	69 501	181 787	64 780	59 891	142 102	39 909	60 344
	January	10 205	5 091	4 446	209	1 171	5 751	6 505	4 097	4 441	10 867	2 437	5 120
	February	11 387	7 860	5 785	756	1 751	5 751	13 143	4 652	7 231	12 266	2 492	5 117
	March	14 010	8 082	6 013	732	1 742	6 285	14 398	5 761	6 259	14 272	2 994	4 789
	April	11 657	5 239	4 285	311	1 290	6 364	12 046	5 658	4 454	8 127	3 028	5 191
	May	13 981	5 393	2 620	741	1 893	4 925	15 758	5 585	5 489	11 299	3 200	5 253
	June	13 359	6 628	5 688	555	1 254	4 999	16 849	5 418	4 411	10 018	5 307	5 244
	July	12 981	5 770	5 218	442	1 348	5 867	16 060	6 478	5 190	10 318	3 847	5 449
	August	11 196	3 824	4 814	480	1 348	5 796	15 146	6 702	5 147	8 550	2 712	5 513
	September	12 137	5 315	2 350	507	1 140	5 291	18 632	5 593	5 057	13 258	1 869	5 368
	October	13 397	6 537	2 616	532	1 577	5 291	19 761	6 699	5 199	14 758	5 172	5 174
	November	13 082	6 315	4 499	271	1 837	6 571	21 268	4 784	4 347	19 625	4 144	4 145
December	10 172	3 280	2 223	386	1 744	6 610	12 221	3 353	2 666	8 744	2 707	3 981	
2007	January	7 940	6 102	1 275	729	1 282	5 789	22 003	3 455	2 138	14 856	1 635	4 238
	February	9 788	5 904	2 832	581	1 452	6 018	18 368	4 228	5 791	11 214	954	3 922
	March	12 802	7 935	3 553	1 123	1 613	8 978	15 648	4 318	5 925	13 803	2 186	4 010
	April	9 349	5 013	3 167	1 123	1 748	8 518	15 648	5 118	4 826	12 558	4 822	3 652
	May	10 792	6 650	5 105	1 332	2 346	5 245	25 094	5 655	2 760	16 251	2 714	4 242
	* June	10 167	4 387	5 688	503	638	7 164	8 213	3 077	3 142	10 948	4 326	4 105
	1/ July	13 170	4 784	1 799	983	2 173	7 164	20 470	5 734	3 469	14 144	3 004	4 105

1/ Preliminary
* Revised

Table 3 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons.

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private Persons			
	2006	2006	2007		2006	2006	2007	
		July	* June	1/ July		July	* June	1/ July
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	120 554	10 932	6 653	6 850	109 368	9 904	6 033	6 069
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	12 254	952	544	718	10 582	832	460	591
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	78 747	7 349	5 377	6 610	69 974	6 802	4 960	5 917
1.2.2 Other	96 191	8 378	6 127	7 102	89 567	7 846	5 705	6 587
1.3 Rent	25 941	2 136	1 774	2 458	20 595	1 761	1 391	2 019
1.4 Money lent	297 379	24 363	25 078	22 455	289 631	23 433	24 755	22 129
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	75 440	5 622	7 332	9 525	68 753	5 341	7 079	9 165
1.6 Other debts	136 605	15 436	9 372	11 048	122 291	12 427	8 697	10 324
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	843 111	75 168	62 257	66 766	780 761	68 346	59 080	62 801
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		71 264	61 794	63 506		64 858	58 509	59 865

1/ Preliminary.

* Revised.

Table 4 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private Persons			
	2006	2006	2007		2006	2006	2007	
		July	June	1/ July		July	June	1/ July
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	673 174	68 834	55 870	54 420	523 117	42 902	38 304	41 814
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	256 585	22 050	14 320	14 689	197 360	15 817	10 890	9 034
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	266 969	19 991	20 164	23 415	223 269	16 225	17 378	18 224
1.2.2 Other	579 439	56 182	45 140	56 755	464 798	44 660	33 578	40 539
1.3 Rent	222 568	19 428	20 880	26 003	153 995	13 224	14 731	19 278
1.4 Money lent	2 086 739	160 037	174 366	143 250	1 960 167	151 067	165 912	135 049
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	713 512	65 386	84 935	94 816	630 837	58 587	79 574	83 096
1.6 Other debts	1 784 255	158 224	88 817	124 240	1 271 309	95 075	74 829	112 495
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	6 583 241	570 132	504 492	537 588	5 424 852	437 557	435 196	459 529
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		545 214	524 401	516 100		444 076	460 833	470 421

1/ Preliminary.

