

Update on ABS matters for the fortnight commencing 27 September [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Secretariat WDB

22

26/09/2019 02:05 PM

## For-Official-Use-Only

### Basics

Secretariat WDB

26/09/2019 04:02 PM

Sent by 22

<b>Send</b>	<p>To 22 @treasury.gov.au</p> <p>cc David Kalisch/Staff/ABS@ABS, Luise Mcculloch/Staff/ABS@ABS, Teresa Dickinson/Staff/ABS@ABS, Jenet Connell/Staff/ABS@ABS, Lane Masterton/Staff/ABS@ABS, Meghan.Quinn@treasury.gov.au, Anders Holmberg/Staff/ABS@ABS; Bruce Hockman/Staff/ABS@ABS; Chris Libreri/Staff/ABS@ABS; Duncan Young/Staff/ABS@ABS; Jacky Hodges/Staff/ABS@ABS; Jacqui Jones/Staff/ABS@ABS; John Shepherd/Staff/ABS@ABS; Lily Viertmann/Staff/ABS@ABS; Marcel van Kints/Staff/ABS@ABS; Michelle Marquardt/Staff/ABS@ABS; Paul Jelfs/Staff/ABS@ABS; Steve Hamilton/Staff/ABS@ABS; 22 /Staff/ABS@ABS; Nick Stathis/Staff/ABS@ABS; Bindi Kindermann/Staff/ABS@ABS; 22 /Staff/ABS@ABS; 22 /Staff/ABS@ABS; Michelle S Howe/Staff/ABS@ABS; 22 /Staff/ABS@ABS; 22 /LTDACC/ABS@ABS; 22 /Staff/ABS@ABS; 22 /Staff/ABS@ABS; Andrew Mann/Staff/ABS@ABS; 22 /Staff/ABS@ABS; 22 /Staff/ABS@ABS; 22 /Staff/ABS@ABS; Michael Meagher/Staff/ABS@ABS; 22 /Staff/ABS@ABS; 22 /Staff/ABS@ABS</p> <p>bcc</p>
<b>Subject</b>	Update on ABS matters for the fortnight commencing 27 September [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]
<b>Protective Mark</b>	For-Official-Use-Only
<b>Categories</b>	Fortnightly Circular for AT\2019

Good afternoon

Please find attached the ABS Circular for the **fortnight commencing 27 September 2019**.



[ABS Fortnightly Circular week commencing 27 September.pdf](#)

Please notify the Parliamentary and Partnerships team via 22 @abs.gov.au if you believe someone should be added, or if you wish to be removed from the distribution list.

Regards

22

*Assistant Director*

Parliamentary and Partnerships | Communication and Parliamentary Branch  
People, Capability and Communication Division

**Australian Bureau of Statistics**

(P) [REDACTED] (E) [REDACTED] [@abs.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@abs.gov.au) (W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

ABS Fortnightly Circular  
Week Commencing 27 September 2019

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**2021 Census**

- The **2019 Census October Test** will commence dropping off forms and mailing out letters of invitation to participate in the test locations from 5 October 2019.

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## FYI: ABS Newsletter for Parliamentarians - October 2019 Special Edition

Secretariat WDB

22

01/10/2019 03:36 PM

## Basics

Secretariat WDB

01/10/2019 04:18 PM

Sent by 22

<b>Send</b>	To "22" <22@TREASURY.GOV.AU> cc 22/Staff/ABS@ABS, Nick Stathis/Staff/ABS@ABS, "22" <22@TREASURY.GOV.AU> bcc
<b>Subject</b>	FYI: ABS Newsletter for Parliamentarians - October 2019 Special Edition
<b>Protective Mark</b>	UNCLASSIFIED
<b>Categories</b>	Liaison with Minister's Office\General\2019

Hi 22

For your information below is the October special edition of the ABS Parliamentarian Newsletter that we are planning to send out to Federal, State and Territory parliamentarians tomorrow. This edition focuses on work being undertaken to prepare for the 2021 Census.

Kind Regards,

22

Parliamentary and Partnerships Section | Communication and Parliamentary Branch | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

(P) 22 (E) 22 [@abs.gov.au](mailto:22@abs.gov.au) (W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

**October 2019**

**Welcome to a special Census edition of the ABS Newsletter for Parliamentarians**

In this issue we highlight the work being undertaken by the ABS to prepare for the 2021 Census.

## **2019 Census Test**

The ABS is conducting a [2019 Census Test](#) in the areas of Wagga Wagga and surrounds and areas south of Brisbane. The test will cover the following local government areas:

- Wagga Wagga
- Greater Hume
- Lockhart
- Junee

- Gundagai
- Coolamon
- Scenic Rim
- Logan

Before each Census it's important to test how we will run the Census to ensure it's easy for people to participate, cheaper to run, and captures the right data, in the right way. Some households in the above local government areas will be asked to participate in the test. The Census Test night is Tuesday 15 October 2019.



Visit [abs.gov.au](https://abs.gov.au) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

## Basics

Secretariat WDB

02/10/2019 12:12 PM

Sent by [REDACTED]

<b>Send</b>	<p><b>To</b></p> <p><b>cc</b></p> <p>A.Albanese.MP@aph.gov.au; John.Alexander.MP@aph.gov.au; Katie.Allen.MP@aph.gov.au; Anne.Aly.MP@aph.gov.au; Karen.Andrews.MP@aph.gov.au; menzies@aph.gov.au; Bridget.Archer.MP@aph.gov.au; Adam.Bandt.MP@aph.gov.au; Angie.Bell.MP@aph.gov.au; Sharon.Bird.MP@aph.gov.au; Chris.Bowen.MP@aph.gov.au; Russell.Broadbent.MP@aph.gov.au; Scott.Buchholz.MP@aph.gov.au; Tony.Burke.MP@aph.gov.au; Linda.Burney.MP@aph.gov.au; Josh.Burns.MP@aph.gov.au; Mark.Butler.MP@aph.gov.au; Terri.Butler.MP@aph.gov.au; Anthony.Byrne.MP@aph.gov.au; Jim.Chalmers.MP@aph.gov.au; Nick.Champion.MP@aph.gov.au; Darren.Chester.MP@aph.gov.au; Lisa.Chesters.MP@aph.gov.au; George.Christensen.MP@aph.gov.au; Jason.Clare.MP@aph.gov.au; Sharon.Claydon.MP@aph.gov.au; Libby.Coker.MP@aph.gov.au; David.Coleman.MP@aph.gov.au; Julie.Collins.MP@aph.gov.au; Pat.Conaghan.MP@aph.gov.au; Vince.Connelly.MP@aph.gov.au; Pat.Conroy.MP@aph.gov.au; Mark.Coulton.MP@aph.gov.au; Milton.Dick.MP@aph.gov.au; Mark.Dreyfus.MP@aph.gov.au; Damian.Drum.MP@aph.gov.au; Peter.Dutton.MP@aph.gov.au; Justine.Elliot.MP@aph.gov.au; Warren.Entsch.MP@aph.gov.au; Trevor.Evans.MP@aph.gov.au; Jason.Falinski.MP@aph.gov.au; Joel.Fitzgibbon.MP@aph.gov.au; Paul.Fletcher.MP@aph.gov.au; Nicolle.Flint.MP@aph.gov.au; Mike.Frelander.MP@aph.gov.au; Josh.Frydenberg.MP@aph.gov.au; Andrew.Gee.MP@aph.gov.au; Steve.Georganas.MP@aph.gov.au; Andrew.Giles.MP@aph.gov.au; David.Gillespie.MP@aph.gov.au; Ian.Goodenough.MP@aph.gov.au; Patrick.Gorman.MP@aph.gov.au; Luke.Gosling.MP@aph.gov.au; Helen.Haines.MP@aph.gov.au; Celia.Hammond.MP@aph.gov.au; Andrew.Hastie.MP@aph.gov.au; Alex.Hawke.MP@aph.gov.au; Chris.Hayes.MP@aph.gov.au; Julian.Hill.MP@aph.gov.au; Kevin.Hogan.MP@aph.gov.au; Luke.Howarth.MP@aph.gov.au; Greg.Hunt.MP@aph.gov.au; Ed.Husic.MP@aph.gov.au; Steve.Irons.MP@aph.gov.au; Stephen.Jones.MP@aph.gov.au; Barnaby.Joyce.MP@aph.gov.au; Bob.Katter.MP@aph.gov.au; Ged.Kearney.MP@aph.gov.au; Craig.Kelly.MP@aph.gov.au; Mike.Kelly.MP@aph.gov.au; Matt.Keogh.MP@aph.gov.au; Peter.Khalil.MP@aph.gov.au; Catherine.King.MP@aph.gov.au; Madeleine.King.MP@aph.gov.au; Andrew.Laming.MP@aph.gov.au; Michelle.Landry.MP@aph.gov.au; Julian.Leeser.MP@aph.gov.au; Andrew.Leigh.MP@aph.gov.au; Farrer@aph.gov.au; David.Littleproud.MP@aph.gov.au; Gladys.Liu.MP@aph.gov.au; Nola.Marino.MP@aph.gov.au; Richard.Marles.MP@aph.gov.au; Fiona.Martin.MP@aph.gov.au; Emma.McBride.MP@aph.gov.au; Michael.McCormack.MP@aph.gov.au; Melissa.McIntosh.MP@aph.gov.au; John.McVeigh.MP@aph.gov.au; Brian.Mitchell.MP@aph.gov.au; Rob.Mitchell.MP@aph.gov.au; Scott.Morrison.MP@aph.gov.au; Ben.Morton.MP@aph.gov.au; Daniel.Mulino.MP@aph.gov.au; Peta.Murphy.MP@aph.gov.au; Shayne.Neumann.MP@aph.gov.au; Ted.O'Brien.MP@aph.gov.au; Llew.O'Brien.MP@aph.gov.au; Brendan.O'Connor.MP@aph.gov.au; Ken.O'Dowd.MP@aph.gov.au; Clare.ONeil.MP@aph.gov.au; Julie.Owens.MP@aph.gov.au; Tony.Pasin.MP@aph.gov.au; Alicia.Payne.MP@aph.gov.au; Gavin.Pearce.MP@aph.gov.au; Graham.Perrett.MP@aph.gov.au; Fiona.Phillips.MP@aph.gov.au; Keith.Pitt.MP@aph.gov.au; Tanya.Plibersek.MP@aph.gov.au;</p> <p><b>bcc</b></p>
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	<p>Christian.Porter.MP@aph.gov.au; Melissa.Price.MP@aph.gov.au; Rowan.Ramsey.MP@aph.gov.au; Amanda.Rishworth.MP@aph.gov.au; Stuart.Robert.MP@aph.gov.au; Michelle.Rowland.MP@aph.gov.au; Joanne.Ryan.MP@aph.gov.au; Rebekha.Sharkie.MP@aph.gov.au; Dave.Sharma.MP@aph.gov.au; Bill.Shorten.MP@aph.gov.au; Julian.Simmonds.MP@aph.gov.au; Tony.Smith.MP@aph.gov.au; David.Smith.MP@aph.gov.au; Warren.Snowdon.MP@aph.gov.au; Anne.Stanley.MP@aph.gov.au; Zali.Steggall.MP@aph.gov.au; James.Stevens.MP@aph.gov.au; Michael.Sukkar.MP@aph.gov.au; Meryl.Swanson.MP@aph.gov.au; Angus.Taylor.MP@aph.gov.au; Dan.Tehan.MP@aph.gov.au; Susan.Templeman.MP@aph.gov.au; Matt.Thistlethwaite.MP@aph.gov.au; Phillip.Thompson.MP@aph.gov.au; Kate.Thwaites.MP@aph.gov.au; Alan.Tudge.MP@aph.gov.au; Maria.Vamvakinou.MP@aph.gov.au; Bert.Vanmanen.MP@aph.gov.au; Ross.Vasta.MP@aph.gov.au; Andrew.Wallace.MP@aph.gov.au; Tim.Watts.MP@aph.gov.au; Anne.Webster.MP@aph.gov.au; Anika.Wells.MP@aph.gov.au; Lucy.Wicks.MP@aph.gov.au; Andrew.Wilkie.MP@aph.gov.au; Josh.Wilson.MP@aph.gov.au; Rick.Wilson.MP@aph.gov.au; Tim.Wilson.MP@aph.gov.au; Jason.Wood.MP@aph.gov.au; Ken.Wyatt.MP@aph.gov.au; Terry.Young.MP@aph.gov.au; <sup>22</sup> [REDACTED]@aph.gov.au; Trent.Zimmerman.MP@aph.gov.au; General Managers and above; Outposted Officers; Parliamentary &amp; Partnerships; "<sup>22</sup> [REDACTED]" &lt;<sup>22</sup> [REDACTED]@TREASURY.GOV.AU&gt;; <sup>22</sup> [REDACTED]@aph.gov.au</p>
<b>Subject</b>	ABS Newsletter for Parliamentarians - October 2019 Special Edition
<b>Protective Mark</b>	UNCLASSIFIED
<b>Categories</b>	Parliamentary Liaison\MP Newsletter\2019

# 22 Duplicate

Basics

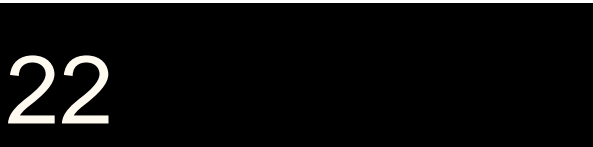
Secretariat WDB  
Sent by [redacted]

09/09/2019 09:30 AM

<b>Send</b>	To "[redacted]" <[redacted]@TREASURY.GOV.AU>, "[redacted]" <[redacted]@TREASURY.GOV.AU> cc Nick Stathis/Staff/ABS@ABS, [redacted]/Staff/ABS@ABS, Chris Libreri/Staff/ABS@ABS bcc [redacted]/Staff/ABS@ABS; [redacted]/Staff/ABS@ABS; [redacted]/Staff/ABS@ABS; [redacted]/Staff/ABS@ABS; Bindi Kindermann/Staff/ABS@ABS; [redacted]/Staff/ABS@ABS
<b>Subject</b>	Re: For action: Please send Census QTBs (QB19-000004 and QB19-000005) 📎
<b>Protective Mark</b>	UNCLASSIFIED
<b>Categories</b>	QTBs\2019

Dear [redacted],

As discussed, here are the two QTBs the ABS has prepared. Please let us know if there is anyone we should add to the distribution list for these.



[QB19-000005 2021 Census Topics Recommendations.docx](#)

Kind Regards,

[redacted]

Parliamentary and Partnerships Section | Communication and Parliamentary Branch | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

(P) [redacted] (E) [redacted] [@abs.gov.au](mailto:[redacted]@abs.gov.au) (W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

"[redacted]" For action: Please send Census QTBs [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED] 07/09/2019 11:27:38 AM

**For action: Please send Census QTBs [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]**

Secretariat WDB

"[redacted]" 07/09/2019 11:27 AM

Basics

"22" 07/09/2019 11:27 AM  
22@TREASURY.GOV.A

U

<b>Send</b>	To "Secretariat WDB" <22@abs.gov.au> cc
<b>Subject</b>	For action: Please send Census QTBs [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
<b>Protective Mark</b>	
<b>Categories</b>	
<b>Visibility</b>	Public
<b>Editors</b>	"22" <22@TREASURY.GOV.AU>, [Wkgroup]
<b>Document Usage</b>	General Operations - determines recordkeeping action
<b>Document Id</b>	DCOO-BFS3SL

22

Good morning,

As discussed with 22 on Friday, please send the two census QTBs the ABS has already prepared as soon as possible Monday morning.

Many thanks

22

22

Departmental Liaison Officer  
Office of the Hon Michael Sukkar MP  
Minister for Housing and Assistant Treasurer  
Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600  
P: 22  
M: 22

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# AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS - 2021 CENSUS TOPIC RECOMMENDATIONS

## Key Message:

- An extensive consultation and a public submission process has been undertaken on potential topics to be included in the 2021 Census. The Government will ensure that the information collected in the next Census reflects Australia's priority information needs, while also mindful of the burden on the community to complete the Census.

## Key Facts And Figures:

- The ABS has engaged in extensive community consultation, has received hundreds of submissions, and undertaken some statistical testing of possible Census topics.
- Last year the ABS released a short-list of eight topics that were being tested for inclusion:
  - Chronic health conditions
  - Journey to education
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural identity
  - Current or previous service with the Australian Defence Force
  - Smoking status
  - Non-binary sex and/or gender identity
  - Sexual orientation.
  - More contemporary measures of household and family relationships including shared care of children
- There is a limit to the number and type of questions that can be reasonably asked through a Census, due to the burden on respondents, the space limitations of a paper form, and the cost of collecting and analysing the information collected. While a number of new topics would be of value, it is not feasible to add them all to the 2021 Census.
- Determining which topics should be asked in a Census requires choices between competing alternatives, while also being mindful of the overall burden placed on the community to complete such a comprehensive Census as we have in Australia.

## Coalition Action:

- The Government will decide on the topics for the 2021 Census and will issue a Census regulation, with the list of topics. This is expected to be tabled in Parliament in early 2020.

<b>QTB Number</b>	QB19-000005	<b>Adviser</b>	
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Chris Libreri	<b>Contact Number</b>	47F [REDACTED]
<b>Division responsible</b>	Census Division, Australian Bureau of Statistics		
<b>Office Responsible</b>	The Hon Michael Sukkar MP	<b>Date of Update</b>	06/09/2019

# AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS - 2021 CENSUS TOPIC RECOMMENDATIONS

## Background:

- The Census provides a contemporary picture of Australian society every five years. As the Census is collected from the entire population in Australia, it is a critical source of information on the population, allowing for an understanding of small areas and small groups in ways that surveys do not provide. The total number of topics and range of subjects has changed over time, and Australia has one of the longest and most comprehensive Census collections.
- There has been no change in the list of topics for both the 2011 Census and 2016 Census, meaning topics have not changed since the 2006 Census. The ABS has recommended changes that aim to ensure the 2021 Census reflects current information needs, balanced with considerations of capability to ask questions that produce reliable data. There is a strong case to maintain a large number of questions from past Censuses to produce reliable trends over time.

