

Abstract for “Social Transfers in-Kind (STIK) - Methodologies for their Imputation, Impact on Economic Well-being and a Comparison of the Treatment in Macro versus Micro Data”

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The ABS has progressively improved the methodologies used and frequency of imputing the value of social transfers in kind in its micro statistics. From 2011-12, micro estimates of STIK will be imputed for individual households as part of the standard output of the biennial Survey of Income and Housing (SIH). Until 2009-10, STIK were imputed six-yearly using data from the Household Expenditure Survey (HES). Additionally, following on from the work of the OECD Expert Group on Disparities in the National Accounts, in 2013, the ABS published distributional measures of household statistics from the national accounts, including STIK. Micro data from the ABS household surveys of income, expenditure and wealth were used as the basis for these distributions. Further work is planned to improve the coherence of micro and macro household income estimates.

Firstly, this paper details the concepts, data sources, and the methods used by the ABS to produce STIK for households in both the National Accounts and the SIH - including developments that have enabled the ABS to generate STIK estimates as part of the regular output from the SIH. Secondly, the paper compares STIK estimates in ABS micro and macro data at a detailed level and outlines plans to improve the coherence of these estimates between the two datasets. Finally, it examines the impact of in kind benefits on economic well-being and discusses analysis undertaken regarding whether income from STIK should be included in its measure of low economic resource households.