



**Statistics
South Africa**

Preferred supplier of quality statistics



Statistical release

P0041

Statistics of civil cases for debt (Preliminary)

May 2009

Embargoed until:

23 July 2009

09:00

Enquiries

User Information Services

Tel: (012) 310 8600/4892/8390

Forthcoming issue

June 2009

Expected release date

20 August 2009

Contents	Page
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: STATISTICS OF CIVIL CASES FOR DEBT (MAY 2009)	2
Detailed results: Tables	4
Table 1 – Number of civil cases recorded and summonses issued for debt according to business enterprises and private persons	4
Table 2 – Number of civil cases recorded according to selected magistrates’ offices.....	5
Table 3 – Number of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons	6
Table 4 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons (R’000)	7
Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current quarter and the corresponding quarter of the previous year.....	8
Table 6 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded for the current quarter and the corresponding quarter of the previous year	8
Table 7 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year.....	8
Explanatory notes	9
Glossary	10
General information	11

Key figures

Table A – Key figures for the month of May 2009

Actual estimates	May 2009	% change between May 2008 and May 2009	% change between March to May 2008 and March to May 2009
Number of civil summonses issued for debt	105 214	1,8	10,4
Number of civil judgements recorded for debt	54 357	-4,2	8,2
Value of civil judgements recorded for debt (R million)	547,7	14,2	21,1

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: STATISTICS OF CIVIL CASES FOR DEBT (MAY 2009)

The number of civil summonses issued for debt increases

The total number of civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended May 2009 increased by 10,4% compared with the three months ended May 2008. There was also a 1,8% increase between May 2008 and May 2009 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the increase in civil summonses issued for debt for the three months ended May 2009 compared with the three months ended May 2008 were civil summonses issued in respect of money lent (3,5 percentage points), goods sold on an open account (3,0 percentage points), and promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt (2,5 percentage points) (see Table 6 column 2, page 8).

The number of civil judgements recorded for debt increases

The total number of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended May 2009 was 8,2% higher compared with the three months ended May 2008. There was, however, a 4,2% decrease between May 2008 and May 2009 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

Civil judgements in respect of money lent (7,6 percentage points) and professional services (3,2 percentage points) were the main drivers behind the 8,2% increase in the number of civil judgements recorded for debt (see Table 6 column 3, page 8).

The value of civil judgements recorded for debt increases

The total value of civil judgements recorded for debt for the three months ended May 2009 increased by 21,1% compared with the three months ended May 2008. There was also a 14,2% increase between May 2008 and May 2009 (see Table A and Tables 5 and 7).

The major contributors to the 21,1% increase in the value of civil judgements for the three months ended May 2009 compared with the same period last year were money lent (12,8 percentage points), promissory notes and other acknowledgements of debt (3,1 percentage points) and rent (2,8 percentage points). The 'other debts' category was the only negative contributor (with -3,2 percentage points) (see Table 6 column 4, page 8).

During May 2009, 54 357 civil judgements for debt amounting to R547,7 million were recorded. The largest contributors to the R547,7 million were:

- Civil judgements relating to money lent (R198,4 million or 36,2%)
- 'Other debts' (R88,8 million or 16,2%)
- Goods sold on an open account (R62,4 million or 11,4%) and
- Other services (R52,9 million or 9,7%).

Figures 1 and 2 outline the number of civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded for debt respectively from January 2004 to May 2009.