<b>QTB Number</b>	QB19-000005	<b>Adviser</b>	
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Chris Libreri	<b>Contact Number</b>	47F [REDACTED]
<b>Division responsible</b>	Census Division, Australian Bureau of Statistics		
<b>Office Responsible</b>	The Hon Michael Sukkar MP	<b>Date of Update</b>	06/09/2019

FW: For action: Please send Census QTBs (QB19-000004 and QB19-000005) [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED] (Response to: )  
Secretariat WDB "22" 08/10/2019 05:31 PM

Basics

"22" 08/10/2019 05:31 PM  
"22" @TREASURY.GOV.A  
U

<b>Send</b>	To "22" <22@abs.gov.au> cc "Secretariat WDB" <22@abs.gov.au>, "22" <22@abs.gov.au> bcc
<b>Subject</b>	FW: For action: Please send <b>Census</b> QTBs (QB19-000004 and QB19-000005) [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
<b>Protective Mark</b>	UNCLASSIFIED
<b>Categories</b>	QTBs\2019

3 attachments

22



QB19-000005 2021 Census Topics Recommendations.docx



QB19-000003 QTB 2021 Census Test - October 2019.docx

22

Hi 22,

As discussed, could you update (if necessary) the following QTBs by Thursday 10 October. Following this, please let me know what I need to do to get access to the ABS's version of PDMS to manage these QTBs going forward.

Kind regards

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22

Departmental Liaison Officer  
Office of the Hon Michael Sukkar MP  
Minister for Housing and Assistant Treasurer  
Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

P: [REDACTED]

M: [REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@abs.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Monday, 9 September 2019 9:30 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@TREASURY.GOV.AU>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@TREASURY.GOV.AU>  
**Cc:** Nick Stathis <nick.stathis@abs.gov.au>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@abs.gov.au>; Libreri, Chris (ABS - Unclassified (DLM)) <chris.libreri@abs.gov.au>  
**Subject:** Re: For action: Please send Census QTBs (QB19-000004 and QB19-000005)  
[SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Dear [REDACTED],

As discussed, here are the two QTBs the ABS has prepared. Please let us know if there is anyone we should add to the distribution list for these.

[REDACTED]

*(See attached file: QB19-000005 2021 Census Topics Recommendations.docx)*

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]

Parliamentary and Partnerships Section | Communication and Parliamentary Branch | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

(P) [REDACTED] (E) [REDACTED] [@abs.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@abs.gov.au) (W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

"[REDACTED]" ---07/09/2019 11:27:38 AM---For action: Please send Census QTBs  
[SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

**For action: Please send Census QTBs [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]**

Secretariat WDB

"[REDACTED]" 07/09/2019 11:27 AM

\*

**Basics**

"[REDACTED]"

[REDACTED] [@TREASURY.GOV.AU](mailto:[REDACTED]@TREASURY.GOV.AU)

07/09/2019 11:27 AM



Send	To	"Secretariat WDB" 22 @abs.gov.au>
	cc	
Subject	For action: Please send Census QTBs [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]	
Protective Mark		
Categories		
Visibility	Public	
Editors	" 22 " < 22 @TREASURY.GOV.AU>, [Wkgroup]	
Document Usage	General Operations - determines recordkeeping action	
Document Id	DCOO-BFS3SL	

22

Good morning,

As discussed with 22 on Friday, please send the two census QTBs the ABS has already prepared as soon as possible Monday morning.

Many thanks

22

22

Departmental Liaison Officer  
Office of the Hon Michael Sukkar MP  
Minister for Housing and Assistant Treasurer  
Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600

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# AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS - 2021 CENSUS TEST

## TOP LINES:

- The first significant test assisting implementation of the 2021 Census is planned for 7 October - 10 November 2019. A number of smaller, targeted tests will supplement this field test in addition to an extensive operational readiness test planned for mid-2020.
- The Census Test will include 40,000 dwellings in the Federal Electorates of Riverina, Farrer, Forde and Wright. Participation in the Census Test is voluntary and communication and engagement activities have commenced in Test locations.
- Content for the 2021 Census is still to be finalised. The ABS makes use of these tests to assess the potential feasibility of asking questions in the Census or another survey.

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## KEY FACTS AND FIGURES:

- The October Test will include a sample of 40,000 dwellings to the south of Brisbane , QLD and Wagga Wagga and surrounds, NSW; spanning the Federal Electorates of Forde, Riverina, Farrer and Wright. Sound methodological procedures were used to select test areas, ensuring demographic representation and Test criteria can be met.
- The Test in October provides an opportunity to test potential, new and changed Census questions and strategies designed to encourage high response. The Test also develops staff capability, helping to increase levels of preparedness, and allows suppliers and prime partners the first window to road test critical supporting strategies including Risk, Privacy, Communication and Engagement.
- The Test will emulate the Main Census Event, by having a mix of collection modes including e-form and paper. Of the 40,000 dwelling sample, approximately 12,000 will receive a paper form, and around 28,000 will be invited to participate using an e-form. The e-form is not the digital service to be used in the 2021 Census; rather, it is a temporary solution that has been developed to enable early testing of questions and the response window. The solution will have appropriate security and capacity.
- This test will be voluntary. Based on past Census tests, a response rate of between approximately 30% and 35% is expected.
- Communication and engagement activity will occur prior to the October test in both test locations. The approach includes outreach to key stakeholders and community organisations such as local councils, Federal MPs, libraries and respective state government agencies.

Page 1 of 2

QTB Number:	QB19-000003	QTB Category:	ABS
Contact Officer:	Chris Libreri	Date and time:	25/10/2019 10:08 AM
Contact Number:	47F	Next update:	As required
Office Responsible		Office Adviser Initial and Date Cleared	

- A ‘*Planning the 2021 Census*’ publication, which describes the way we propose to conduct the 18<sup>th</sup> Census, is being finalised. This publication includes information about topic consultation, a digital first focus, privacy and confidentiality of information, and communication and engagement plans particularly for people who may require extra assistance. We expect that this will be released in August 2019.

**BACKGROUND:**

- The ABS has traditionally tested the Census program by conducting a number of field tests with the public. While other testing has been conducted to ensure components are fit for purpose, the program’s main testing strategy has been large scale public tests.
- Traditionally, Census Tests occurred annually and usually involved approximately 5,000 households. Some dress rehearsals and major tests involved considerably more households, for example, the 2016 Major Test involved 100,000 households. Sample sizes considered for the 2021 Census testing program are based on test objectives, helping to inform design decisions. Unlike the 2016 Major Test there will be minimal change to the enumeration/collection model for the 2021 Census Test. Results do not necessarily need to be statistically significant.
- The October Test will be used to determine effects of collecting sensitive information on Census response rates. This information will assist in finalising topics and questions for the 2021 Census.

**2021 Census**

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QTB Number:	QB19-000003	QTB Category:	ABS
Contact Officer:	Chris Libreri	Date and time:	25/10/2019 10:08 AM
Contact Number:	47F	Next update:	As required
Office Responsible		Office Adviser Initial and Date Cleared	



General Manager  
Census Division

MB19-000043

The Hon Michael Sukkar MP  
Minister for Housing and Assistant Treasurer

cc: The Hon Josh Frydenberg MP, Treasurer  
Dr Steven Kennedy PSM, Secretary to the Treasury

### Release of the Planning the 2021 Census publication

#### For information

1 This Minute provides information on the upcoming release of *Planning the 2021 Census* publication.

# 22

4 The ABS website will provide the full publication ([Attachment A](#)) which is primarily targeted at stakeholders and a shorter version suitable for the general public ([Attachment B](#)).

5 The publication will be released on Monday, 16 September 2019 and will be communicated to key stakeholders at that time.



Chris Libreri  
General Manager

11 September 2019

The Deputy Australian Statistician has been consulted on this Minute: Yes



# Planning for the 2021 Census

## Preface

The 2021 Census will be Australia's 18<sup>th</sup> Census.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is planning the design and implementation of the 2021 Census in consultation with the community and relevant organisations. This document outlines the steps we are taking in that process.

The Census is one of the largest and the most important statistical collections undertaken by the ABS. The Census measures the number and key characteristics of people in Australia on Census night, including where we live, how old we are, our ethnicity, religion (optional to answer), income, education, and our living and housing arrangements.

Information from the Census helps governments, businesses and not for profit organisations across the country make informed decisions. The Census improves the accuracy of population estimates for Australia in each state, territory, and local government area. This informs decisions on electoral boundaries and underpins funding to states, territories and local governments. It informs decisions for services and infrastructure such as roads, childcare, hospitals and schools for every community in Australia. The Census is also a vital tool for a myriad of investment decisions made by businesses across all sectors of the economy, and is used by community groups to inform support for some of the most vulnerable people in Australia.

As our society changes and technology advances, so too must the way we collect information through the Census. The ABS is committed to ensuring that the Census collects accurate and timely information, in ways that are cost-effective, easy for people to participate and assures the privacy of personal information.

We will continue to encourage people to complete their Census online and lessons from the 2016 Census are informing our approach to the 2021 Census. Of course, a digital Census will not meet the needs of everyone, so paper forms will also be available.

The questions asked in the Census also determine the usefulness of the data collected. Drawing on an extensive public consultation process and testing by the ABS, the Australian Government is considering its decision on the Census topics for 2021.

This publication outlines how we propose to conduct the 2021 Census and explains how we will protect the privacy and confidentiality of the information you provide.

We look forward to your participation in the 2021 Census and thank you for your ongoing support.

David W. Kalisch

Australian Statistician



## About the Census

The next Census will be held in 2021. Censuses have been conducted in Australia in the first half of August since 1991.

The Census measures the number and some characteristics of people in Australia during the Census and provides a snapshot of the economic, social and cultural make-up of our nation.

Australia's first Census was held in 1911. The data collected over time through the Census helps to tell the story of how Australia is changing. It informs planning for services and the level of funding to be distributed between state and local governments.

Census data is used by people and organisations from all over Australia to inform decisions on issues that impact on our lives. This includes governments and government agencies, departments, local councils, not for profit organisations, researchers, business and community groups.

Census data also helps to:

- determine the number of seats allocated to each state and territory in the House of Representatives and informs decisions on electoral boundaries.
- inform the distribution of billions of dollars of annual GST revenue to states and territories - \$64 billion in 2017-18.
- determine state and territory grants to local government areas.

### Legal authority for the Census

The Census is conducted under the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* (the Act). The original Act stipulated that the Census would be taken in 1911 and in every tenth year thereafter. From 1961 the Census has been conducted every five years. This became mandatory with the 1977 amendment to the Act, requiring that the Census be taken in 1981 and in every fifth year thereafter and at such other times as prescribed.

### Who is included in the Census?

The Census includes every person, including overseas visitors, in Australia, Norfolk Island, the Territories of Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Christmas Island during the Census.

The Census does not include Australian residents who are out of the country on Census night nor foreign diplomats and their families living in Australia.

Participation in the Census is compulsory and while penalties may apply if a person refuses to complete the Census, the ABS's priority is to obtain informed and willing cooperation to complete the Census.

### Responding to our changing environment

The Census approach must keep pace with the changing nature of the Australian community. Across our community, living arrangements, lifestyles and family structures are becoming more complex. This means, for example, we need to be able to capture information from groups living in multi-generational households with large numbers of extended family members, and from people living in secure apartment buildings that are difficult to access.

In 2016, nearly half (49%) of Australians were either born overseas or had one or both parents born overseas. It is important that we capture data that accurately reflects this diversity.

The ABS must continue updating our processes and using available technology to provide effective methods for people to participate, while also providing alternatives for people who choose to, or who have no option than to, use paper Census forms.

Internationally, Censuses and surveys are experiencing lower response rates. At the same time, national statistical offices around the world continue to face the challenge of meeting demands for more data.

The ABS works collaboratively with our colleagues in international statistical organisations to share information and experience as we face many common challenges.

### **Making the 2021 Census a success**

The ABS aims to deliver a successful 2021 Census by ensuring that:

- the Census experience is simple and secure,
- there is a high level of community participation
- the resulting Census data is high quality, and
- governments, businesses and the community have confidence in the Census data.

## **Our approach to privacy, confidentiality and security**

We understand the importance of the data we collect and hold. We respect your data and take our duty to protect it very seriously.

We never release data that could be linked to you or identify you. The ABS abides by the Australian Privacy Principles and our legislative requirements.

We understand that keeping your data secure means we need to continuously review our practices and procedures. We do this by working closely with Australian Government security and cyber-security agencies and seeking external privacy advice.

### **Privacy**

The ABS does not share personal information that could identify you or any other person. This is a legal requirement of the Census and Statistics Act.

Other organisations, including all government departments and direct marketing companies, cannot access the personal information you provide on your Census form.

In addition to the Act, the ABS complies with the [Privacy Act 1988](#) and handles all personal information in accordance with the [Australian Privacy Principles](#). The Australian Privacy Principles set out standards, rights and obligations in relation to handling, holding, accessing and correcting personal information.

You can read more about how your information is collected, stored, used and destroyed in the [ABS Privacy Policy](#). The Policy outlines the provisions that legally bind ABS staff to protect your data. This includes fines of up to \$25,200 or imprisonment for two years, or both.

Privacy is thoroughly considered during Census planning and operations and a privacy by design approach has already been adopted. Independent privacy experts, Galexia, [has been selected to](#) conduct a comprehensive Privacy Impact Assessment in the lead up to the 2021 Census, commencing in the second half of 2019. They will identify and evaluate the potential privacy impacts of every stage of the Census and recommend ways to manage, minimise or eliminate these impacts. The Privacy Impact Assessment will be published and publicly available by August 2020, one year ahead of the Census.

### Keeping your data secure

Keeping your data secure is a high priority for the ABS. A critical feature of the Census, including the online form, is the high level of security protecting the privacy of personal information. The security measures in place have been, and will continue to be, independently tested and reviewed by security experts including from government agencies such as the Australian Cyber Security Centre and the private sector to ensure that your personal information is secure.

ABS systems and processes are implemented in accordance with the Information Security Manual, which is part of the Australian Government's Protective Security Policy Framework.

Completed online and paper Census forms are sent to a processing centre within the ABS which will operate within the Protective Security Policy Framework.

All Census data will be stored in Australia — the same as in all previous Censuses. Names and addresses will continue to be stored separately from other Census data.

When we release Census data, it is always anonymised and cannot be traced to any individual. We treat Census data in accordance with the internationally recognised *Five Safes Framework*.

Safe people	as the detail in the data increases, the level of user authorisation increases.
Safe projects	ensuring the data is being used for an appropriate purpose; that is, for statistical and research work only.
Safe settings	ensuring that data access and use occurs in a transparent way.
Safe data	data is always released in ways that make it exceptionally unlikely that individuals can be identified.
Safe outputs	this is a final check on information before it is made public to ensure identifying information is not released. For example, in the ABS DataLab, statistical experts do a thorough check before outputs leave the DataLab environment.

### Why we collect names and addresses

Names and addresses have been collected as part of every Census since 1911 and are a critical part of ensuring the quality and value of the Census. They will be stored securely and separately from one another. Names are collected in the Census for many reasons, including:

- encouraging the person completing the form to provide the right information for each person in the household

- enabling important research such as more accurate estimation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander life expectancy
- allowing our post-enumeration survey to assess the quality of the data (a post-enumeration survey is a short survey run in the month after the Census, to determine how many people were missed or counted more than once, and to independently assess completeness of the Census).

Addresses are collected in the Census for many reasons, including:

- to minimise missing households, as the Census collects data on the key characteristics of people as well as the dwellings in which they live
- to produce accurate population estimates for regions, which inform the distribution of government funds and for electoral purposes
- to enable the development of a higher quality ABS Address Register, which is used widely to develop better survey processes, and improve processes and systems for the next Census the ability to release data for geographic areas, such as postal areas, states and territories, capital cities, towns, remote areas and many more to provide insights on the internal migration of people within Australia as well as the ability to measure travel distances to work).

The Australian Statistician committed to destroying names and addresses from the 2016 Census when there was no longer any community benefit to their retention, or four years after collection, whichever was earliest.

In line with this commitment, names collected in the 2016 Census have already been destroyed in 2019.

Addresses from the 2016 Census are required for longer. Census addresses are integral to creation of population statistics for different levels of geography (e.g. state, city, town and suburb) which inform local services, electoral boundaries, state and territory funding and business decisions.

Every Census, new data processing systems are created to manage the information collected from the approximately nine million Census forms returned by the Australian community and help develop that data into statistics.

In advance of the 2021 Census, we are using 2016 addresses to test these new processing systems to make sure they can:

- handle the large volumes of complex address information, and
- use addresses to accurately map data to a geographic location such as a town or suburb.

The address information collected in 2016 will be destroyed by August 2020 at the latest, consistent with past commitments.

### **Consultation on how long names and addresses should be kept**

The ABS will seek views on the length of time we should keep names and addresses from the 2021 Census. This decision will be informed by the independent Privacy Impact Assessment including consultation with members of the community, privacy experts and other stakeholders. This process will commence in late 2019.

## *Data integration*

Anonymised names and encoded addresses are also used for data integration purposes. Data integration is where two or more separate sources of data are combined in a safe and secure way to create new information. By combining Census data with other survey and administrative data, we can provide a richer statistical picture of Australia.

Combining Census data with other data can help answer important questions about communities, families, our environment and the economy that no single dataset can answer. For example:

- *Healthcare*: Healthcare services for vulnerable people can be designed and targeted more effectively due to a greater understanding of the backgrounds and living conditions of people accessing these services.
- *Employment opportunities*: Training and employment support programs can be informed by how family background and different educational choices influence outcomes for students.
- *Access to education*: The data be used to examine whether government support payments and programs for students are improving educational access and outcomes for students.

Importantly, data integration combines, or links, information from different sources while protecting the privacy and security of information. Information is only combined in a secure environment within the ABS, by a dedicated team. Only aggregate information will be released from the ABS environment, subject to strict confidentiality treatments. The ABS will never release information in a manner likely to enable the identification of a person or organisation.

