

Australian statistics bureau systems hacked

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According to newly declassified documents and internal incident reports obtained by The Australian Financial Review, the ABS has been the

subject of numerous attacks over the past four years.

They include at least 11 incidents over seven months during 2012, involving thousands of attempts to access the government bureau's computer network to view [secret information](#) about Australia's economy, the report said.

At least two were reportedly linked to Internet accounts in China.

The attacks often came immediately prior to the scheduled release of [confidential data](#) that affects financial market prices, such as employment, inflation, retail sales and [gross domestic product](#), the newspaper said.

These official statistics have the potential to push the Australian dollar and the market either higher or lower.

The bureau said in a statement that none of the attempted hacks was successful.

"As is the case with a number of other government agencies, the ABS has experienced a growing number of attacks by [cyber criminals](#) over recent years," it said.

"To date none of these attempts has been successful. Hackers have not gained access to market [sensitive data](#) or any other confidential information held by the bureau."

It said details had been passed to the Defence Signals Directorate's [Cyber Security](#) Operation Centre.

"Data security is taken very seriously and the ABS continues to monitor the security environment to assess the effectiveness of security controls

deployed," the bureau said.

Last year computer networks at the Reserve Bank of Australia were hacked, with some reportedly infected by Chinese-developed malware searching for sensitive information.

Those attacks came a year after the computers of Australia's prime minister, foreign and defence ministers were all suspected to have been hacked.

Reports and security experts said at the time that the attacks originated in China, but Beijing dismissed the allegations as "groundless and made out of ulterior purposes".

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