Figure 1 – Civil summonses issued for debt

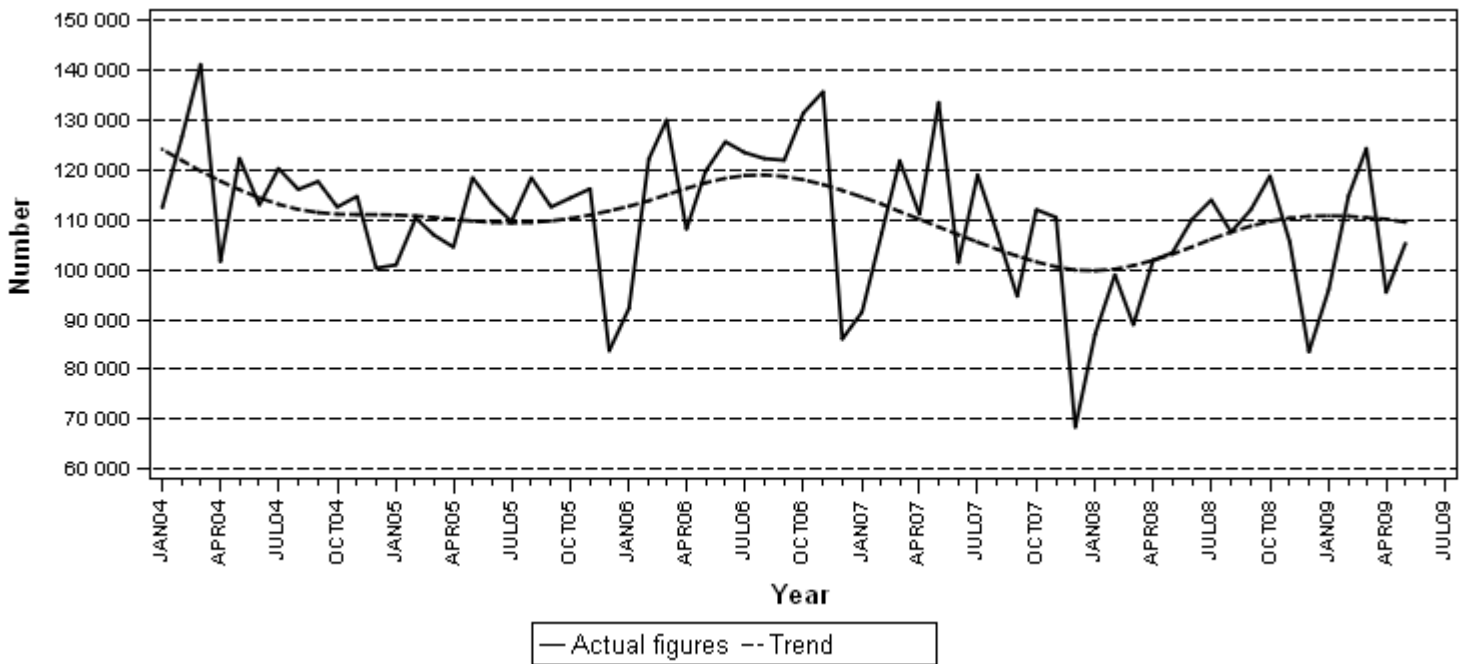
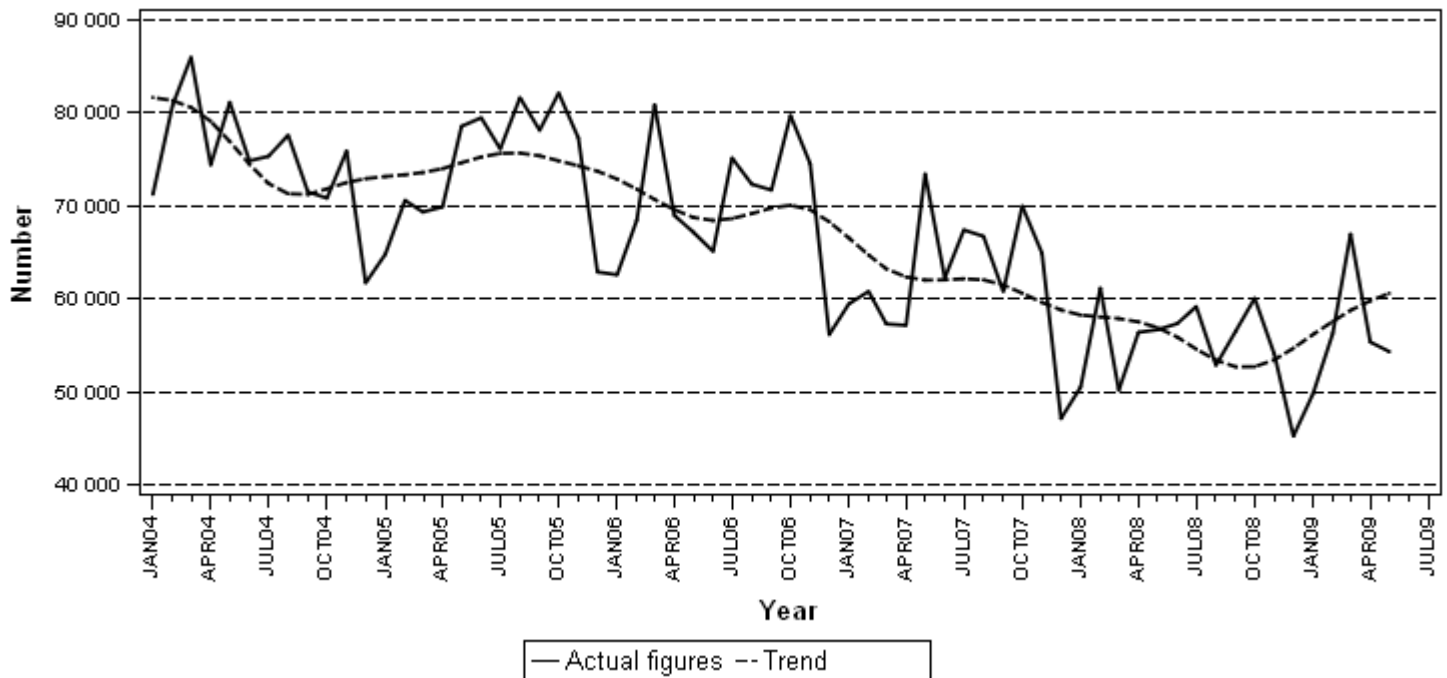