More information about [ABS data integration](#) is available on our website.

## How we plan to conduct the 2021 Census

The Census is a major exercise that takes around six years to plan, develop, test, implement, deliver and disseminate the information collected.

### Cycle of Census planning

The running of a Census is a continuous cycle. The planning of the 2021 Census commenced even before the ABS released the 2016 Census data.

The ABS has already achieved significant milestones in preparation for the 2021 Census. As at September 2019, suppliers for our online services and field staff recruitment have been engaged. The ABS has completed the consultation and testing to inform the 2021 Census topic recommendations.

Leading up to the Census, we will release our Privacy Impact Assessment, build a strong community network to support participation and undertake significant field tests to ensure our processes and systems run smoothly.

### The topics

The selection of Census topics to be asked is a government decision. The ABS has undertaken an extensive public consultation in 2018 and provided Government with an assessment of the priority and feasibility of the topic suggestions. The ABS received 450 submissions from government departments, private and not for profit organisations and members of the public. A report on of this consultation can be found at: [Census of Population and Housing: Topic Directions 2021](#).

Topic selection will be finalised in early 2020 and tabled in Parliament. The final topics will be released in a publication later the same year.

Since 1911, the number and range of topics covered by the Census has changed. These changes reflect our evolving society, the increasing diversity of our communities, and the need to inform planning for future services and infrastructure.

The 45 Census topics asked in the 2016 Census have remained unchanged since the 2006 Census.

Decisions to change topics and the questions asked in the Census are not made lightly. The value of information to be gained through new topics needs to be considered against the time needed for people to answer more questions and the cost of processing and analysing the information collected. While topic changes can improve the information available to inform planning for a changing population, there is also the risk of reducing the value of long-term data sets that have been built over decades.

### The 21<sup>st</sup> century digital service

Reaching every person who is in Australia and its territories on Census night and ensuring that every household is counted is challenging. To achieve this in 2021, the ABS will deliver a predominantly digital Census. This means that people will be able to complete the 2021 Census online, securely, from any device. Paper forms will still be available for those who need one, such as people without ready access to a device or an internet service, or for those who would prefer to complete their Census on paper.

The ABS is partnering with IT provider PwC Australia to build and operate the 2021 Census Digital Service. This includes the online form, website and assistance to help people participate in the Census. The service will operate on the Amazon Web Services cloud platform. Amazon Web Services has been awarded Australian Signals Directorate (ASD) certification to the highest classification level on the ASD Certification Cloud Service List (PROTECTED).

In 2016, the ABS introduced a 'digital-first' Census to improve the cost effectiveness of the Census and to meet community expectations; this was a significant change. Prior to 2016, paper forms were the primary way to complete the Census and were delivered and collected by hand, to and from every household in Australia. Hand delivery across the entire country is neither sustainable nor affordable and does not reflect the community's increasing expectation of interacting with government digitally.

On Census night in 2016, the [online form suffered a series of outages](#) due to Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks. The ABS decided to close access to the online form to ensure the Census data was protected. The form was offline for 40 hours within an overall collection period of eight weeks. No data was taken or lost. Despite the outage, more than 63 per cent of households completed their 2016 Census online. We expect that rate to increase in 2021.

The 2016 Census was successful, with:

- a greater than 95% participation rate
- the unique identifier for each online Census form ensured privacy and provided extra protections against fraud
- the Independent Panel established to review the quality of the 2016 Census data concluding that it was fit-for-purpose and could be used with confidence.

Lessons from the 2016 Census are informing planning and delivery of the 2021 Census. The ABS has recognised cyber security as a contemporary risk of operating in a digital world where information security and privacy are paramount. The ABS has implemented the recommendations from the Special Adviser to the Prime Minister on Cyber Security on procurements, privacy, engagement, risk management and cyber security. For example:

- the ABS has engaged external independent assurers to provide the 2021 Census with assurance around cyber security, project delivery and risk management
- the ABS is ensuring the community informs how the Census operates through user centred design, market research and focus groups, and formal consultation opportunities.

## Completing the Census

Every household and each individual in a non-private dwelling is required to complete the Census.

### *Completing the Census online*

Most dwellings (around 85%) will receive a Census letter, either by post or delivered by a Census field officer. This letter will include a unique Census online code for each dwelling and instructions on how to complete the online Census form. People will visit the Census website, enter their Census online code, create a password, and then start the Census.

### *Completing a paper Census form*

A paper Census form will be delivered to the remaining dwellings, those in areas where we do not have accurate addresses, areas that do not have reliable internet access, or where we consider people are more likely to respond on a paper form. Alternatively, paper forms can be requested online or by calling the automated Paper Form Request Service which will be established in 2021.

A reply-paid envelope will be provided for the return of the completed Census paper form.

### *Requesting a private Census form*

Some people may prefer to keep their Census information private from people they live with. We can send instructions on how to complete the Census online, or a separate paper form, for those who prefer to complete the Census as an individual rather than as part of a dwelling.

### *Away from home in August 2021*

Some people will be away from home on Census night. They should complete their Census where they are staying on Census night. People who are overseas on Census night are not required to complete the Census. We will provide details closer to the time about what to do if no one is staying at home on Census night.

## **Making it easy for people to participate**

The ABS is working with the public and community organisations to ensure everyone in Australia and its territories can easily participate in the 2021 Census.

People will be able to schedule when they complete the Census, either in the days before or after Census night. The ABS will support people to complete through online and telephone help services, community networks and through personal assistance by our field staff where required.

### *Advertising and communication campaign*

A comprehensive, national communication campaign will be implemented to explain the value and purpose of the Census, and to ensure people in Australia know the Census is happening and how to participate. The communication campaign will run before, during and also after Census night to remind people who haven't completed the Census to do so. It will include advertising, media, social media, and community engagement, and will be available in languages other than English.

### *Field staff*

Our field staff will continue to play an important role in delivering and collecting Census material, helping those who need it, and reminding people to complete the Census.

In 2021, we expect to employ about 30,000 field staff around the country. In addition to assisting households, field staff will work with local communities and will include people from within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and people with languages other than English. We will also employ Special Census Field staff who have either been homeless or have a background in supporting people experiencing homelessness.



During the Census, field staff will visit places such as retirement villages, aged care facilities, hospitals, hotels, caravan parks, camping grounds, marinas, and military facilities to ensure as many people as possible are counted.

Field staff will also follow up households that have not completed their Census soon after Census night.

### *Support services*

People requiring assistance will be able to access a range of self-help services specifically set up for the 2021 Census. This includes information and services on the Census website and a telephone help line. Face to face support, such as information and fill in the form sessions, will also be available through community services and public spaces such as libraries and community centres.

### *Accessibility*

The Census website and online Census form will meet online accessibility standards (currently WCAG2.1 AA). In addition:

- Census information will be available in a range of languages other than English, including Auslan
- large print and Braille Census forms will be available for those who need them
- the National Relay Service will be available to support people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impediment connect with the Census Contact Centre
- people who do not speak English will be able to access interpreting services through Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS) National.

### *Our partners*

The ABS appreciates the enormous support provided by communities to help people participate in the Census.

The ABS regularly engages with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and communities to build and maintain good working relationships. The Census will collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, organisations and other key stakeholders across urban and remote areas. The Centre of Excellence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics has developed an ABS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Strategy which will inform Census engagement activities.

We will engage with representative multicultural groups and existing service providers to ensure we provide a good service to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) people, including face to face support options. With almost one in five Australians speaking a language other than English at home, we will help people who have difficulty speaking or reading English. The ABS is already engaged in a number of CALD advisory groups at a national and state government level.

We are working with representative groups to ensure support is available from trusted partners for people who need help to participate in the Census.

We will partner with the homeless sector to ensure people experiencing homelessness are able to complete the form, whether they are sleeping rough, in supported and/or crisis accommodation or staying with friends or family. The Homeless Statistics Reference Group is informing the planning and implementation of Census activities for these communities.

We will also work with organisations, in the lead up to Census and during the Census period, representing seniors to ensure the Census is accessible to all.

## Preparing for the Census – Census Tests

Testing is an important part of the Census. Field tests help us check our processes to ensure the Census runs smoothly, people can participate easily and quality data is produced.

The first field test is scheduled for October 2019 in areas around Wagga Wagga, New South Wales and areas south of Brisbane, Queensland. This will test any impact on data quality from the proposed new and changed topics and questions. It will also test whether advising people they can complete the Census a few days before and after Census night has an impact on response rates or data quality.

In 2020 there will be a series of tests. They will test remote area strategies, and examine the operational readiness of our staff, systems, processes and vendors for the 2021 Census.

### National archive

When you participate in the 2021 Census, you will have the opportunity to ensure your story is preserved as part of our national history.

If you agree, by marking your agreement on the Census form, the National Archives of Australia will preserve your information including your name and address in a highly secure Census time capsule for 99 years.

These storage arrangements are completely separate from the ABS storage of data and are managed by the National Archives of Australia. The information will be made available to family historians and researchers in 99 years.

## Strategic risks and assurance

### Planning

The design of the 2021 Census has incorporated lessons, reflections and findings from:

- ABS's experiences of running the challenging but ultimately successful 2016 Census
- the implementation of the successful Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey (AMLPS)
- ABS operational experience from our regular program of surveys producing 500 statistical releases every year
- experiences from our colleagues in international statistical agencies
- report on the quality of 2016 Census data release by the Census Independent Assurance Panel established by the ABS
- the review by the Special Adviser to the Prime Minister on Cyber Security of the events surrounding the outage of the online Census form (the MacGibbon review)
- Senate Inquiries into the 2016 Census and the operation of the AMLPS.

The ABS has established a clear approach to the management, ownership, assessment and treatment of risks and issues, and how we will manage issues.

## Assurance

KPMG has been appointed as the Independent Program Assurer to advise the 2021 Census in delivery of its key outcomes.

The Assurer provides an objective, third party view of the Census progress, along with real-time assurance and views on emerging risks and issues during Census operations. It reports directly to the Census Senior Responsible Officer and informs on the findings of its work to the Census Executive Board, which is chaired by the Australian Statistician and comprises senior ABS staff and external representatives.

## How we process Census data

The ABS aims to collect and process the information you provide on your Census form quickly and accurately. The way we manage this is vital to ensure high quality statistics.

We record when the ABS receives your Census form so our field staff only contact households that haven't responded. This helps ensure coverage of all households. As with previous Censuses, a secure Data Capture Centre will be established to receive paper Census forms. A separate Data Operations Centre will process the information collected from all digital and paper Census forms.

As part of our data processing approach, we take many steps to ensure we correctly capture information from all forms we receive. A variety of quality assurance measures will be implemented throughout the data processing cycle. This is critical for providing accurate and high quality statistics for government, researchers and the community.

The ABS plans to start releasing data from mid-2022.

## Data quality assurance

Among national statistical agencies, data quality is generally assessed on whether the data is 'fit for purpose'. This means that data quality is assessed not only on the accuracy of statistics, but their timeliness and relevance.

ABS has a quality framework for all its statistics, which it will be applying to Census data. More information on the [ABS Data Quality Framework](#) can be found on the website.

In order to produce high quality data from the 2021 Census, we are focussing on the design of the Census form and the procedures for data collection and processing.

## Quality assurance

The quality assurance process makes sure the Census data is fit-for-purpose and meets the requirements of our data quality framework. The quality of Census data will be managed and assured through several activities.

### *Statistical risk management*

Statistical risk is the chance or likelihood of something going wrong in a process that affects the quality or integrity of data. Statistical risks can occur at any time during design, execution and processing of the Census. Statistical risk arises for various reasons, including inadequate

information, changes to existing processes, human error or changes in the external environment. Statistical risk is managed through the data quality controls discussed below.

### *Data quality controls*

Data quality controls are business processes that ensure a part of the Census runs smoothly, for example management of field officers or distribution of Census materials to dwellings. There are also data quality controls that explicitly manage the quality of Census data.

Data quality controls for the 2021 Census include:

- use of quality checks at key stages during Census collection and processing to ensure that any potential causes of data errors are detected early and rectified.
- testing of processes, systems, field operations and new content will be undertaken in the lead up to the Census.
  - Questions have been tested through focus groups, individual interviews using cognitive testing techniques, and field tests. This will ensure high quality data can be obtained for the proposed new and amended topics.
  - Field tests will help refine the wording of questions and ensure new and changed questions do not impact the quality of responses.

### *Census Post Enumeration Survey*

The Census is a large and complex exercise. There are always going to be a small number of people missed or who are counted more than once.

People may be missed for several reasons. For example, they may have been travelling and were difficult to contact, the person completing the form may have mistakenly thought that they shouldn't be counted, or the household was difficult to find. People can also be counted when they should not have been. This can occur when a person was overseas on Census night, but they were still included on a Census form at their home.

The Post Enumeration Survey is a short survey run the month after the Census to determine how many people were missed, counted more than once, or counted in error.

It is run separately from the Census to provide an independent assessment of the completeness of the Census.

From the Post Enumeration Survey, it is possible to determine the number of people who should have been counted in the Census. This is then compared to the number of people who were counted in the Census. The difference is referred to as 'net undercount' or 'net overcount'.

### *For more information*

For further information on the 2016 Post Enumeration Survey and net undercount, refer to the [Census of Population and Housing: Details of Overcount and Undercount, Australia, 2016](#) (Cat.no. 2940.0).

## *2021 Census Statistical Independent Assurance Panel*

The ABS will establish a 2021 Census Statistical Independent Assurance Panel. The 2021 Panel will independently assure the 2021 Census data and publicly release a report on their findings.

This initiative follows the establishment of the 2016 Census Independent Assurance Panel. The 2016 Panel published their findings in the Report on the [Quality of 2016 Census data](#), which is available on the ABS website. The 2016 Panel recommended that the ABS continue the practice of an Independent Assurance Panel reviewing the quality of the Census data to provide greater transparency and accountability.

## Data innovations

New approaches to undertaking a Census are being pursued by statistical organisations around the world. Australia, together with Canada, New Zealand, USA and the UK, is looking at approaches that use data obtained as Australians interact with government (administrative data) to improve the quality of Census data, inform our operations, and collect our data more efficiently.

The 2021 Census will use administrative data to improve how we gather and process data from Census forms. These innovations are a result of the following research agenda - [Investigating administrative data in relation to the 2021 Census](#).

### **Better information increases participation**

Comparing 2016 Census data results with administrative data, is always done in a secure way that ensures confidentiality, is providing information on the general characteristics of dwellings that were harder to reach in the 2016 Census. This research, along with more up-to-date administrative data, will be used to inform strategies that may improve the participation of hard to reach population groups.

### **Improving how we determine an occupied/unoccupied home**

To ensure the most accurate counts of people from the Census, we need to determine whether each dwelling was occupied or unoccupied on Census night.

In addition to the observations made by Census field staff, the 2021 Census will use a 'signs of life' indicator using a range of administrative sources to improve the decision on whether the dwelling was occupied or not.

Our research shows that using administrative data in this way will improve the accuracy of the Census.

### **Improving counts of Australians**

The 2021 Census will use an improved methodology to provide counts where no Census form is returned, but where we believe the dwelling was occupied on Census night. This methodology will use administrative data to identify how best to impute basic Census data (counts ages, sex and marital status) for such households.

# Release of results

## Product and services review

Through-out 2019, the ABS is seeking ideas from data users on improvements to, or on new Census products and services to meet emerging needs. Information on proposed Census data products and services will be published on our website from 2020.

## Geographic boundaries

Census data will be released using the 2021 Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS). For information on any geographic changes since 2016 see the [ABS Geography Portal](#).

The Census will record the actual location where each person stayed on Census night, which is known as 'place of enumeration basis'. As in 2016 and 2011, products from the 2021 Census will be released based on the area where people usually live (place of usual residence), with a limited release based on the 'place of enumeration' area.

Comprehensive material will be published to support the use of Census data.

## How Census data is used to inform community services

The data collected in the Census is used to reset official population estimates and is critical to setting federal, state and territory electoral boundaries. It informs the allocation of billions of dollars of government funding to states, territories and local governments, and feeds into decisions about health care, education, social security, housing, transport and infrastructure.

Census data is also used by many organisations to help plan important support services in our community. Here's a snapshot of how some organisations are using Census data.

### Public transport and roads

State Transport Authorities use Census data on how people travel to work to inform transport infrastructure, services planning and investment. Census data helps identify traffic pressures, plan future road network upgrades, and manage public transport services.

### Local council services

Census data provides local city councils with a profile of their community to inform planning and services. Penrith City Council is a growing local government area that has recently used Census data to help identify how its community has changed and to plan local services including aged-care and disability support.

### Institute for Urban Indigenous Health

The Institute for Urban Indigenous Health plans, develops and delivers primary health care services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in South East Queensland. It uses Census data to know how many Indigenous people there are in the region, and the locations where they are living to inform where multidisciplinary health clinics are required.

The Institute was established in 2009 by the four community-controlled health services in South East Queensland, and the regional network has since expanded to 20 clinics. Based on Census data, there are plans to build additional clinics to provide for the needs of Australia's second largest Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

### Orange Sky Laundry

Orange Sky Laundry is a profit-for-purpose organisation that provides free laundry and shower services to some of Australia's most vulnerable people. 2016 Census data found that 116,000 Australians are experiencing homelessness; that's one in 200 people. Census data helps Orange Sky Laundry to know where their services are needed most.

Since it started in 2014 by two 20-year-old mates, it has expanded to 29 services across the country. What started as an idea to improve hygiene and restore dignity to people doing it tough in Brisbane has evolved into a national service on the verge of going international.

## More information

To stay up to date with progress on planning for the 2021 Census, you can:

- visit [abs.gov.au](https://abs.gov.au)
- [subscribe](#) to receive our newsletter straight to your inbox
- [register](#) your interest in working as part of our field staff in 2021

## *About the Census*

Australia's 18th national Census will be held in 2021. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is planning the design and implementation of the 2021 Census in consultation with the community and relevant organisations.

