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CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING; COUNTS OF ABORIGINALS AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS, AUSTRALIA, STATES AND TERRITORIES 30 JUNE 1971, 1976, 1981

PHONE INQUIRIES

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EXPLANATORY NOTES

This publication contains counts of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders (TSI) from the Censuses of Population and Housing, 30 June 1971, 1976, 1981.

In Table 1 the 1981 count for Aboriginals shows a 0.2 per cent increase since 1976, while that for Torres Strait Islanders shows a fall of 7.9 per cent. There are considerable variations in numbers between the States with Victoria recording a 60 per cent fall and Northern Territory a 22 per cent increase.

Table 2 shows the distribution of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders in major urban, other urban and rural areas in each State and Territory for each of the three censuses. It appears likely that the 1976 figures were overstated for major urban areas in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.

Movements in the figures for the three censuses can be affected by a number of factors. The wording of the question was almost the same for 1971 and 1976 but was changed for 1981. Past experience has shown that even relatively minor changes to questions can affect response.

Also, it should be emphasised that the question is based on self-identification, that is, people were asked to identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander if they considered themselves to be such. Responses to questions of this nature at different points in time can be affected by changes in community attitudes and, apart from some tests of internal consistency, the ABS can do little to verify the accuracy of answers given.

Related publication

For further information on this subject refer to the Information Paper: *Census 81-Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders* (2153.0).

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Australian Statistician

TABLE 1. COUNTS OF ABORIGINALS AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS,
STATES, TERRITORIES AND AUSTRALIA, 30 JUNE 1971, 1976, 1981

State	1971(a) number			1976(b) number			1981(c) number		
	Aboriginal	TSI	Total	Aboriginal	TSI	Total	Aboriginal	TSI	Total
New South Wales	23,101	772	23,873	37,688	2,763	40,451	33,414	1,953	35,367
Victoria	5,656	715	6,371	12,415	2,345	14,760	5,283	774	6,057
Queensland	24,414	7,508	31,922	31,948	9,396	41,344	33,966	10,732	44,698
South Australia	7,140	159	7,299	9,940	774	10,714	9,476	349	9,825
Western Australia	21,903	278	22,181	25,565	560	26,125	30,749	602	31,351
Tasmania	575	96	671	2,522	421	2,943	2,334	354	2,688
Northern Territory	23,253	128	23,381	23,535	215	23,750	28,680	408	29,088
Australian Capital Territory	248	7	255	769	59	828	763	60	823
Australia	106,290	9,663	115,953	144,382	16,533	160,915	144,665	15,232	159,897

(a) 1971 figures include a pro-rating of non-response. (b) Any discrepancies between totals and sums of components are due to sampling error.

(c) Changed editing procedures adopted for 1981 Census results. See (2153.0) for details.

TABLE 2. DISTRIBUTION OF ABORIGINALS AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS 1971(a), 1976(b) AND 1981 BY MAJOR GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS

	Aboriginals			Torres Strait Islanders			Total		
	1971	1976	1981	1971	1976	1981	1971	1976	1981
New South Wales—									
Major urban(c)	5,955	13,363	10,080	567	2,148	1,149	6,522	15,511	11,229
Other urban(d)	9,280	16,145	15,614	115	390	514	9,395	16,535	16,128
Rural(e)	7,866	8,180	7,720	90	225	290	7,956	8,405	8,010
Total	23,101	37,688	33,414	772	2,763	1,953	23,873	40,451	35,367
Victoria—									
Major urban	2,899	7,472	2,329	594	1,809	515	3,493	9,281	2,844
Other urban	1,835	3,433	2,265	91	291	147	1,926	3,724	2,412
Rural	922	1,510	689	30	245	112	952	1,755	801
Total	5,656	12,415	5,283	715	2,345	774	6,371	14,760	6,057
Queensland—									
Major urban	2,605	5,529	5,582	296	716	942	2,901	6,245	6,524
Other urban	7,192	11,605	12,685	3,046	4,866	5,632	10,238	16,471	18,317
Rural	14,617	14,814	15,699	4,166	3,814	4,158	18,783	18,628	19,857
Total	24,414	31,948	33,966	7,508	9,396	10,732	31,922	41,344	44,698
South Australia—									
Major urban	1,721	3,590	3,004	106	616	213	1,827	4,206	3,217
Other urban	1,512	2,325	3,017	25	91	49	1,537	2,416	3,066
Rural	3,907	4,025	3,455	28	67	87	3,935	4,092	3,542
Total	7,140	9,940	9,476	159	774	349	7,299	10,714	9,825
Western Australia—									
Major urban	2,231	5,381	6,325	71	231	149	2,302	5,612	6,474
Other urban	6,514	8,406	10,941	82	132	328	6,596	8,538	11,269
Rural	13,158	11,778	13,483	125	197	125	13,283	11,975	13,608
Total	21,903	25,565	30,749	278	560	602	22,181	26,125	31,351
Tasmania—									
Major urban	n.a.	612	528	n.a.	68	82	n.a.	680	610
Other urban	n.a.	1,140	1,148	n.a.	160	151	n.a.	1,300	1,299
Rural	n.a.	770	658	n.a.	193	121	n.a.	963	779
Total	575	2,522	2,334	96	421	354	671	2,943	2,688
Northern Territory—									
Major urban	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other urban	4,904	4,520	8,959	90	165	343	4,994	4,685	9,302
Rural	19,249	19,015	19,721	38	50	65	19,287	19,065	19,786
Total	23,253	23,535	28,680	128	215	408	23,381	23,750	29,088
Australian Capital Territory—									
Major urban	n.a.	593	588	n.a.	59	60	n.a.	652	648
Other urban	n.a.	—	—	n.a.	—	—	n.a.	—	—
Rural	n.a.	176	175	n.a.	—	—	n.a.	176	175
Total	248	769	763	7	59	60	255	828	823
Australia—									
Major urban	15,667	36,540	28,436	1,665	5,647	3,110	17,332	42,187	31,546
Other urban	30,594	47,574	54,629	3,482	6,095	7,164	34,076	53,669	61,793
Rural	60,029	60,268	61,600	4,516	4,791	4,958	64,545	65,059	66,558
Total	106,290	144,382	144,665	9,663	16,533	15,232	115,953	160,915	159,897

(a) 1971 figures include a pro-rating of non-response. (b) Any discrepancies between totals and sums of components are due to sampling error. (c) Major urban—urban centres with a population of 100,000 and over. (d) Other urban—urban centres with a population of 1,000 to 99,999. (e) Rural—includes bounded rural localities with population clusters of 200 to 999 persons and balance of State. n.a.—not available. — nil or rounded to zero.