Figure 2 – Civil judgements recorded for debt



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			
	* 2008	2008	1/ 2009		* 2008	2008	1/ 2009	
		May	April	May		May	April	May
1. Cases recorded								
1.1 Actual figures	1 442 676	123 363	115 913	126 579	1 265 159	110 070	103 307	111 939
1.2 Seasonally adjusted		120 249	122 949	123 752		106 890	109 522	109 121
2. Civil summonses for debt								
2.1 Goods sold								
2.1.1 Open account	116 702	10 913	11 407	10 197	95 703	9 198	9 934	8 237
2.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	31 242	2 399	2 630	2 914	26 472	1 944	2 315	2 451
2.2 Services								
2.2.1 Professional	132 886	11 474	10 635	12 446	112 140	10 058	8 832	10 433
2.2.2 Other	173 709	16 500	11 484	11 518	151 941	14 388	9 851	9 796
2.3 Rent	53 031	4 573	3 802	4 231	42 964	3 713	3 320	3 617
2.4 Money lent	283 693	21 381	22 889	24 025	262 921	19 331	21 679	22 474
2.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	201 891	16 876	15 030	18 379	189 884	15 794	13 929	17 445
2.6 Other debts	238 253	19 238	17 575	21 504	205 941	16 520	13 818	17 316
2.7 Total								
2.7.1 Actual figures	1 231 407	103 354	95 452	105 214	1 087 966	90 946	83 678	91 769
2.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		102 171	99 119	104 627		90 139	87 712	91 622