The Census measures the number and key characteristics of people in Australia during the Census period. Census data is used by people and organisations all over Australia to plan for services and infrastructure such as roads, childcare, hospitals and schools for every community in our nation.

## *Who is included in the Census*

The Census includes every person, including overseas visitors, in Australia, Norfolk Island, the Territories of Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Christmas Island on Census night. The Census does not include Australian residents who are out of the country on Census night nor foreign diplomats and their families living in Australia.

## *How the 2021 Census will be delivered*

### Completing the Census online



Most dwellings will receive a Census letter, either by post or delivered by a Census field officer. This letter will include a unique Census number for each dwelling and instructions on how to complete the online Census form.

### Completing a paper Census form



A paper Census form will be delivered by a field officer to some dwellings, particularly where mail services aren't available. Paper forms can also be requested online or by calling the automated Paper Form Request Service which will be established in 2021.

### Requesting a private Census form



Some people may prefer to keep their Census information private from people they live with. People will be able to provide personal information separate from household information and the information of other residents. This separate online or paper form will be available on request.

### Away from home in August 2021



Some people will be away from home on Census night and should complete the form where they are staying. People who are overseas on Census night are not required to complete the Census. We will provide details closer to the time about what to do if no one is staying at home on Census night.

## *Making it easy for people to participate*

The ABS is working with the public and community organisations to ensure everyone in Australia and its territories can easily participate in the 2021 Census.



### ***Advertising and communication campaign***

A national advertising and communication campaign before, during and after Census night will inform people how and when to complete the Census, and remind people who haven't completed the Census to do so by the due date.

### ***Field staff***

Our field staff will continue to play an important role in delivering and collecting Census material, helping those who need it, and reminding people to complete the Census. Field staff will visit places such as retirement villages, aged care facilities, hospitals, hotels, caravan parks, camping grounds, marinas, and military facilities to ensure as many people as possible are counted.

### ***Support services***

People requiring assistance will be able to access a range of self-help services. This includes information and services on the Census website and a telephone helpline. Face to face support, such as information and fill in the form sessions, will also be available through community services and public spaces such as libraries and community centres.

### ***Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities***

Field staff will be hired from local communities and will include people from within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The Census will collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, organisations and other key stakeholders across urban and remote areas to ensure as many people as possible have the opportunity to be included.

### ***People experiencing homelessness***

We will employ special Census field staff who have either been homeless or who have experience assisting people experiencing homelessness. We will partner with the homeless sector to ensure people experiencing homelessness are able to complete the form, whether they are sleeping rough, in supported and/or crisis accommodation, or staying with friends or family.

### ***Multicultural communities and people who don't speak English***

We will help people who have difficulty speaking or reading English. Field staff will be selected to work with multicultural communities and people with languages other than English. People who do not speak English will be able to access interpreting services through Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS) National.

### ***Accessibility***

The Census website and online Census form will meet online accessibility standards (currently WCAG2.1 AA). Census information will be available in a range of languages other than English, including Auslan. Large print and Braille Census forms will be available. People who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impediment will be able to access help through the National Relay Service (NRS).

## ***Keeping your information private, secure and confidential***

We understand the importance of the data we collect and hold. We respect your data and take our duty to protect it very seriously.

### ***Privacy***

The ABS does not share personal information that could identify you or any other person. This is a legal requirement of the *Census and Statistics Act*.

Other organisations, including government departments and direct marketing companies, cannot access the personal information you provide on your Census form.

In addition to the Act, the ABS complies with the [Privacy Act 1988](#) and handles all personal information in accordance with the [Australian Privacy Principles](#). The Australian Privacy Principles set out standards, rights and obligations in relation to handling, holding, accessing and correcting personal information.

You can read more about how your information is collected, stored, used and destroyed in the [ABS Privacy Policy](#). The Policy outlines the provisions that legally bind ABS staff to protect your data. This includes fines of up to \$25,200 or imprisonment for two years, or both.

### ***Security***

Keeping your data secure is a high priority for the ABS. The Census and online form has a high level of security to protect the privacy of your personal information. The security measures in place have been, and will continue to be, independently tested and reviewed by security experts. This includes private sector and government agencies such as the Australian Cyber Security Centre, to ensure your personal information is secure.

### ***National archives***

When you participate in the 2021 Census, you will have the opportunity to have your story preserved as part of our national history. If you agree, by marking your agreement on the Census form, the National Archives of Australia will preserve your information including your name and address in a highly secure Census time capsule for 99 years.

These storage arrangements are completely separate from the ABS storage of data and managed by the National Archives of Australia. The information will be made available to family historians and researchers in 99 years.

### ***Names and addresses***

Names and addresses have been collected as part of every Census since 1911 and are a critical part of ensuring the quality and value of the Census. They will be stored securely and separately from one another.

Names are collected for many reasons including making sure no household or person is missed. Names collected in the 2016 Census have been destroyed. Addresses enable the mapping of Census forms to local areas and the release of data vital for making decisions for geographic areas, including postcodes, small towns and remote areas. The address information collected in 2016 will be destroyed by August 2020 at the latest, consistent with past commitments.

## *How you inform the planning the 2021 Census*

The ABS seeks the views of the community, data users and key stakeholder to inform key aspects of the 2021 Census.

### *What questions will be asked in the Census*

In 2018, the public was consulted on the questions to be asked in the 2021 Census. The outcomes of this consultation can be found at: [Census of Population and Housing: Topic Directions 2021](#). Drawing on this extensive public consultation process and testing by the ABS, the Australian Government is considering their decision on the Census topics for 2021. The final topics for inclusion will be published in 2020.

### *How long names and addresses should be kept*

The ABS will seek views on the length of time we keep names and addresses from the 2021 Census. The ABS will be informed by the independent Privacy Impact Assessment and consultation with members of the community, privacy experts and other stakeholders. This process will start in late 2019.

### *Product and services review*

In 2019 and early 2020, the ABS will seek ideas from data users on possible improvements, and on new Census products and services to meet emerging needs. Information on proposed Census data products and services will be published on our website from 2020.

### *Participating in Census Tests*

Testing is an important part of the Census. Field tests help us test our processes to ensure the Census runs smoothly, is easy for people to participate and produces quality data. The first field test is scheduled for October 2019 in areas around Wagga Wagga, New South Wales and areas south of Brisbane.

In 2020, there will be a series of tests. They will test remote area strategies, and examine the operational readiness of our staff, systems, processes and vendors for the 2021 Census.

### *More information*

To stay up to date with progress on planning for the 2021 Census, you can:

- visit [abs.gov.au](http://abs.gov.au)
- [subscribe](#) to receive our newsletter straight to your inbox
- [register](#) your interest in working as part of our field staff in 2021

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ABS Minute MB19-000063 - Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Forward Work Program, 2019-20  
Secretariat WDB [redacted] 04/10/2019 12:48 PM

Basics

Secretariat WDB 04/10/2019 02:14 PM  
Sent by [redacted]

<b>Send</b>	<b>To</b> [redacted]@treasury.gov.au David Kalisch/Staff/ABS@ABS, Teresa Dickinson/Staff/ABS@ABS, Luise Mcculloch/Staff/ABS@ABS, Jenet Connell/Staff/ABS@ABS, Lane Masterton/Staff/ABS@ABS, Nick Stathis/Staff/ABS@ABS, <b>cc</b> [redacted]/Staff/ABS@ABS; Michelle S Howe/Staff/ABS@ABS; [redacted]/Staff/ABS@ABS; [redacted]/Staff/ABS@ABS; [redacted] <b>bcc</b> [redacted]/Staff/ABS@ABS; [redacted]/Staff/ABS@ABS; [redacted] [redacted]/Staff/ABS@ABS; [redacted]/Staff/ABS@ABS; [redacted] [redacted]/Staff/ABS@ABS; [redacted]/LTDACC/ABS@ABS; [redacted] [redacted] Staff/ABS@ABS; [redacted] /Staff/ABS@ABS; [redacted] [redacted] /Staff/ABS@ABS
<b>Subject</b>	ABS Minute MB19-000063 - Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Forward Work Program, 2019-20
<b>Protective Mark</b>	UNCLASSIFIED
<b>Categories</b>	Ministerial Briefings\2019

Good afternoon

**For information**

Please bring the attached minute to the attention of the Minister for Housing and Assistant Treasurer, the Treasurer, and the Secretary to the Treasury. It provides information on and a copy of the Australian Bureau of Statistics Forward Work Program 2019-20, to be published on 18 October 2019.



ABS Minute MB19-000063 Australian Bureau of Statistics Forward Work Program, 2019-20.pdf

Regards,

[redacted]

Parliamentary and Partnerships Section | Communication and Parliamentary Branch |  
**Australian Bureau of Statistics**

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**A/g Australian Statistician**

**MB19-000063**

The Hon Michael Sukkar MP  
Minister for Housing and Assistant Treasurer

cc: The Hon Josh Frydenberg MP, Treasurer  
Dr Steven Kennedy PSM, Secretary to the Treasury

**Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Forward Work Program, 2019-20**

**For information**

**22**

22

*Luise McCulloch*

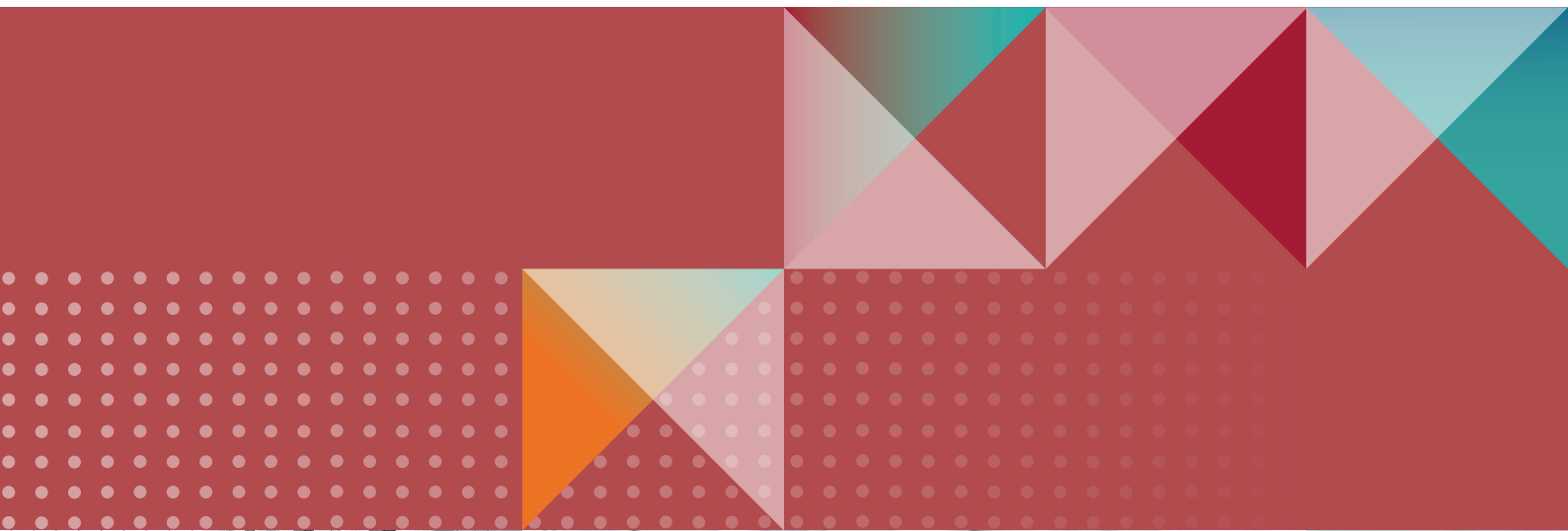
Luise McCulloch

4 October 2019



# FORWARD WORK PROGRAM

## 2019–20





### Further information

For any enquiries about the content of this report, please contact:

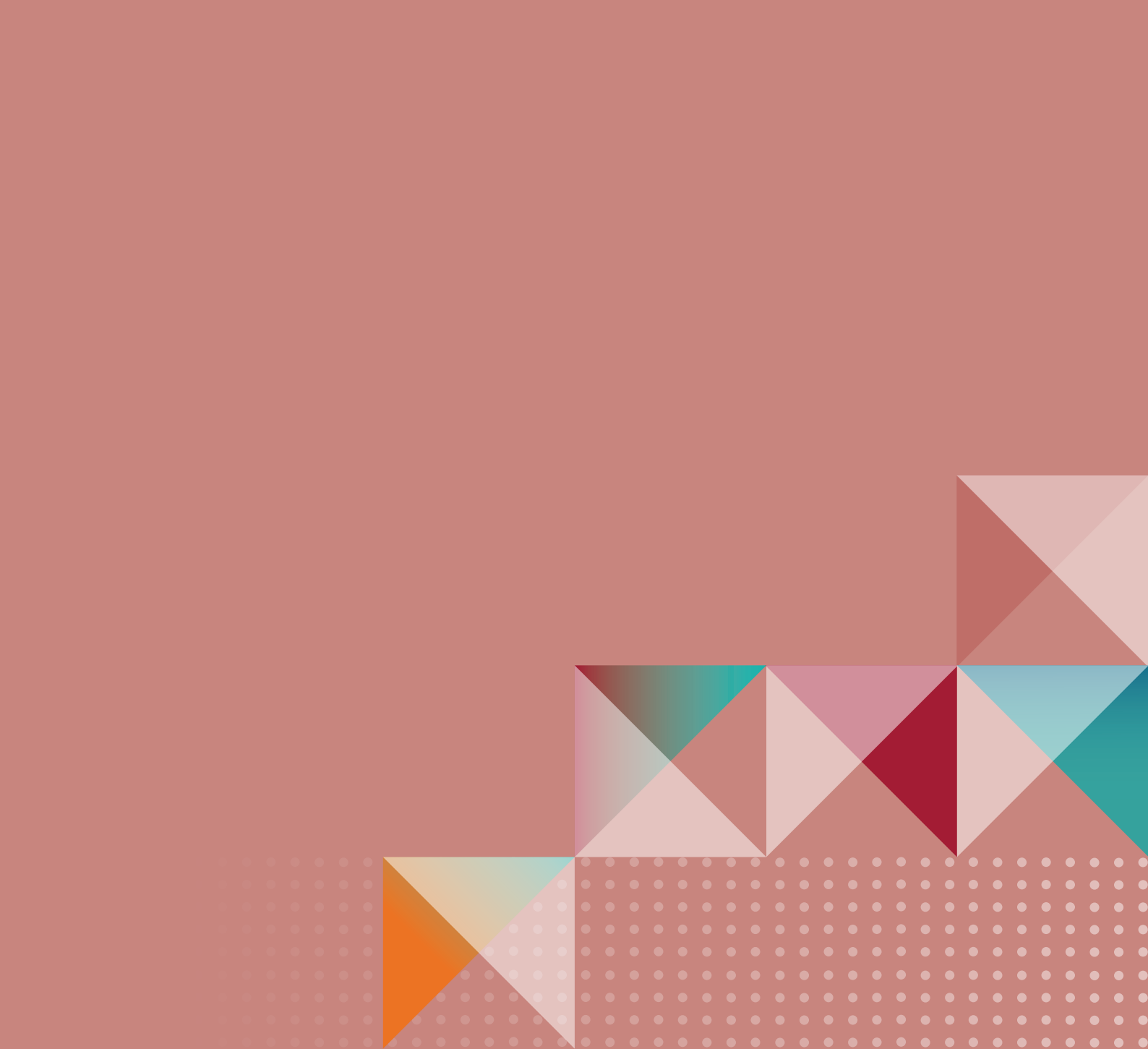
Statistical Services Group  
Australian Bureau of Statistics  
Locked Bag 10,  
Belconnen, ACT, 2616  
Telephone: 02 6252 5000

The Forward Work Program 2019–20  
can be found at [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)



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## PREFACE

The focus of the ABS is to maximise public value across the competing dimensions of:

- The provision of quality, timely national statistics;
- Producing new statistical insights;
- Enabling effective, safe use of ABS data;
- Pursuing data capture that is efficient and less intrusive; and
- Continuing to build ABS capability for the future.

Inevitably, we have to make choices between these five dimensions within the overall context of the ABS budget and staff capability.

The ABS continues to prioritise reliable, essential official statistics for the nation. Increased attention and resources have been focused on statistical risk management and quality assurance. Improvements have been made to the quality of a number of our key indicators including labour force estimates, the Consumer Price Index and population estimates. In 2019-20, no significant change to the current suite of statistical products is planned.

The ABS is measuring an economy, society and environment that are becoming more complex. Globalisation is challenging how we measure economic activity and international trade and we are working to enhance the measurement of growing sectors of our economy such as health, education and disability services. Productivity is a key policy and measurement conundrum that requires focused attention. Addressing mental health issues, providing a place based perspective on the socio-economic condition of communities in economic transition and population pressures are also emerging as measurement priorities.

The ABS data integration capability is underpinning the production of official statistics, informing economic assessments, and contributing improved understanding to significant policy questions such as firm dynamics, wage movements, education, health policy and mental health considerations.

The ABS is enabling improved yet safe access to our valuable statistical resources, especially our microdata. ABS data is part of our essential national infrastructure, available to inform important decisions by governments, business and the community. Importantly, greater access and use of ABS data is occurring while simultaneously ensuring the confidentiality of individuals' and businesses' information. This is core activity for national statistical offices.

The ABS wants to improve the experience for those who generously supply information to the ABS. New data acquisition systems are progressively enabling us to increase the level of on-line survey completion. We continue to assess opportunities to reduce the call we make on households and businesses. This includes developing opportunities to make better use of existing information.

While much has been achieved, there is more to do. The ABS transformation will be ongoing. In a world of constant change, particularly emerging data opportunities and risks, this is both inevitable and essential.

**David W. Kalisch**  
Australian Statistician



# 1. ENVIRONMENTAL AND ORGANISATIONAL CONTEXT

ABS statistics and analysis empower decisions across government, business, and in the communities of every day Australians. Guided by the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* and the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* the ABS continues to collect, compile, analyse and disseminate statistics that remain relevant for Australia.