* Revised.

Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number and value of debts recorded between the current quarter and the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

	Actual estimates May 2006 to July 2006	Actual estimates May 2007 to July 2007	% change between May 2006 to July 2006 and May 2007 to July 2007	Difference between May 2006 to July 2006 and May 2007 to July 2007
Number of summonses for debt	368 710	354 612	-3,8	-14 098
Number of judgements for debt	207 510	202 479	-2,4	-5 031
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	1 665,3	1 704,3	2,3	39,0

Table 6 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the total number and value of debts recorded for the current quarter and the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

	Contribution (percentage points) to the percentage change in the total number of summonses for debt	Contribution (percentage points) to the percentage change in the total number of civil judgements for debt	Contribution (percentage points) to the percentage change in the total value of civil judgements for debt
Goods sold			
--Open Account	-2,9	-4,3	0,1
--Instalment sale transactions	-0,6	-0,3	-1,3
Professional Services	-0,3	-1,4	-0,5
Other Services	-0,8	-2,3	-0,1
Rent	-0,6	0,0	0,7
Money lent	0,4	6,6	6,4
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgement of debt	4,7	3,6	4,0
Other debts	-3,6	-4,4	-7,1
Total	-3,8	-2,4	2,3

The contribution (percentage points) is calculated by multiplying the quarterly percentage change of each kind of debt with the percentage contribution to the total number or value of cases recorded during May 2006 to July 2006, divided by 100. Figures have been rounded off.

Table 7 – Percentage change in the total number and value of debts recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year.

	Actual estimates July 2006	Actual estimates July 2007	% change between July 2006 and July 2007	Difference between July 2006 and July 2007
Number of summonses for debt	123 422	119 711	-3,0	-3 711
Number of judgements for debt	75 168	66 766	-11,2	-8 402
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	570,1	537,6	-5,7	-32,5

Explanatory notes

Introduction	1	Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) conducts a monthly sample survey of civil cases recorded and civil summonses for debt issued in South Africa. This information is obtained from selected magistrates' offices.
	2	Except for cases recorded, all other information relates to debt cases only, therefore claims for damages, ejection orders and other non-debt cases are excluded.
Scope of the survey	3	This survey covers- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of civil cases recorded; • number of civil summonses issued for debt; • number of civil judgements recorded for debt; and • value of civil judgements recorded for debt.
Statistical unit	4	The statistical unit for collection of information is a magistrate' office. Magistrates' offices include the small claims courts.
	5	The largest magistrates' offices in South Africa, which account for approximately 95% of all the civil cases in South Africa, are included in the monthly survey of civil cases recorded and civil summonses for debt issued. The smallest magistrates, offices are not used in the sample. A sample of 151 magistrates' offices is drawn using only the number of civil cases recorded as measure of size.
Survey methodology and design	6	The survey is conducted by mail each month from approximately 151 magistrates' offices.
Response rate	7	The response rate for the civil cases for debt for July 2007 was 88,7%.
Trend cycle	8	Smoothed seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are generated using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Programme.
Publications	9	Users may also wish to refer to the following publications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bulletin of Statistics issued quarterly.</i> • <i>SA Statistics issued annually.</i>
Unpublished statistics	10	In some cases Stats SA can also make available statistics, which are not published. The statistics can be made available as computer printouts, on diskette or CD. Generally a charge is made for providing unpublished statistics.
Symbols and abbreviations	11	R/D Refer to Drawer CD Compact Disc Stats SA Statistics South Africa TBVC Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Ciskei * Revised figures