1/ Preliminary

* Revised

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

Year and month		Cape Peninsula	Port Elizabeth	East London	Kimberley	Pietermaritzburg	Durban	Johannesburg	East Rand	West Rand	Pretoria	Vereeniging and Vanderbijlpark	Bloemfontein
2007	Year Total	117 403	65 797	32 766	9 226	17 420	77 021	215 297	51 978	40 863	153 646	26 219	45 913
2008	Year Total	117 171	54 474	17 553	7 236	19 284	78 092	205 869	59 060	33 410	138 384	26 859	33 374
	January	6 304	5 151	1 278	274	1 136	5 286	10 193	3 392	1 905	15 008	4 496	3 068
	February	9 395	4 538	2 187	431	1 132	5 476	11 003	4 424	3 242	11 748	3 638	2 842
	March	9 382	4 278	1 399	822	1 447	6 079	11 776	4 716	2 482	7 997	1 470	2 905
	April	8 158	6 398	1 807	465	1 851	6 648	17 776	5 253	2 858	9 995	1 815	2 658
	May	9 157	6 544	1 695	597	1 814	5 513	17 667	5 407	2 499	10 008	2 666	3 087
	June	8 499	6 045	1 578	928	1 557	5 572	19 524	5 494	2 673	12 313	1 865	2 987
	July	11 015	3 344	1 144	869	1 954	7 370	22 450	4 484	2 922	11 901	2 710	2 992
	August	9 558	4 502	1 180	500	1 615	6 213	20 052	4 552	3 490	11 136	2 236	3 050
	September	10 882	3 738	825	555	1 707	6 312	22 753	5 257	2 816	14 527	1 839	2 962
	October	12 480	3 866	1 549	405	1 966	7 767	18 597	5 758	3 777	14 812	1 975	2 374
	November	12 497	3 655	1 535	844	2 050	8 149	18 480	5 704	2 879	11 611	1 375	2 356
December	9 844	2 415	1 376	546	1 055	7 707	15 598	4 619	1 867	7 328	774	2 093	
1/ 2009	January	8 353	1 955	1 259	515	1 713	7 400	20 427	5 126	2 299	10 835	1 265	4 435
	February	10 331	3 211	1 619	795	1 557	7 766	22 126	5 592	2 742	12 559	1 449	3 645
	March	14 242	5 191	1 759	755	1 807	7 604	20 163	5 618	4 660	14 922	2 339	3 728
	April	9 791	3 286	1 384	538	1 403	7 336	18 223	4 108	2 668	9 863	1 671	2 494
	May	11 016	3 555	1 439	641	1 839	7 483	18 112	4 878	3 120	11 931	3 448	3 554

1/ Preliminary

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			
	* 2008	2008	1/ 2009		* 2008	2008	1/ 2009	
		May	April	May		May	April	May
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	85 779	8 466	6 941	6 233	75 644	7 539	6 178	5 307
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	9 655	777	1 012	1 201	8 047	649	862	984
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	77 331	5 946	7 688	7 160	67 961	5 297	6 921	6 084
1.2.2 Other	80 433	6 461	6 226	5 517	72 556	5 968	5 729	4 797
1.3 Rent	30 891	3 208	2 269	2 221	23 363	2 314	1 810	1 800
1.4 Money lent	222 378	18 788	20 297	21 755	216 753	18 396	19 924	21 368
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	47 916	4 319	3 417	3 477	42 595	3 935	3 048	3 005
1.6 Other debts	106 174	8 750	7 544	6 793	95 631	8 028	6 929	6 131
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	660 557	56 715	55 394	54 357	602 550	52 126	51 401	49 476
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		55 875	58 285	53 623		51 632	53 975	49 078

1/ Preliminary
 * Revised

Table 4 – Value of civil default and consent judgements for debt according to business enterprises and private persons (R'000)

Item	Business enterprises and private persons				Private Persons			
	* 2008	2008	1/ 2009		* 2008	2008	1/ 2009	
		May	April	May		May	April	May
1. Judgements								
1.1 Goods sold								
1.1.1 Open account	631 110	58 943	54 732	62 385	442 239	42 897	38 927	41 614
1.1.2 Instalment sale transactions	254 184	20 408	30 607	33 477	199 440	16 311	24 778	25 875
1.2 Services								
1.2.1 Professional	281 951	21 760	21 529	22 314	217 663	17 025	18 026	17 423
1.2.2 Other	595 868	43 441	50 654	52 918	455 915	32 257	41 400	37 661
1.3 Rent	323 395	24 491	37 058	41 709	212 835	14 931	26 240	29 634
1.4 Money lent	1 956 374	163 583	216 410	198 368	1 827 288	154 674	204 349	189 195
1.5 Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgements of debt	662 489	52 786	56 570	47 756	555 402	47 525	45 223	31 462
1.6 Other debts	1 314 647	94 006	89 837	88 793	1 012 729	76 010	71 952	69 594
1.7 Total								
1.7.1 Actual figures	6 020 018	479 418	557 397	547 720	4 923 511	401 630	470 895	442 458
1.7.2 Seasonally adjusted		489 209	575 458	560 504		398 030	478 578	439 090