## 1.1 ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT

In the provision of high quality statistics, the ABS needs to constantly evaluate its program in light of the changing external environment. Maintaining the relevance and quality of statistics requires a continuous focus on enhancing methods, data sources and practices. It also requires vigilance in re-shaping the program to ensure we are measuring changes in the economy, changes in government and community priorities and expectations.

In 2019-20, focus will continue on seeking to enhance measurement of growing sectors of the economy, digital activities and globalisation. At the same time, the ABS will be delivering on an ambitious measurement program around living conditions, including indigenous health and social support, mental health, household time use, personal safety and education.

Increasingly, place-based socio-economic policy and assessment of land use, resource use and the associated environment is being prioritised by communities and governments. The ABS will develop this capability as resources permit.

With increasing demand for data coupled with technological advances that will enable increased access to a plethora of information (often instantaneously), the role and practices of the ABS will need to continue to evolve in an increasingly crowded and complex data landscape. The need for data literate analytical capability across the public and private sector will continue to grow and remains a major challenge. This is occurring against the back drop of growing public awareness and concern about some inappropriate use of data.

The ABS is actively supporting the Australian Government's policy, by working with the National Data Commissioner, to enable a national data system that facilitates maximising the value of data, while ensuring the community can be confident about the public sector use and protections of their information.

## 1.2 ABS STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

To position the ABS for the future, the ABS has articulated four longer term goals. These goals point to the agency the ABS aspires to be. These strategic directions are as follows.

- Continue to invest in the production of high quality data and statistics
- Be recognised as a leader in the Australian data landscape
- Demonstrate leadership in data skills and capability building across Australia
- Deliver new data solutions and services

### 1.3 INFRASTRUCTURE MODERNISATION

2019-20 is the final year of the ABS's five-year program to modernise its information technology infrastructure and statistical business processes. This transformation program has delivered against the original program objectives to:

- Improve customer outcomes through more seamless interfaces that reduce red tape for providers of information and increase the availability of information for the users of ABS statistics; and
- Reduce risk to our statistical outputs by improving statistical processing systems and supporting technology infrastructure.

The objective of delivering financial efficiencies is yet to be fully realised. This reflects delays in the delivery of statistical processing capabilities and the need to adopt a cautious approach in transitioning the current statistical programs to the new infrastructure. This cautious approach has been designed to protect the quality and continuity of ABS statistics during the transition.

The ABS has started using cloud computing as part of its information technology infrastructure. This includes the use of cloud service providers from the Australian Signals Directorate Certified Cloud Services List. An example is our new data integration lab, which allows access to large scale computing for researchers using our large integrated datasets. These services are configured in line with advice from the Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC).

The ABS has a large security uplift program running in 2019-20 to better safeguard citizen data in line with community expectations. The ABS will be focussing on raising maturity against ACSC's Essential 8 Maturity Model.

### 1.4 WORKFORCE STRATEGY

The ABS operates in an environment where there is increasing external demand for staff with high quality data and statistical capabilities. Over coming years it is expected that the growth in demand for data scientists will outpace overall employment growth, and that Australian businesses will make significantly increased investment in data analytics capabilities.

Within this context, the ABS Workforce Strategy 2019-23 provides a four year outlook to ensure that the ABS continues to attract, develop and retain high quality staff and equip them with required skills and knowledge. The strategy includes four streams to drive high organisational performance:

- Increase the capacity and capability of the ABS workforce through development and recruitment to address key gaps;
- To identify, monitor, and predict where specialised and general skills and knowledge are required to responsively meet short, medium and long term needs;
- Support innovative ways of working to achieve high performance and efficiency; and
- Improve the ABS' position as an 'employer of choice' to retain and attract the best employees.

As Australia's National Statistical Office we are well placed to assist data capability development in the Australian Public Service (APS). The ABS is working with public sector partners to determine how we can assist government employees to develop data analytical skills. This includes investigating:

- Making statistical training developed by the ABS easily accessible by other APS staff;
- Increasing opportunities to undertake secondments to and from the ABS; and
- Developing a data related job roles and capability framework to support a sector wide approach to professionalising the data workforce.

## 1.5 FINANCIAL CONTEXT FOR 2019-20

The level of ABS resources is a combination of Government appropriation and user funding for data products and services.

In 2019-20, the ABS will receive an annual appropriation of \$261.7 million and user funding of \$49.5 million. This appropriation is marginally higher than the \$258.6 million appropriated in 2018-19 due to additional funding to conduct a Time Use Survey, produce the Labour Accounts publication, and various other minor cyclical funding adjustments.

This base funding excludes funding for the Census of Population and Housing, which is appropriated separately, the Statistical Business Transformation Program (SBTP), capital and low value asset replacement funding. In 2019-20 Census funding will increase by \$44 million to \$74.8 million as the program ramps up.

The ABS appropriation largely funds the demographic and economic statistical program; data acquisition and enabling services such as information technology. Data acquisition (including surveys, data cleaning) accounts for around a quarter of the ABS appropriated funding.

By contrast, the social statistics program is largely reliant on user funding. Seventy five per cent of the \$49.5 million in user funding in 2019-20 supports the social statistics program, with a small proportion supporting the industry, environment and agricultural statistical programs and data integration.

Appropriated funding for a number of activities ceases in June 2020, including funding for the Data Integration Partnership for Australia (DIPA), labour accounts and research into measuring the non-market service sector.

## 1.6 MEDIUM TERM FUNDING OUTLOOK

Over the past decade the need for prioritisation has become sharper as the ABS' ongoing appropriation has reduced. Funding in 2019-20 in real terms is 28 per cent lower than a decade ago. This takes into account the additional funding of \$31.2 million (excluding capital) over five years provided to the ABS in the 2018-19 Budget and 2018-19 MYEFO (Refer Chart 1).

The ABS has achieved efficiencies by reducing:

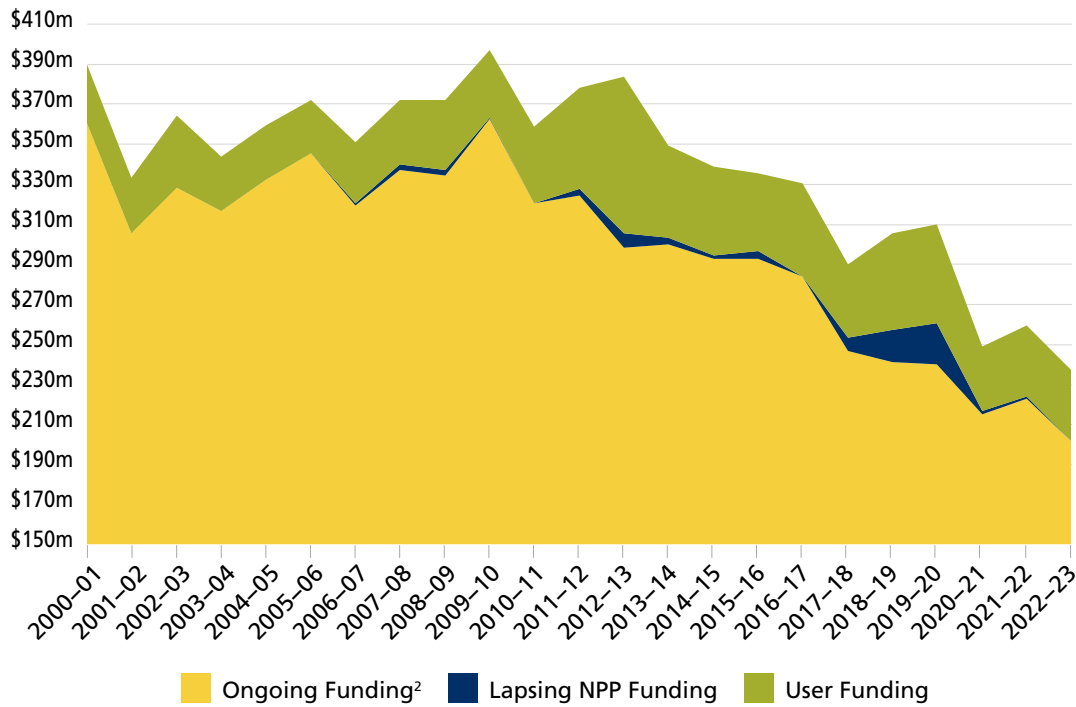
- Corporate overheads;
- Staffing numbers, through several rounds of redundancies and not replacing staff leaving the organisation;
- Our property footprint through activity based working and sharing with other government agencies; and
- Direct collection methods, where administrative and transactional data can be used.

These efficiencies are offset by rising costs of:

- Household surveys, particularly the monthly labour force survey;
- Data security protections; and
- Qualified expert staff recruitment and development.

Future efficiencies will be dependent on changes in the way the ABS collects information, such as further use of administrative data, more e-form collection, and the efficiency with which we compile and analyse this information, such as more automation of coding and editing.

**CHART 1: REAL ABS OPERATING FUNDING<sup>1</sup>, 2000-01 TO 2022-23**



Notes:

1. Excludes funding for SBTP, the Census of Population and Housing and the Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey. Depreciation funding of approximately \$30m per annum was removed from 2010-11 onwards.
2. Base funding after WCI, Efficiency Dividend, efficiencies following SBTP and Whole-of-Government Savings. Includes ongoing NPP funding and offsets for property savings.
3. Base funding excludes the reclassification of Departmental Capital Budget funding for low value asset purchases.





## 2. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR 2019-20

### 2.1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ONE: ABS STATISTICS ARE TRUSTED AND USED TO INFORM IMPORTANT DECISIONS

The ABS released 496 statistical products in 2018-19, with a similar number of releases scheduled in 2019-20. Table 1 sets out the broad schedule for the ABS' regular publications. This does not include the myriad of experimental, one-off or ad hoc releases that occur throughout the year. Appendix 1 sets out the statistical program in more detail.

With funding in 2019-20 similar to funding in 2018-19, the ABS is not contemplating significant changes to the statistical work program in 2019-20.

#### 2.1.1 ECONOMIC AND LABOUR MARKET MEASUREMENT

##### Main Economic Indicators

The main economic indicators are the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the National and International Accounts inclusive of the critical business survey, price deflators and administrative data that are critical inputs for these.

The ABS will continue to prioritise maintaining the quality of these core economic statistics. This includes continuing to embed enhanced statistical risk management and prioritising critical staff capability and availability. To the extent possible within diminishing resources, the ABS will continue to focus research activity on enhancing economic measurement to maintain relevance in a changing economy.

Australia is recognised internationally as a leader in economic statistics. We are one of very few countries that publishes all three measures of Gross Domestic Product in the National Accounts. The introduction of annual re-weighting of the CPI and use of scanner and web scraped data in the CPI are world leading. However, we remain the only G20 country that does not have monthly inflation estimates.

Australia's LFS is first class by world standards (see Box 1). Our monthly labour force publication now includes monthly estimates of underemployment and underutilisation. Australia is the only country to release a comprehensive quarterly Labour Account. Denmark, the Netherlands and Switzerland release components of a Labour Account

Maintaining high quality labour force statistics comes with challenges in terms of costs and response rates. In order to sustain the survey, the ABS has identified a range of essential changes in consultation with international and domestic experts. This includes the establishment of an "Innovation Panel" that allows randomised controlled trials with survey respondents to test communication and survey material. This is already yielding returns through increased use of e-forms making it easier for people responding to the survey and ameliorating some cost pressures associated with maintaining strong response rates.

**TABLE 1: ABS SCHEDULE OF STATISTICAL RELEASES**

MONTHLY	QUARTERLY	ANNUAL	OTHER FREQUENCIES
<b>LABOUR MARKET</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labour Force</li> </ul> <hr/> <b>ECONOMIC INDICATORS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building approvals</li> <li>Retail Trade</li> <li>International Trade in Goods &amp; Services</li> <li>Lending to households &amp; businesses</li> </ul> <hr/> <b>DEMOGRAPHIC</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overseas Arrivals &amp; Departures</li> </ul>	<b>PRICES INDICES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CPI</li> <li>International Trade</li> <li>Producer Price</li> <li>Residential Property</li> <li>Selected cost of living</li> <li>Wage prices</li> </ul> <hr/> <b>ECONOMIC ACCOUNTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Income, Expenditure &amp; Product</li> <li>Finance &amp; Wealth</li> <li>Government Finance Statistics</li> <li>Balance of Payments &amp; International Investment Position</li> </ul> <hr/> <b>LABOUR MARKET</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labour Account</li> <li>Job Vacancies</li> <li>Industrial Disputes</li> </ul> <hr/> <b>ECONOMIC INDICATORS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly Business Indicators</li> <li>Private New Capital Expenditure &amp; Expected Expenditure</li> <li>Building Activity &amp; Engineering Constructions</li> <li>Mineral &amp; Petroleum Exploration</li> </ul> <hr/> <b>DEMOGRAPHIC</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly Estimated Resident Population by State, including net Overseas Migration</li> </ul>	<b>AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL ACCOUNTS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CPI</li> <li>Input output tables</li> <li>Supply use tables</li> <li>Industry multi-factor productivity estimates</li> </ul> <hr/> <b>LABOUR MARKET</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Labour Force Status &amp; Other Characteristics of Families</li> <li>Employment &amp; Earnings, Public Sector</li> <li>Jobs in Australian</li> <li>Job Search, Participation &amp; Mobility</li> </ul> <hr/> <b>ENVIRONMENT AND SECTORAL</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Water &amp; Energy Accounts</li> <li>Energy Use &amp; Electricity Generation</li> <li>Agriculture commodities &amp; production</li> <li>Motor Vehicle Use</li> <li>Tourism Satellite Account</li> </ul> <hr/> <b>SOCIAL STATISTICS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Income of Migrants</li> <li>Gender Indicators</li> <li>Consumption of Alcohol</li> <li>Patient Experience</li> <li>Crime: prisoners, criminal courts, crime victimisation, recorded crime</li> </ul> <hr/> <b>DEMOGRAPHIC</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Life expectancy</li> <li>Births &amp; deaths</li> <li>Regional population statistics</li> <li>Marriages &amp; divorces</li> </ul>	<b>SOCIAL STATISTICS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Household Income &amp; Expenditure</li> <li>National Health Survey</li> <li>National Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander Health Survey</li> <li>Survey of Disability, Ageing &amp; Carers</li> <li>Family &amp; Community Experiences</li> </ul> <hr/> <b>CENSUS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agriculture</li> <li>Population &amp; Housing</li> </ul> <hr/> <b>DEMOGRAPHIC</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Population projections</li> <li>Household &amp; family projections</li> <li>Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander population estimates &amp; projections</li> <li>Aboriginal &amp; Torres Strait Islander life expectancy</li> </ul> <hr/> <b>OTHER</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Average Weekly Earnings (6 monthly)</li> <li>Business &amp; Government Research &amp; Development Expenditure</li> <li>Australian Statistical Geography Standard</li> </ul>

**Enhancing economic measurement**

To ensure the way the ABS measures the economy is contemporary and adapting to trends in a changing economy the ABS continues to progress research to:

- Measure digital activity in the economy, with the publication of experimental digital activity estimates (see Box 2) – the scheduled Time Use Survey will contribute to enhanced digital measurement;
- Improve economic (output) and productivity measurement of the non market sector, with the publication of experimental disease based hospital estimates and plans to extend this work to the education sector; and
- Improve the measurement of the housing sector by providing greater detail to estimates of housing stock and planning and zoning data.

### BOX 1: INTERNATIONAL LABOUR FORCE SURVEY COMPARISONS

	AUSTRALIA	CANADA	NZ	UK	US
Frequency	Monthly	Monthly	Quarterly	Quarterly	Monthly
Responding sample size	26,000 households	56,000 households	15,000 households	40,000 households	74,000 households
	50,000 people	100,000 people	30,000 people	100,000 people	105,000 people
Response rates	Around <b>93%</b>	Around <b>90%</b>	Around <b>86%</b>	Around 49%	Around 86%
Rotation groups	8	6	8	5	8*
Population compared to Australia		1.5 times the size of Australia	19% the size of Australia	2.7 times the size of Australia	13.3 times the size of Australia

Note: \*4 months, and then the same 4 months a year later.

In 2019-20, attention has turned to investigating options for enhancing the measurement of consumption, including potential new data sources, noting that annual re-weighting of the CPI uses estimates of household final consumption expenditure.

Implementation of new economic and finance statistics data collected by the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority will occur in 2019-20, significantly improving the quality of financial information in the National Accounts, and finance and lending publications.

These economic measurement challenges are common across the world and the ABS is collaborating through United Nations, OECD, IMF and country bi-laterals to ensure the ABS leverages and contributes to international research and enhancements. The ABS is also working with international statistical organisations to ensure international conceptual frameworks, standards and classifications are fit for purpose for an Australian economy.

#### Enhanced labour market measurement

Through the creation of an annual and quarterly Labour Account, the ABS has built an overarching picture of the labour market with coherent estimates of the number of jobs, people, hours worked and labour income in each industry. Quarterly Labour Accounts are now released a week after the national accounts.

