

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS ACT 1975: sub-section 6(3)

**PROPOSAL NO. 6 OF 2020
BY THE AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS**

SURVEY OF HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) proposes to collect information for the purpose of measuring the prevalence and severity of specific mental health conditions in Australia.

The information will be collected through personal face-to-face interview, and will include approximately 17,000 private dwellings throughout Australia. The first sample of approximately 8,500 will be enumerated from December 2020. The second sample of approximately 8,500 will be enumerated from December 2021.

Information will be sought from one randomly selected person, aged between 16 and 85 years, in each selected dwelling. Persons aged 16-17 years will only be asked questions with the consent of a parent or guardian.

Information will be collected on a range of characteristics including:

- demographic and socio-demographic data;
- long-term health conditions;
- general health and functioning;
- mood and anxiety disorders, suicidality, self-harm, substance use, disordered eating, and use of health services; and
- impacts of COVID-19 on employment and use of health services.

Respondents will also be asked to volunteer their contact details for participation in a follow-up survey. The follow-up survey will be conducted one year after their initial survey.

The information collected will be used by the ABS to analyse the prevalence of specific mental health conditions and those groups in the community most affected, and to assess and improve policies and services related to the provision and management of mental health.

While this collection will be conducted under the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, the content relating to mental health conditions will be voluntary. All information obtained by the Australian Bureau of Statistics will be covered by the secrecy provisions of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

The ABS expects to make the first release of statistical and related information from the collection available from late 2021. It will be published as the National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing.

This collection is part of the broader Intergenerational Health and Mental Health Study. It has been developed in consultation with the Department of Health, who will be the principal user of the data. Other users of the information will include Commonwealth, state and territory health authorities, clinicians and academic researchers working in the field.

To assist in determining the feasibility of the collection and to understand and manage respondent burden consistent with the Government's Regulator Performance Framework, the ABS:

- considered what existing information is available;
- consulted with key stakeholders;
- cognitively tested new survey content to ensure that the required data are readily available and that the respondent load has been minimised. Based on cognitive testing and the experience with the 1997 and 2007 surveys, no significant adverse respondent reaction is expected.

This collection was last conducted from August to December 2007 and was previously tabled in Parliament as Proposal No. 2 of 2007.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Jelfs', with a horizontal line underneath.

Dr Paul Jelfs
General Manager
Social Statistics Division

12 August 2020