Glossary

Acknowledgement of debt	Acknowledgement of debt is a statement by a person/debtor which he admits that he owes money to an individual or a company or a bank.
Bills	Bills are statements of charges for services rendered or for amounts owed.
Civil judgements	Civil judgements are decisions taken in a civil matter or a dispute between two people or parties.
Civil summonses	Civil summonses are notices to appear before the court of law where a dispute between two parties or people has to be heard, i.e. not for a criminal offence.
Consent judgements	Consent judgements refer to where a debtor agrees to subject himself/herself to obey or accept a judgement of a court against him for debt he owes without defending the action. This usually happens before the debtor signs a binding contract, e.g. loan agreement.
Default judgements	Default judgements refer to where the court gives a judgement or a ruling against the defendant who is not present in court and was previously given a notice that was ignored, i.e. a judgement was given against a party or an individual while not present in court.
Instalment sale transaction	Instalment sale transaction relates to where a person buys goods on credit and pays for them in instalments, e.g. every week or month, until he/she settles the debt.
Litigants	Litigants are people who take part in court proceedings, usually against each other, like a debtor and a creditor.
Litigants referred	Litigants referred relates to a case where the parties have been referred to another instance/court.
Open account transaction	Open account transactions are revolving credit, i.e. where an account does not have a final payment date and a person can always take more goods and keep paying as long as he has credit.
Other services	“Other services” refers to municipal services (except outstanding assessment rates), plumbers, builders, mechanics, panel-beaters and electricians.
Other debts	“Other debts” refers to all other kinds of outstanding debts such as salaries and wages, outstanding medical fund debts, outstanding sponsored debts, outstanding class and tuition debt, outstanding income and sales, tax, outstanding assessment rates, outstanding money in respect to television maintenance contracts and outstanding money in respect of flat levies,
Plaintiff	Plaintiff is a person/party in a civil case who asks the court for judgement against another person.
Professional services	Professional services refer to medical doctors/ dentists, advocates/attorneys, auditors/accountants, architects, engineers and hospital services.
Promissory note	Promissory note is a written note, signed by one person, in which he promises to pay money to another person or to the bearer of such a note on a specific date or on demand.
Reference month	Reference month refers to one calendar month.
Refer to drawer (R/D) cheques	R/d cheques refer to dishonoured cheques. The drawer is the owner of the cheque. When a person issues a cheque and there is no money in the cheque account, the bank will refuse to pay the bearer. The cheque will be referred back to the drawer.

General information

Stats SA publishes approximately 300 different statistical releases each year. It is not economically viable to produce them in more than one of South Africa's eleven official languages. Since the releases are used extensively, not only locally but also by international economic and social-scientific communities, Stats SA releases are published in English only.

Stats SA has copyright on this publication. Users may apply the information as they wish, provided that they acknowledge Stats SA as the source of the basic data wherever they process, apply, utilize, publish or distribute the data: and also that they specify that the relevant application and analysis (where applicable) result from their own processing of the data.

Advanced release calendar

An advanced release calendar is disseminated on www.statssa.gov.za

Stats SA products

A complete set of Stats SA publications is available at the Stats SA Library and the following libraries:

National Library of South Africa, Pretoria Division
National Library of South Africa, Cape Town Division
Natal Society Library, Pietermaritzburg
Library of Parliament, Cape Town
Bloemfontein Public Library
Johannesburg Public Library
Eastern Cape Library Services, King William's Town
Central Regional Library, Polokwane
Central Reference Library, Nelspruit
Central Reference Collection, Kimberley
Central Reference Library, Mmabatho

Stats SA also provides a subscription service.

Electronic services

A large range of data is available via on-line services, diskette, CD and computer printouts. For more details about our electronic data services, contact (012) 310 8600/8390/8351/8496/4892/8095.

You can visit us on the Internet at: www.statssa.gov.za

General enquiries

Telephone number: (012) 310 8600/ 8390/ 8351/ 8496/ 4892/ 8095 (user information services)
(012) 310 8161 (orders)
(012) 310 4883/ 4885/ 8018 (library)

Fax number: (012) 310 8664 (technical enquiries)

email: juan-pierret@statssa.gov.za (technical enquiries)
info@statssa.gov.za (user information services)
distribution@statssa.gov.za (orders)

Postal address: Private Bag X44, Pretoria, 0001

Produced by Stats SA