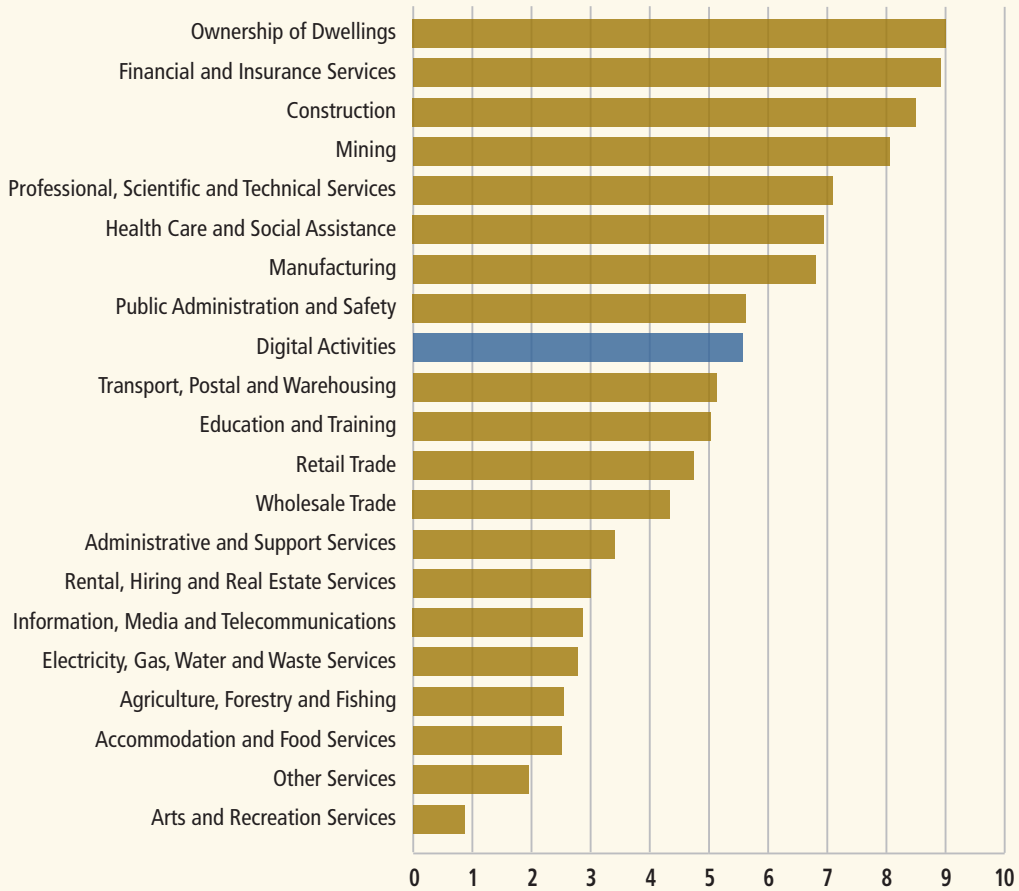
One input to the Labour Account, and a statistical asset in its own right, is the linkage of personal income tax, Pay As You Go Payment Summaries (PAYG), individual tax returns and the Business Longitudinal Analysis Data Environment (BLADE) to provide annual data on filled jobs for more than 2,200 different regions across Australia (see Box 3). Previously this detail was only available with the 5 yearly Census of Population and Housing.

**BOX 2: ENHANCING MEASUREMENT OF DIGITAL ACTIVITIES**

Adopting an approach developed by the US Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), the ABS has estimated the size and contribution of digital activities in the Australian economy. While digital activity is already included within the traditional measures of the economy, this work gives visibility to the growing contribution of digital activities occurring across industries. The ABS intends to update, and potentially enhance in the future using information from the Time Use Survey.

In 2011-12 digital activities contributed 5.4% (\$75.6 billion) to the total Australian economy. This grew to 5.7% (\$93.5 billion) in 2016-17. Digital activity is becoming increasingly important, with a contribution to the Australian economy larger than industries such as retail, education and training and agriculture (see Figure 1 below). Traditional drivers of economic growth such as finance, construction and mining continue to make a larger contribution to economic activity.

**FIGURE 1: AVERAGE INDUSTRY SHARE IN AGGREGATE VALUE ADDED (%), DIGITAL ACTIVITIES 2011-12 TO 2016 17, CURRENT PRICE<sup>1</sup>**



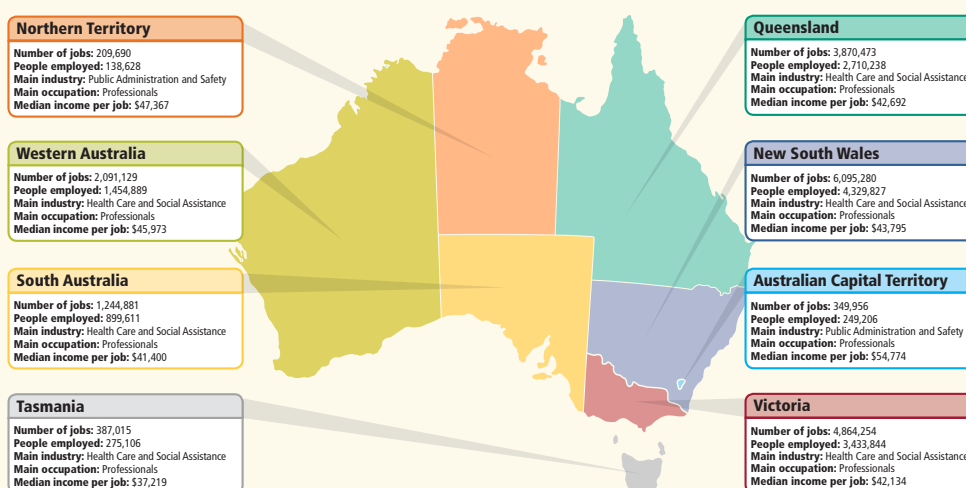
<sup>1</sup> Measuring Digital Activities in the Australian Economy released on 27 February 2019.

### BOX 3: ANNUAL JOBS IN AUSTRALIA<sup>2</sup>

Jobs in Australia provides a detailed economic summary of jobs for each State and Territory and over 2,200 regional areas across Australia, including information on employment income, age, gender and detailed industry information. An updated instalment of Jobs in Australia will be released in 2020.

The research revealed that people under the age of 30 were more likely to be multiple job holders, with one in every four holding multiple jobs in 2016-17. Around 26 per cent of multiple job holders worked all of their jobs in the same industry. For multiple job holders working across industries, the most common combinations of industries where people worked were:

- Health care & social assistance and Administrative & support services
- Health care & social assistance and Education & training
- Retail trade and Accommodation & food services



## 2.1.2 DEMOGRAPHIC MEASUREMENT

Under the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, the ABS is required to produce 'statistics of the number of the people of each state as on the last day of March, June, September and December in each year'. Estimated Resident Population (ERP) is the only measurement that is legislatively required, aside from the five yearly Census of Population and Housing. Maintaining the quality of ERP is therefore a priority, particularly given the contribution it makes to ensuring Australia has fair electoral boundaries and its central role in determining the distribution of GST revenue between the states and territories.

Other key elements of the demographic program include:

- National indicators for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people including population estimates and projections, and information on fertility, mortality and life expectancy; and
- Statistics on births and deaths, including the compilation and coding of detailed information about causes of death.

<sup>2</sup> The ABS released Jobs in Australia, 2011-12 to 2016-17, on 1 August 2019

Consistent with international best practice, after each Census, the ABS conducts a large Post Enumeration Survey, now to be known as the Post Census Review (PCR). This provides a mechanism to quality assure the Census outcomes and to re-benchmark ERP every five years. Planning and field testing for the 2021 PCR commences in 2019-20.

The ABS is working closely with The Treasury in helping to establish the Centre for Population announced in the 2019-20 Budget. The ABS is contributing data and expertise. The Centre is part of the Government's broader population package and will provide a central, consistent and expert perspective on population in Australia.

### 2.1.3 CENSUS

Preparation for the 2021 Census has reached the mid-point of the Census cycle with two years to go until Census night in August 2021. A number of important milestones are being reached as activities build towards mobilisation and operational readiness during 2019-20.

The three strategic objectives of the 2021 Census are:

- Smooth Running;
- Strong Support; and
- High Quality Data.

Underpinning these high level objectives is the goal to increase the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Census, in order to improve the quality of statistics for this population. This work directly supports the measurement of the Closing the Gap Refresh and making data available for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities. The ABS Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Round Table will guide this work.

Other key goals include providing appropriately calibrated support for vulnerable and disadvantaged people and communities to participate (for example through pop-up support centres), enhancing customer experience (for example through improved call centre arrangements).

To provide a basis for assessing progress and assuring various elements for the 2021 Census two major tests are planned over the next 12 months:

- A test of key design decisions and assumptions with an emphasis on understanding any impacts to data quality for any new or changed content in October 2019; and
- An end-to-end full operational readiness exercise in August 2020.

Procurement of digital information technology, e-forms and workforce recruitment has been secured. Other significant procurements to be finalised over the next 12 months include paper form printing, logistics and payroll.

An independent Privacy Impact Assessment for the whole Census, to be conducted by Galexia, has commenced and is planned to be completed by August 2020.

The Government will make its decision on the 2021 Census topics ahead of the release of an exposure draft regulation and explanatory material that will set out the proposed topics for the Census 2021. The regulation is expected to be tabled in both Houses of Parliament in the first half of 2020.

## 2.1.4 MEASURING SOCIETY'S LIVING CONDITIONS

The ABS social statistics program over the next two years is significant. The following surveys will be in the field collecting information from individuals and households in 2019-20:

- The General Social Survey;
- The next iteration of the Survey of Income and Housing;
- The Longitudinal Study of Australia's Children; and
- The Personal Safety Survey.

In 2019-20, the outcomes and findings of large surveys conducted in previous years will be published, including:

- The 2017-18 National Health Survey;
- The 2017-18 Survey of Income and Housing;
- The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey; and
- The 2018 Survey of Disability Ageing and Carers.

Preparation for the first Time Use Survey since 2006 will occur in 2019-20, with the collection of information to commence in July 2020. This survey will enable, for the first time, e-diary recording to provide information on how people spend their time (see Box 4).

Design work and field preparation will also commence in 2019-20 for an ambitious Intergenerational Health and Mental Health Study to be conducted in 2021. This study was announced by the Minister for Health, the Hon. Greg Hunt MP on 14 August 2019. It is being developed in collaboration with the Commonwealth Department of Health (see Box 5).

### BOX 4: THE TIME USE SURVEY

A Time Use Survey was announced as part of the Government's Women's Economic Security Package. It will provide insights into:

- The distribution of paid and unpaid work between men and women;
- The effectiveness of various policy measures to support flexible work arrangements and workforce participation;
- Barriers (such as caring roles) and incentives to labour force participation;
- The value of unpaid work to the Australian economy;
- The balance between work and other roles within families and how this has changed since 2006;
- The health and wellbeing of Australians (time spent sleeping, active vs sedentary leisure);
- Volunteering and community participation; and
- The impact of technology on how Australians work and spend their time.

The Social Statistics work program also includes significant work in compiling, analysing and presenting administrative data in the fields of education, crime and justice, migration and social wellbeing.

#### **BOX 5: THE INTERGENERATIONAL HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH STUDY**

The Intergenerational Health and Mental Health Study will be the most comprehensive health study in the nation's history. It will provide detailed insights into:

- The impact of mental and behavioural and other chronic health conditions on Australians;
- The use of health services and barriers to accessing them;
- Factors underlying increases in chronic conditions and obesity;
- Dietary and physical activity habits;
- Undiagnosed health conditions and nutrition deficiencies;
- Biomedical factors that contribute to poor health outcomes; and
- Lived experiences of suicide and related services.

Specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander samples will be surveyed for all components except mental health.





## **2.2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE TWO: PARTNERSHIPS TO ENABLE BETTER DECISIONS**

### **2.2.1 MAINTAINING COMMUNITY TRUST**

The ABS relies on the trust of households, businesses and other data suppliers to provide their information to the ABS. Without this trust the ABS could not produce the statistics to inform important decisions.

The ABS professionally and transparently uses information provided to produce official statistics. Information is made available to expert analysts and researchers, while protecting the secrecy of individuals' and business' information. Access to detailed microdata, including integrated data assets, is carefully managed to protect privacy and confidentiality while enabling valuable research and evaluation of public policy issues.

Community trust in the quality and integrity of ABS statistics remains high. In 2020 ABS will again commission an external research agency to conduct a Community Trust in ABS Statistics Survey. This survey was previously conducted in 2010 and 2015. Its purpose is to measure the current levels of trust in the ABS and its products among the general community and informed users of statistics.

### **2.2.2 MAKING IT EASIER TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO THE ABS**

The quality of the service experience we deliver to the community matters. The ABS is continuing to transform our approach to data collection to improve the experience of those providing information to the ABS.

In 2019-20, more businesses and households will be able to take advantage of the ABS' new data acquisition platform.

The adoption of new infrastructure will allow the ABS to remove paper survey form obligations from a number of businesses, with our first adopters scheduled to transition in 2019-20. For other business surveys that are already digital, they will benefit from an improved provider experience and smarter digital forms.




Businesses and organisations that provide the ABS with administrative data files will also progressively move to the new platform, which provides them with a single view across their interactions with the ABS and a greater ability to self-service. The new platform for collecting administrative data files is helping remove the need for physical transfer of data on digital media, as well as other security enhancements.

For households completing ABS surveys, e-form submission that is easier and quicker will gradually become available. The Survey of Income and Housing and the General Social Survey were the first household surveys to offer an e-form option using the ABS's new data acquisition digital solution (see Box 6).

### **2.2.3 MAKING IT EASIER TO USE ABS STATISTICS**

As part of its modernisation, the ABS is designing a new website to make it easier to find, understand and use ABS information. A beta website was launched in 2018-19 to gather feedback from customers to support the development of the new website. In 2019-20 the

**BOX 6: BENEFITS OF NEW INFRASTRUCTURE**

COLLECTIONS	BENEFITS
<p><b>HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Introduction of web reporting</li> <li>✓ Improved communication materials</li> <li>✓ Continued support for telephone and face to face interviewing</li> <li>✓ More reliable and secure systems</li> </ul>
<p><b>BUSINESS SURVEYS</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Removal of paper survey forms</li> <li>✓ Enhanced web reporting with increased data validation</li> <li>✓ Digital contact and reminders to support timely participation</li> <li>✓ More reliable and secure systems</li> </ul>
<p><b>ADMINISTRATIVE DATA PROVIDERS</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Single view of all ABS collections</li> <li>✓ Ability to self service</li> <li>✓ Removal of physical digital media transfers</li> <li>✓ More reliable and secure systems</li> </ul>

focus is to design and build the new website based on this feedback. The ABS will support stakeholders through the transition to a new website by having a fully functional beta website in parallel to the current website.

The ABS is also developing Application Programmable Interfaces (API) services to enable systematic access to ABS data. In 2018-19 the ABS Indicator API was released to provide market moving economic statistics to approved media customers at the time of official release. In 2019-20 the ABS Data API will be released, providing an alternative channel to access complete datasets for key economic indicators at the same time they are released to the ABS website.

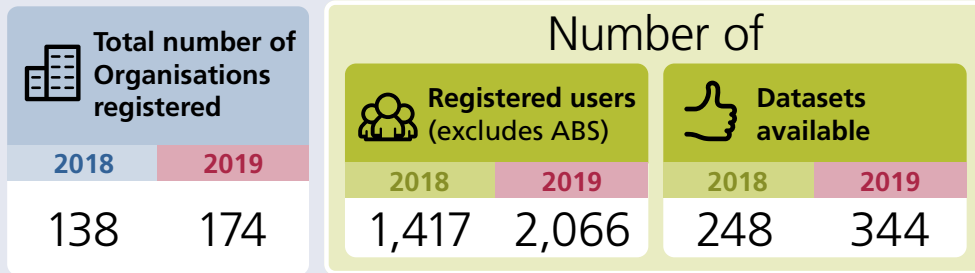
An ongoing challenge for the ABS is how to enable access to more detailed and bespoke datasets that meet specific stakeholders’ needs that cannot be met through publicly releasing information. Safe and secure access to confidentialised data is essential to maximise the data’s public value.

While TableBuilder<sup>3</sup> will remain the primary means for using microdata to build customised statistical tables (with over 1 million user sessions in 2018-19), the ABS is testing new innovative solutions to cater to highly sophisticated users of microdata.

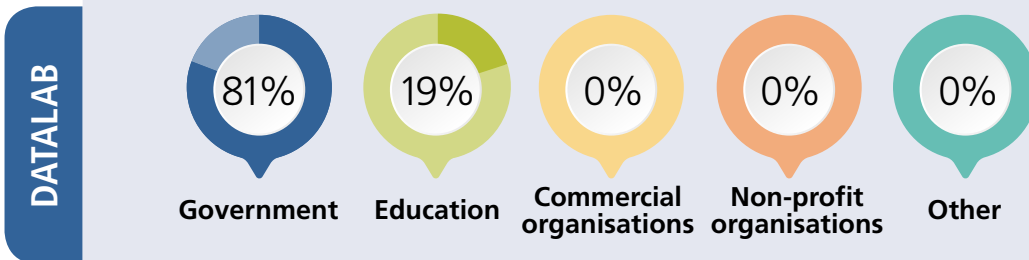
In 2018-19, the ABS DataLab was launched. There are currently over 2,000 authorised users of the ABS DataLab, with 81% of those users from the government sector and the remainder from the academic sector. A focus in 2019-20 will be to deliver solutions that allow the DataLab facility to continue to meet growing demand and expected service levels.

<sup>3</sup> TableBuilder is an online application that enables customers to interact and create customised tabular outputs from ABS data.

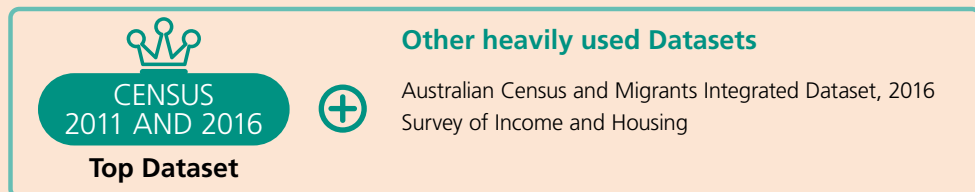
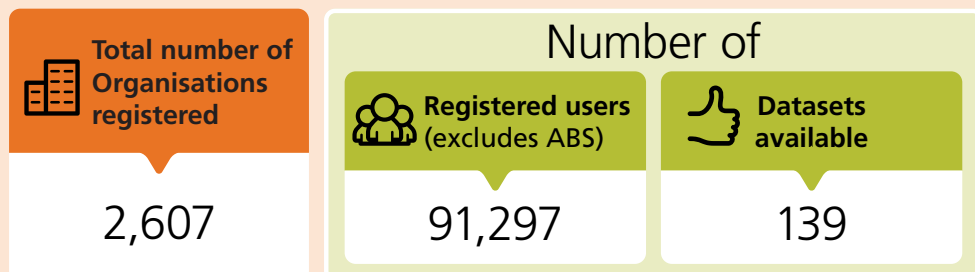
### DataLab (as at August 2019)



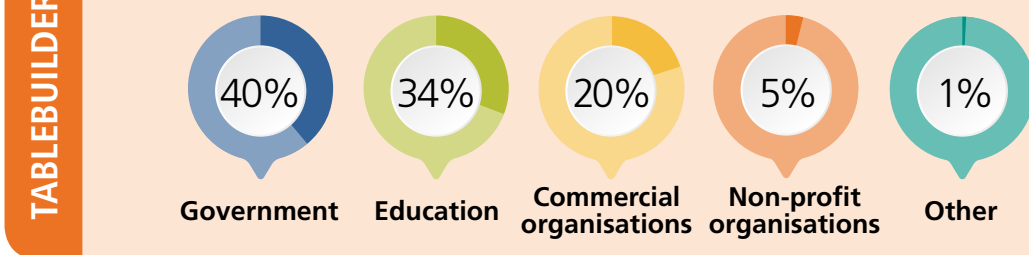
### Who is using DataLab?