1/ Preliminary
* Revised

Table 5 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current quarter and the corresponding quarter of the previous year

Actual estimates	Actual estimates March to May 2008	Actual estimates March to May 2009	% change between March to May 2008 and March to May 2009	Difference between March to May 2008 and March to May 2009
Number of summonses for debt	294 185	324 900	10,4	30 715
Number of judgements for debt	163 363	176 744	8,2	13 381
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	1 429,5	1 731,6	21,1	302,1

Table 6 – Contribution of the different kinds of debts to the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded for the current quarter and the corresponding quarter of the previous year 1/

Item	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	3,0	-2,6	0,3
--Instalment sale transactions	0,3	0,8	2,0
Professional Services	1,9	3,2	1,3
Other Services	-2,3	0,2	2,1
Rent	-0,1	-0,5	2,8
Money lent	3,5	7,6	12,8
Promissory notes, bills, R/D cheques, credit cards and other acknowledgement of debt	2,5	1,3	3,1
Other debts	1,7	-1,8	-3,2
Total	10,4	8,2	21,1

1/ 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 March to May 2008, divided by 100. Figures have been rounded off.

Table 7 – Percentage change in the total number of civil summonses, judgements and the value of judgements recorded between the current month and the corresponding month of the previous year

Actual estimates	Actual estimates May 2008	Actual estimates May 2009	% change between May 2008 and May 2009	Difference between May 2008 and May 2009
Number of summonses for debt	103 354	105 214	1,8	1 860
Number of judgements for debt	56 715	54 357	-4,2	-2 358
Value of judgements for debt (R million)	479,4	547,7	14,2	68,3

Explanatory notes

Introduction	1	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
Purpose of the survey	3	<p>The survey of Civil Cases for Debt covers a sample of magistrates' offices in South Africa, excluding the former Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (TBVC states). This survey collects information regarding civil cases recorded, civil summonses issued and civil judgements recorded in order to provide users with information on the extent of unpaid debt in South Africa. The results of the survey are used by the private and public sectors as an indicator of economic performance.</p>
Scope of the survey	4	<p>This survey covers-</p> <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	5	<p>The statistical unit for collection of information is a magistrate' office. Magistrates' offices include the small claims courts.</p> <p>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 was drawn using only the number of civil cases recorded as measure of size.</p>
Survey methodology and design	6	<p>The survey is conducted by mail each month from 151 magistrates' offices.</p>
Response rate	7	<p>The response rate for the civil cases for debt survey for May 2009 was 89,4%.</p>
Trend cycle	8	<p>Smoothed seasonally adjusted and trend estimates are generated using the X-11 Seasonal Adjustment Programme.</p>
Publications	9	<p>Users may also wish to refer to the following publications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bulletin of Statistics issued quarterly.</i> • <i>SA Statistics issued annually.</i>
Unpublished statistics	10	<p>In some cases Stats SA can also make available statistics, which are not published. The statistics can be made available as computer printouts or CD. Generally a charge is made for providing unpublished statistics.</p>
Symbols and abbreviations	11	<p>R/D Refer to Drawer CD Compact Disc Stats SA Statistics South Africa TBVC Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, Ciskei * Revised figures</p>

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, 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 8407/ 2965 (technical queries)
(012) 310 8161 (orders)
(012) 310 4883/ 4885/ 8018 (library)

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

email: nthabisengt@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