### TableBuilder (as at August 2019)



### Who is using TableBuilder?



## 2.2.4 COLLABORATING WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Engaging, partnering and collaborating provides benefits to the ABS and data users. Through these interactions, the ABS better understands data needs and stakeholders gain a better understanding of and access to the data that is available, and access to ABS data capability.

Collaboration and partnership will continue to be a focus in 2019-20. A survey of ABS stakeholders conducted in May 2019 found that:

- 96% of stakeholders agreed or strongly agreed that the ABS is a credible source of data and information;
- 87% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with their relationship with the ABS; and
- 72% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that the ABS collaborates effectively with its stakeholders and that trust in ABS data continues to remain high.

A number of formal and semi-formal advisory groups have been established as a mechanism for external advice on the shape of the statistical program, priorities, innovations and enhancements. Membership typically comprises representatives from Commonwealth agencies, state and territory government agencies, academia, private sector organisations and industry/community organisations (see Box 7).

### BOX 7: ABS STATISTICAL ADVISORY GROUPS

**Australian Statistics Advisory Group:** ASAC is the ABS's primary advisory group, established through and with its functions outlined in the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*.

**Economic Statistics Advisory Group:** ESAG comprises membership from Departments of: Foreign Affairs and Trade, Jobs and Small Business, Industry, Parliamentary Services; Grattan Institute; Productivity Commission; Reserve Bank of Australia; Treasury; University of NSW; NSW Treasury; and Deakin University to provide feedback on developments in the ABS in the field of economic statistics

**Population and Social Statistics Advisory Group:** PSSAG comprises membership from Departments of Education, Treasury, Home Affairs, Social Services, Prime Minister and Cabinet, NSW Families and Communities and Victorian Health and Human Service as well as the Australian National University, Charles Darwin University, Australian Council of Social Services and Uniting Care Australia with a view to providing strategic advice on the demographic and social statistical program.

**Labour Statistics Advisory Group:** LSAG meets once or twice a year to provide advice to the ABS on the labour statistics program, to discuss developmental work being undertaken by the ABS, and to bring major user concerns regarding labour statistics to the attention of the ABS.

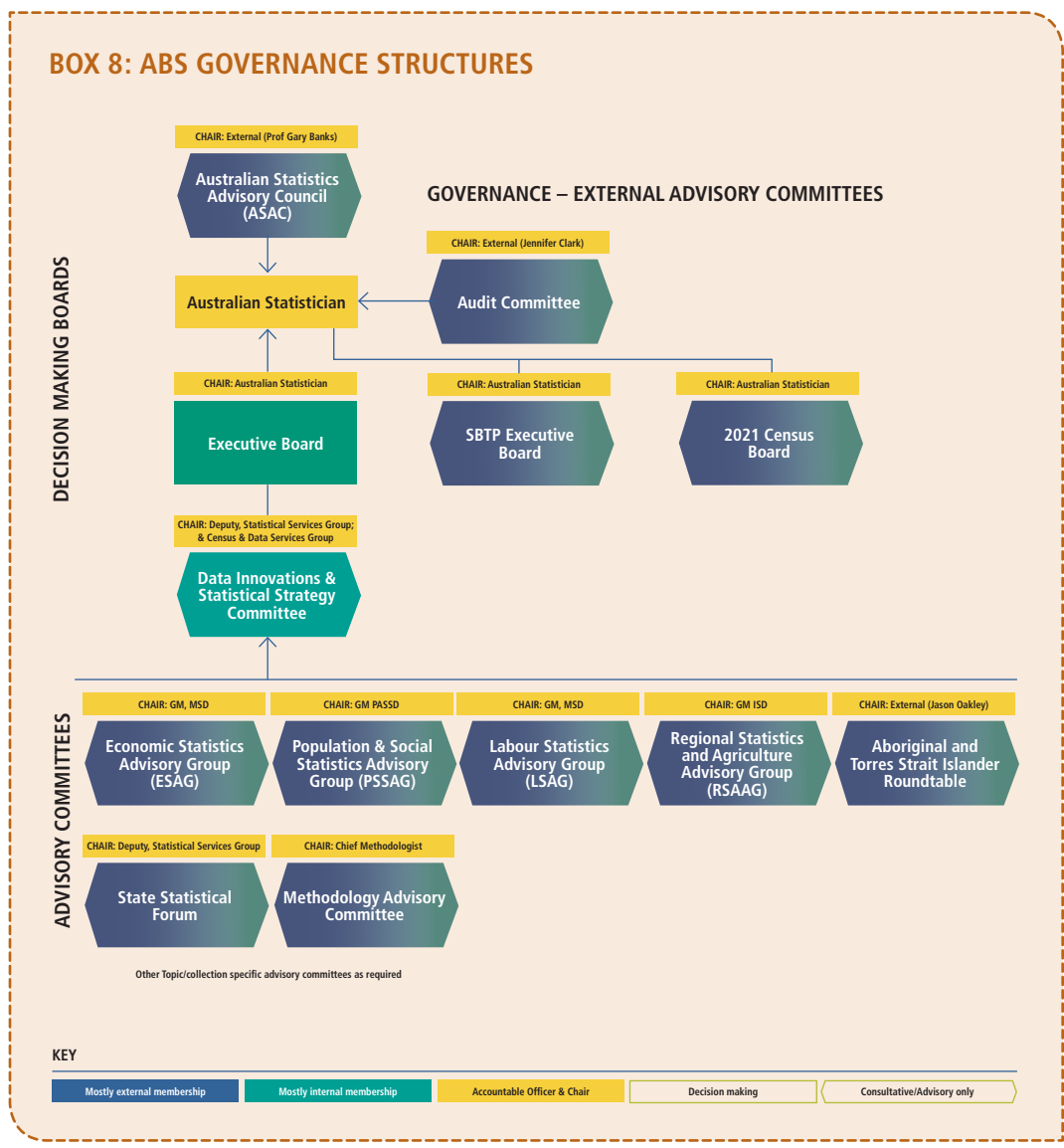
**Regional Statistics and Agricultural Advisory Group:** RSAAG was recently established with membership from the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences, Department of the Environment and Energy, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development, Bureau of Meteorology, Geoscience Australia, National Farmers Federation, Meat and Livestock Australia, Cotton Research and Development Corporation, Queensland Department of Agriculture and Forestry and Deakin University to guide directions for regional, infrastructure agriculture and environment statistics.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Roundtable:** is a senior advisory group with membership from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from across Australia, including the Torres Strait with extensive experience working with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The ABS has increased representation of external experts in its governance structure (see Box 8). Three experts from the private sector, state government, other large service delivery agencies, are members on each of the Census 2021 and STPB Boards.

The ABS have a network of Strategic Relationship Managers out posted to state and territory Treasuries or Premiers departments to facilitate consultation and collaboration. ABS staff are also out posted to a range of Commonwealth agencies including PM&C, Treasury, ATO, Department of Environment and Energy (DoEE), Department of Social Services (DSS), Department of Health and Department of Education.

In return agencies are increasingly embedding staff with the ABS to either make use of unpublished data (for example, the RBA work on wages) or to contribute an external perspective to the development of ABS statistics (for example, Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business in relation to the development of the labour account).



### 2.2.5 Collaboration with Academics and Scientific Organisations

The ABS collaborates with Australian Universities and scientific organisation to facilitate effective use of ABS data by academics and to leverage academic expertise in ABS work program and capability building.

**Deakin University Partnership:** began in 2016 when the ABS National Data Acquisition Centre was established in the Deakin Waterfront Campus. The ABS has gained access to contemporary academic thinking on issues such as operational organisational design and approaches to improve response rates from providers of information. Deakin, in turn, has been exposed to the real world issues faced by National Statistical Organisations. This relationship will continue, including through the offer of ABS internships to give Deakin students industry experience

**The ARC Centre of Excellence for Mathematical and Statistical Frontiers (ACEMS):** the ABS is an official partner of the ACEMS and under this partnership, the ABS is exploring and developing machine learning solutions with the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and Monash University, both nodes of ACEMS.

**Australian National University:** and the ABS jointly offers an ANU course in environmental economic accounting, and collaborates with the ANU in analysing mortality data. Senior ABS and ANU representatives are working to build a framework for cooperating in statistical training; secondments and internships; data integration; and joint projects. A wide range of possible areas to work on have been identified, including labour mobility; survey methods; data linking; spatial modelling; missing data and disclosure control.

**CSIRO and Geoscience Australia:** both have projects in partnership with the ABS, including:

- Development of a Location Index API to seamlessly integrate data on people, business, and the environment;
- A Data61 geo spatial project that uses sophisticated modelling to dynamically translate data onto different geographies;
- A Data61 prototype Protari API that is being used by researchers to analyse data from the Multi-Agency Data Integration Project (MADIP);
- Leveraging ABS methodologists to assist on differential privacy (an emerging approach to data confidentiality);
- The use of satellite imagery from Geoscience’s “Earth Observations” platform to inform the accuracy of the ABS address register;
- Developing automated Image Recognition machine learning to classify aerial imagery with a view to improving data quality and reduce the amount of costly manual intervention required to maintain the ABS address register.

## 2.3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE THREE: NEW STATISTICS TO SUPPORT AUSTRALIA'S EMERGING NEEDS

### 2.3.1 DATA INTEGRATION IS PROVIDING NEW INSIGHTS

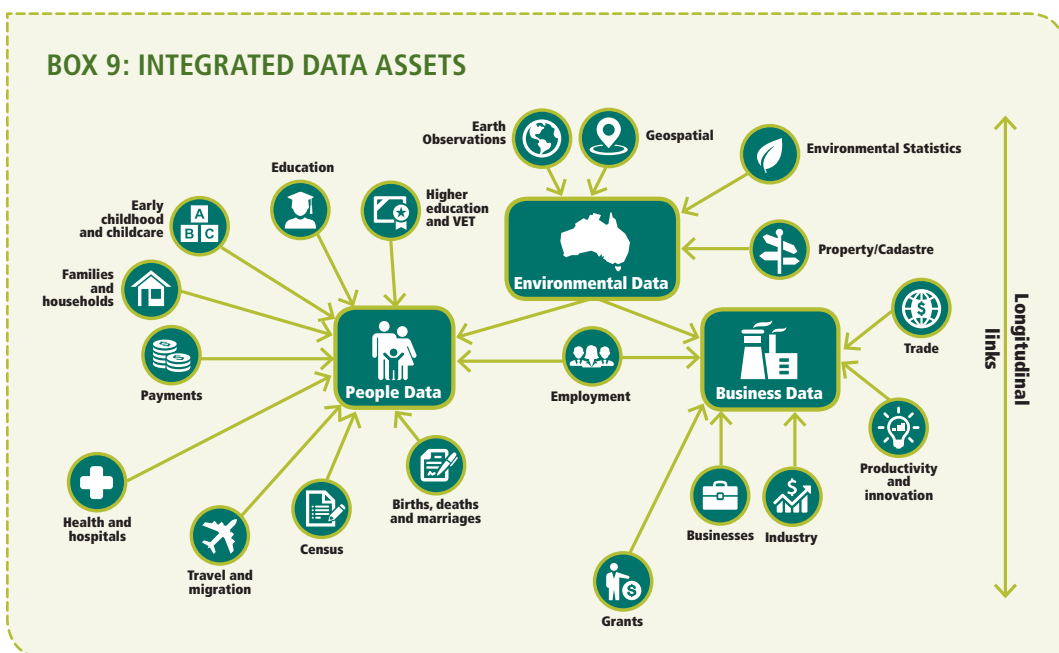
Data integration and increased sharing of administrative data has the potential to provide insight into “wicked policy questions” that cut across policy domains, different groups in the community, and different generations.

As a means for evaluating programs, data integration can provide insights into the effectiveness of interventions in areas such as health, social security, education, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wellbeing, and the economy. This has the potential to underpin more cost effective Government expenditure and economic policy. There is also a potential to inform place based analysis through a socio-economic and location based data resource.

With funding from the Government’s Data Integration Partnership for Australia (DIPA) initiative and user funding, there are two related aspects to the ABS data integration work that will continue in 2019-20:

- Building and maintaining an integrated data asset; and
- Using this data asset to undertake projects for policy agencies and researchers to inform “cross cutting public policy issues”.

Box 9 depicts the current ABS integrated data asset, which is built around three core domains of people, business and location. This asset has now reached a high degree of maturity with a large number of administrative and survey data included. In the last 12 months, for example, export and education data has been added. Maintaining the currency of this data asset and adding new data sources will continue to require resources in 2019-20.



The number of uses of this integrated data asset to inform official statistics and policy challenges is growing.

Data integration is now a critical element of official population estimates. Without integrating Medicare enrolment information with travel data from the Department of Home Affairs, the ABS would be unable to produce reliable estimates of state and territory population. This follows the cessation of the Outgoing Passenger Card for international travel.

A number of ground-breaking projects are now contributing directly to Government policy decisions and/or assessments of the economy. Examples include the allocation of school funding, assessment of wages growth by the RBA, and assessment of health outcomes from certain medicines (see Box 10).

### BOX 10: PUBLIC POLICY FOCUSED DATA INTEGRATION PROJECTS

#### Improving the allocation of funding for non-government schools

Integrated data delivers better measures for schools



##### Background

- Based on capacity of families to contribute to the operating costs of the school
- Funding models so far have been based on aggregate data (SEIFA scores)
- More detailed data would mean more targeted funding

##### Data Solution

- Direct measure of income is being produced using linked data of students to incomes of parents
- Allows for a more accurate analysis of parents' capacity to contribute to school funding

##### Outcomes

- Data integration pivotal for a new direct income measure
- More effective allocation of funding – flows to non-government schools that need it the most
- Potential improvement of education outcomes

#### Better understanding of low wage growth in Australia



##### Purpose of study

To understand the factors potentially impacting on low wage growth by classifying firms in each industry into high, mid, and low productivity growth groups and then **examining the relationship** between wages, productivity, and other characteristics

##### Data used

Business Longitudinal Analysis Data Environment (**BLADE**)

##### Findings

Higher productivity businesses tended to pay higher real wages, and employees of these businesses experienced higher real wage growth. However, the **increased wage growth was not in proportion to the productivity.**

##### Benefits

Understanding the drivers behind wage growth is a valuable source of information for **Government fiscal policy and economic research**

#### Preventing harm from medicines



##### Purpose of study

To identify **adverse health events** associated with medicines

##### Data used

**Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS)** data is currently being linked with **hospital admissions**

##### Findings

Initial findings include five medications **newly identified** as potentially associated with heart failure. A further 122 medications were confirmed as associated with heart failure (as an adverse event).

##### Benefits

Findings can help to better monitor the **safety** of medicines in Australia, improving **health outcomes**, targeting public **expenditure**, and potentially **saving lives**



Linking Census data longitudinally (2006, 2001 and 2016) has provided a rich data set that is informing policies such as the COAG initiative *Closing the Gap* for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People (see Box 11).


Current data integration projects with policy relevance that will be conducted by the ABS in 2019-20 include:

- A Treasury led project in collaboration with the Department of Social Services, Department of Education and the University of Sydney examining how parental receipt of income support and family circumstances can affect children’s social, health, education and employment outcomes;
- A Treasury led project in collaboration with the Reserve Bank of Australia and the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science to understand the drivers of multi factor productivity;
- A Department of Industry, Innovation and Science project to identify the key drivers of innovation in Australian firms; and
- A Department of PM&C led project to examine the outcomes for job seekers who have left employment services programs in remote Australia since 2013.

**BOX 11: CLOSING THE GAP TARGETS**

**Better measures of Closing the Gap targets**

Research using the Australian Census Longitudinal Dataset (ACL D)



<b>Research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ACLD allows better measures of Indigenous population growth</li> <li>• Impact of people newly identifying as Indigenous on outcome measures for all Indigenous Australians</li> <li>• ACLD shows <b>worsening employment outcomes</b> between 2011-2016</li> <li>• While, looking at 2011 and 2016 Censuses in isolation shows a small improvement</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linking Census data over time allows us to measure the journey and progress of Australians better than the snapshot taken on Census night</li> <li>• Government now has a better understanding of progress towards the Closing the Gap targets</li> <li>• Policy agencies now have better evidence to set the right targets and adjust and target policies, programs and services</li> </ul>

### 2.3.2 ALTERNATIVE DATA SOURCES

The ABS has long had an ambition of increasing its use of non-survey data, as well as emerging alternate data sources associated with innovation and technological change. Non-survey data includes for example, administrative data collected by public and private sector entities in their conduct of their business, retail transaction data, and web scraped data. Non-survey data has the potential to substitute or complement direct collection of information from businesses and households surveys.

Non-survey data already underpins a large proportion of official statistics including:

- Official population statistics, sourced entirely from administrative data;
- The CPI, which uses transactions data from the private sector and web scraped data;
- Trade statistics, which are primarily based on data from the Department of Home Affairs;
- The National Accounts and a number of our economic indicators which draw heavily on business and personal income tax data; and
- Financial sector statistics, which use APRA and RBA data.

Increased use of non-survey data can be more cost effective than surveys, and can eliminate duplication of effort and minimise 'red tape' burden on data providers.

In 2019-20, the ABS has an ambition to progress the use of innovative data sources as part of our strategic directions.

The new Regional and Agricultural Statistics Advisory Group has been established with the specific intent of leveraging alternate and emerging data sources to inform agricultural statistics, placed based socio-economic and environmental information at a regional level and further develop environmental economic accounts particularly for water and land use.

Pilot projects are being conducted with the Meat and Livestock Association and the Grains Research and Development Corporation to leverage industry data, and satellite imagery is being tested for use in gathering information about land use.

The ABS is conducting research to improve the Census count with the use of administrative data. The research is focused in two key areas: (1) improving the decision on whether each dwelling in Australia was occupied or not on Census night; and (2) developing improved methodology to provide counts where no Census form is returned, but where the ABS believe the dwelling was occupied on Census night.

The ABS will also examine the Census experiences of peer international statistical agencies, and their use of administrative data, to inform future Census research.

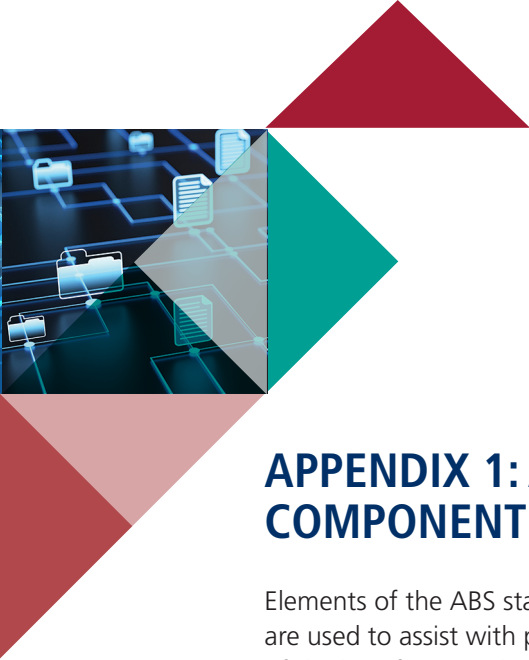
### **2.3.3 ENVIRONMENTAL AND SATELLITE ACCOUNTS**

Satellite accounts are a mechanism to re-use and combine existing information to provide a new perspective or increased transparency to information underpinning existing official statistics.

An example of this includes environmental-economic accounts which use a national account framework to allow for an expanded and enhanced view of economic activity through its relationship with the physical environment. Existing publications of water and energy accounts combine ABS economic information, some survey data and administrative data from agencies such as the Bureau of Meteorology, state governments and the DoEE.

Experimental estimates of a waste account, prepared in collaboration with the DoEE, have recently been released, and the development of a land account continues in collaboration with state government agencies and DoEE.

In 2019-20, the ABS will continue to produce a tourism satellite account in partnership with Austrade, and will look to update the experimental transport satellite account in partnership with Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development (both these accounts are funded by these partner agencies).



## APPENDIX 1: ABS STATISTICAL WORK PROGRAM BY COMPONENT

Elements of the ABS statistical work program are classified into four components. These are used to assist with prioritisation. This work was informed by the earlier development of the list of Essential Statistical Assets for Australia (cat. no. 1395.0), in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. The ABS intends to review the framework and tiers in the coming year.

Refer to Tables below for the ABS work program classified into four components. A number of these programs and outputs are making significant use of data integration to reduce provider burden or enhance the information available.

COMPONENT	
ENABLING CAPABILITIES AND ASSETS	Essential capabilities required to deliver a quality national statistical service. These capabilities are reviewed and prioritised on an ongoing basis.
TIER 1	Statistics that are considered to be the foundation work of a national statistical organisation.
TIER 2	Important areas of statistics where there is a significant government outlay or where there is a significant public policy interest.
TIER 3	Other important statistical work that is currently undertaken to meet identified user requirements that could be deemed as falling beyond tiers 1 and 2.

## ENABLING CAPABILITIES AND ASSETS

PROGRAM	
REGISTERS AND FRAMEWORKS	Address Register
	Business Register and Tax Data Program
	Classifications
	Data Governance and Assurance
	Data Standards and Methods
	Geospatial Standards and Methods
	Statistical Spatial Framework
METHODOLOGY	Statistical Methods
	Statistical Quality Assurance
	Statistical Risk Management
TRANSFORMATION	Data Integration Infrastructure
	Data Integration Research, Feasibility and Development projects
	Microdata Futures (Enhanced Microdata Access)
	Statistical Business Transformation Program
PARTNERSHIPS AND DISSEMINATION	Partnership projects
	Statistical Services to the state and territory governments
	Customised Data Delivery
	Dissemination and Publishing
	Microdata Delivery and Access Support (including DataLab)
	Business Longitudinal Analysis Data Environment
	Multi-Agency Data Integration Project
DATA COLLECTION	Data Acquisition
	Provider Management
	Survey Management

## TIER 1

PROGRAM	
NATIONAL ACCOUNTS	Quarterly and Annual statistics of Gross Domestic Product and components
SUPPLY	Input Output tables
INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTS	Australia's Balance of Payments Estimates
	International Investment Statistics
	International Merchandise Trade
	International Trade in Services Statistics
BUSINESS INDICATORS	Private New Capital Expenditure and Expected Expenditure
	Quarterly Business Indicator Surveys
	Retail Trade
	Consumer Sales
	Dwelling and Other Building Approvals
	Construction related gross fixed capital formation – Building Activity and Engineering Construction
INDUSTRY STATISTICS	Economic Activity Survey
FINANCIAL STATISTICS	Quarterly Australian Prudential Regulation Authority and the Managed Funds Survey
	Survey of Financial Information
PUBLIC FINANCE	Government Finance Statistics
LABOUR STATISTICS	Labour Force
	Survey of Average Weekly Earnings
	Major Labour Costs (irregular)
	Survey of Employee Earnings and Hours (biennial)
	Survey of Employment and Earnings
CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING	Census of Population and Housing
PRICES	Consumer Price Index
	Wage Price Index
	Producer Price Indexes
	International Trade Price Indexes
	Pensioner and Beneficiary Living Costs Index
DEMOGRAPHY	Estimated Resident Population
	Births and Deaths
	Indigenous Mortality
	Overseas Arrivals and Departures
LIVING CONDITIONS	Household Expenditure Survey
	Survey of Income and Housing
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	Collaborating with international statistical agencies and other organisations e.g. United Nations Statistical Commission, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

## TIER 2

PROGRAM	
NATIONAL ACCOUNTS	Annual productivity statistics (including annual estimates of multi-factor productivity)
	Annual State Accounts
	Annual Supply and Use Tables
	Annual Input and Output Tables
BUSINESS INDICATORS	Mineral and Petroleum Exploration
INDUSTRY STATISTICS	Business Characteristics Survey
	Business Demographics
FINANCIAL STATISTICS	Lending Indicators
EMPLOYER STATISTICS	Agricultural Census
AGRICULTURE STATISTICS	Rural Environment and Agricultural Commodities Survey
	Value of Agricultural Commodities Produced
ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS	Environment Accounts, including Water, Energy and Land Accounts
	Environmental Indicators Surveys
	Water Supply and Sewerage Supply / Use Survey
LABOUR STATISTICS	Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation
	Characteristics of Employment
	Linked Employer-Employee Database: Labour Market Statistics
	Retirement and Retirement Intentions
	Work Related Injuries
	Participation, Job Search and Mobility
	Labour Force Status, and Other Characteristics of Families
Job Vacancies Survey	
CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING	Australian Census Longitudinal Dataset
	Australian Census and Temporary Migrants Integrated Dataset
PRICES	Residential Property Prices Indexes
TRANSPORT AND TOURISM STATISTICS	Motor Vehicle Census
DEMOGRAPHY	Population Projections
	Regional Population Growth
EDUCATION AND TRAINING	National Schools Statistics Collection
	Survey of Education and Work
	Work Related Training and Adult Learning Survey
HEALTH AND DISABILITY STATISTICS	Causes of Death
	National Health Survey
	National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey
	Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers
MIGRANT STATISTICS	Characteristics of Migrants
	Personal Income Tax and Migrants Integrated Dataset
	Data by Region (national regional profiles)
LIVING CONDITIONS	Time Use Survey

### TIER 3

PROGRAM	
INTERNATIONAL ACCOUNTS	Characteristics of Australian Exporters
	Survey of Foreign Currency Exposure
	Survey of Australian Owned Foreign Businesses
INDUSTRY STATISTICS	Research and Experimental Development – Business, Government, Private Non-Profit and Higher education
	Venture Capital and Later Stage Private Equity
FINANCIAL STATISTICS	Assets and Liabilities of Australian Securitises
AGRICULTURE STATISTICS	Wool Receivals, Purchases and Sales Survey
	Livestock, Poultry and Game Slaughtering
LABOUR STATISTICS	Industrial Disputes
	Estimates of Personal Income for Small Areas
	Longitudinal Labour Force Survey
	Labour Account
TRANSPORT AND TOURISM STATISTICS	Tourism Satellite Account
	Survey of Motor Vehicle Use
CRIME AND JUSTICE STATISTICS	National Recorded Crime Victims & Offender Statistics
	National Criminal Courts Statistics
	National Corrective Services Statistics
	Crime Victimization Survey
CULTURE AND RECREATION STATISTICS	Cultural Participation and Attendance
DEMOGRAPHY	Marriages and Divorces
EDUCATION AND TRAINING	Childhood Education and Care Survey
	Educational Outcomes
	National Early Childhood Education and Care Collection
	Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies
HEALTH AND DISABILITY STATISTICS	Patient Experience Survey
	Survey of Mental Health and Well-being
SOCIAL CONDITIONS	Longitudinal Survey of Australian Children
	Personal Safety Survey
	General Social Survey
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	Indonesia Government Partnership Project
	Statistical development work in the Pacific, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste

(MC19-000040) FW: Correspondence from Stephen Jones MP

Secretariat WDB

"22" 24/09/2019 03:43 PM

Basics

"22" 24/09/2019 03:43 PM

"22" @TREASURY.GOV.A

U

<b>Send</b>	To "Secretariat WDB" <"22"t@abs.gov.au> cc "22" <"22" @TREASURY.GOV.AU> bcc
<b>Subject</b>	(MC19-000040) FW: Correspondence from Stephen Jones MP
<b>Protective Mark</b>	UNCLASSIFIED
<b>Categories</b>	Ministerial Correspondence\General 2019

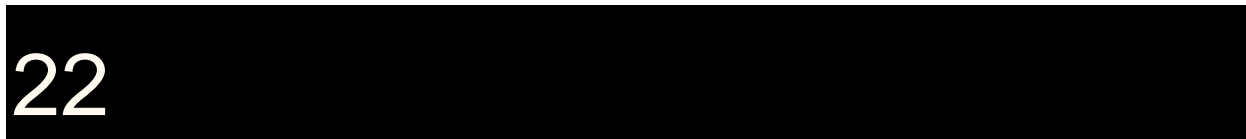
2 attachments



190827 Jones to Sukkar.pdf



image001.png



For CoS response please

Thanks

"22"

**From:** "47F" (M. Sukkar, MP) <"47F" @aph.gov.au>

**Sent:** Wednesday, 28 August 2019 10:21 AM

**To:** Minister Sukkar <Minister.Sukkar@TREASURY.GOV.AU>

**Subject:** Correspondence from Stephen Jones MP

**Importance:** High

Request from Labor MP.

Kind regards

"47F"

Office of Michael Sukkar MP



Federal Member for Deakin  
5/602 Whitehorse Road, Mitcham VIC 3132

47F

**From:** 47F (S. Jones, MP)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 27 August 2019 4:35 PM  
**To:** Sukkar, Michael (MP)  
**Subject:** Correspondence from Stephen Jones MP

Dear Minister Sukkar,

Please find attached correspondence from Stephen Jones MP.

Thank you,

47F



47F

**OFFICE OF STEPHEN JONES MP**  
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR WHITLAM  
SHADOW ASSISTANT TREASURER  
SHADOW MINISTER FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES  
ELECTORATE 47F | PARLIAMENT 47F

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Shadow Assistant Treasurer  
Shadow Minister for Financial Services

27 August 2019

The Hon Michael Sukkar  
Assistant Treasurer and Minister for Housing  
PO Box 232  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister Sukkar,

I am writing to ask for consultations on the process and content of the 2021 Australian Census.

The 2021 Census will be our largest national data gathering exercise ever. The Census provides essential information that helps governments and private organisations deliver services. Following on from the near-disaster of the 2016 Census, the delivery of a successful Census in 2021 should be a key priority for the Government.

Recently, a number of major health organisations outlined their support for the appropriate and meaningful collection of data on sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status of the Australian population in the 2021 Census.

LGBTI Australians have been ignored in Australian policy planning for too long. Even after years of progress, there are still significant health and wellbeing disparities that affect LGBTI communities around Australia. Discrimination against LGBTI Australians continues to cause enormous suffering. LGBTI Australians are disproportionately likely to suffer from mental health issues and experience a higher cancer burden.

Labor strongly supports the call to improve visibility and service planning for LGBTI Australians. All Australians deserve to be counted in the Census, including Australians of varying sexual orientations, gender identities and intersex status.

We are willing to work collaboratively with the Government and with peak LGBTI representative organisations to improve the inclusivity of the Census in 2021. Such a change is too important to be undertaken on a partisan basis.

I look forward to hearing from you on this important issue at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Jones MP  
Shadow Assistant Treasurer  
Shadow Minister for Financial Services

RE: Draft response MC19-000025, MC19-000026 and MC19-000027 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
 Secretariat WDB "22" 23/09/2019 02:48 PM

## Basics

"22" 23/09/2019 02:48 PM

"22" @TREASURY.GOV.A

U

<b>Send</b>	<p>To "22" &lt;"22" @abs.gov.au&gt;, "22" &lt;"22" @abs.gov.au&gt;, "22" &lt;"22" @abs.gov.au&gt;</p> <p>cc "22" &lt;"22" @TREASURY.GOV.AU&gt;</p> <p>bcc</p>
<b>Subject</b>	RE: Draft response MC19-000025, MC19-000026 and MC19-000027 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
<b>Protective Mark</b>	UNCLASSIFIED
<b>Categories</b>	Ministerial Correspondence\General 2019

3 attachments



MC19-000026.pdf MC19-000027.pdf MC19-000025.pdf

# 22

Good afternoon,

Please find attached a copy of the signed letters, hard copies were also mailed today.

Kind regards

"22"

**From:** "22" <"22" @abs.gov.au>

**Sent:** Wednesday, 7 August 2019 5:32 PM

**To:** "22" <"22" @TREASURY.GOV.AU>

**Cc:** "22" <"22" @abs.gov.au>; "22" <"22" @abs.gov.au>

**Subject:** MC: Draft response MC19-000025, MC19-000026 and MC19-000027 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Good afternoon,

Please find attached draft responses and original copies of correspondence for MC19-000025, MC19-000026 and MC19-000027. These MCs were referred to us through PDMS from PM&C.

PDR Number	Original Correspondence	Response
MC19-000025 [REDACTED]	(See attached file: MC19-000025 Original Correspondence- Part 1.pdf)(See attached file: MC19-000025 Original Correspondence- Part 2.pdf)	(See attached file: MC19-000025 Draft response [REDACTED].docx)
MC19-000026 [REDACTED]	(See attached file: MC19-000026 Original Correspondence.pdf)	(See attached file: MC19-000026 Draft response [REDACTED].docx)
MC19-000027 [REDACTED]	(See attached file: MC19-000027 Original Correspondence- Part 2.pdf)(See attached file: MC19-000027 Original Correspondence- Part 1.pdf)	(See attached file: MC19-000027 Draft Response [REDACTED].docx)

Kind Regards,

[REDACTED]

Parliamentary and Partnerships Section | Communication and Parliamentary Branch | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

(P) [REDACTED] (E) [REDACTED] [@abs.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@abs.gov.au) (W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

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**THE HON MICHAEL SUKKAR MP**  
**Minister for Housing and Assistant Treasurer**

Ref: MC19-000025

47F

Dear 47F

Thank you for your correspondence of 30 May 2019, originally directed to the Prime Minister, regarding new content on the 2021 Census of Population and Housing. Your correspondence has been referred to me as I have responsibility for this matter. I apologise for the delay in responding to you.

I have recently received a recommendation from the Australian Bureau of Statistics regarding the 2021 Census topics. The Government will note the issues you raise and take your viewpoint into consideration when it reviews the recommendation.

I trust this information will be of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "MS", written over a large, stylized blue scribble.

The Hon Michael Sukkar MP



**THE HON MICHAEL SUKKAR MP**  
**Minister for Housing and Assistant Treasurer**

Ref: MC19-000026

47F

Dear 47F

Thank you for your correspondence of 05 June 2019, originally directed to the Prime Minister, regarding new content on the 2021 Census of Population and Housing. Your correspondence has been referred to me as I have responsibility for this matter. I apologise for the delay in responding to you.

I have recently received a recommendation from the Australian Bureau of Statistics regarding the 2021 Census topics. The Government will note the issues you raise and take your viewpoint into consideration when it reviews the recommendation.

I trust this information will be of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Michael Sukkar', written over the words 'Yours sincerely'.

The Hon Michael Sukkar MP



**THE HON MICHAEL SUKKAR MP**  
**Minister for Housing and Assistant Treasurer**

Ref: MC19-000027

47F

Dear 47F

Thank you for your correspondence of 20 June 2019, originally directed to the Prime Minister, regarding new content on the 2021 Census of Population and Housing. Your correspondence has been referred to me as I have responsibility for this matter. I apologise for the delay in responding to you.

I have recently received a recommendation from the Australian Bureau of Statistics regarding the 2021 Census topics. The Government will note the issues you raise and take your viewpoint into consideration when it reviews the recommendation.

I trust this information will be of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Michael Sukkar', written over the typed name.

The Hon Michael Sukkar MP