



INFORMATION PAPER

1991 Census of Population and Housing
CONTENT AND PROCEDURES

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Census 91

**1991 CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:
CONTENT AND PROCEDURES**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1. Australia's twelfth national census of population and housing will be held in 1991. The first was in 1911 and since 1961 a census has been taken every five years, a frequency which is specified in the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

Need

2. The objective of the national census is to measure the number and key characteristics of people in Australia on census night. This provides a reliable basis for the estimation of the population of each of the States and local government areas primarily for electoral purposes and the distribution of government funds. It also provides the characteristics of the population and its housing within small geographic areas and for small population groups to support the planning, administration, policy development and evaluation activities of governments and other users.

3. Under the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution the 'number of members (in the House of Representatives) chosen in the several States shall be in proportion to the respective numbers of their people'. Population estimates based on the census are used to determine the number of seats allocated to each State in the House of Representatives. Population estimates are also used in the allocation of financial assistance grants by the Commonwealth to the States and the Northern Territory. In 1988-89 these grants are expected to amount to \$12.3 billion. The Commonwealth also provides general revenue assistance for local governments which in 1988-89 is expected to amount to \$653 million. The population estimates of local government areas based on the census are a key element in criteria used for the distribution of funds.

4. While the census also provides important information on the characteristics of the population, each of which can be justified in their own right, one of the important features of the census is that it enables a characteristic to be related to other characteristics and for the relationships that exist between the characteristics to be identified. For example, the localities in which people born overseas were living at census date, the employment status of these people, the main occupations and industries they worked in and their education qualifications. As another example, those planning transport facilities can study the main traffic flows within a city and the methods people use to get to work, relating these data to average income levels and the availability of motor vehicles to households.

5. While some information on some characteristics are available from other sources, only a census can provide the information on a standard basis for the country as a whole and for small geographic areas and small population groups.

Consultation

6. In 1987 approval was obtained from the Government for planning of at least a minimum population census in 1991 to proceed. A minimum census would produce information on age, sex and usual residence for the purpose of revising population estimates. In addition, the Government directed that consultation with users about the content of a 1991 Census should proceed but on the basis that the cost of the census was to be a good deal less than the 1986 Census.

7. In January 1988, ABS published an information paper '1991 Census of Population and Housing: Preliminary ABS Views on Content and Procedures' (2171.0). It discussed possible strategies which would be consistent with the Government's directive. In particular it outlined two broad approaches which might have been followed to reduce costs and set out preliminary ABS views on the content of the 1991 Census for each approach. Associated procedures for conducting the census were also described. Users of census data and the public were invited to comment on the views expressed in the paper.

8. While comment was welcomed on any aspect of the 1991 Census, the main issues on which ABS sought advice were:

- whether the ABS should pursue the option of a census with a significant reduction in topics compared with the 1986 Census or a less severe reduction in topics but for some of the topics to be asked of a large (1 in 3) sample of the population only rather than the whole population;
- what topics should be included under the options and which topics might be included in the sampled component under the second option;
- what topics should be deleted if topics other than those proposed were to be included or further savings required or for the sampling option whether the sample fraction should be reduced;
- what priority should be accorded to preliminary processing to enable basic population characteristics to be published well in advance of main census output;

- what date should be used for census day since the traditional date of 30 June would fall in school holidays in most States/Territories; and
- whether the practice of destroying census forms should be maintained.

9. Comments were also invited on other procedures for conducting the census which were described in the information paper, namely:

- field operations (protection of privacy and maintenance of confidentiality);
- extension of self-coding by respondents;
- use of optical mark recognition and computer assisted coding;
- imputation of non-responses;
- outputs;
- classifications; and
- census data for postcode areas.

10. The views of users and the public on the proposals have been obtained in more than 560 written submissions which have been followed up by consultation with major users.

11. There was widespread concern amongst users that significant cuts were being contemplated to the range of data that were collected in the 1986 Census. There was a general view, particularly among State Governments, that the 1986 Census represented the minimum census content which could adequately meet user's needs, although the frequency of collection of a few items was arguable.

12. Many responses argued that the census is of fundamental importance to society because of its ability to produce reliable data on small areas and small groups in the population.

13. More information on the response to ABS preliminary views is available in a paper entitled '1991 Census of Population and Housing, Response to Preliminary ABS Views on Content and Procedures' available from ABS offices.

14. In the light of these consultations draft final recommendations on the 1991 Census were discussed by the Australian Statistics Advisory Council prior to the preparation of a submission to the Government.

2. CONTENT

15. In the census of population and housing information is collected by self-enumeration. Each household is required to fill in the details specified on the census form with relatively little assistance from the census collector. Self-enumeration and the need to ensure that the large census operation is conducted as efficiently and effectively as possible, impose certain constraints on the type of topics and questions that can be included in the census if the public are to provide accurate data. There is also a need to limit the total number of questions asked in order to minimise the reporting burden on households and control census costs.

16. These constraints are reflected in the following criteria used to assess topics for inclusion in the census:

- whether the topic is of major national importance;
- whether the census is an appropriate method of collecting the data, given alternative sources and methods; and
- whether the topic is suitable for inclusion in the census.

17. Taking these criteria into consideration, the Government has decided that the following topics will be included in the 1991 Census:

For each person –

name
age
sex
marital status
relationship (family structure)
usual residence at census time
internal migration
birthplace
birthplace of parents
year of arrival
citizenship
Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander origin
language use
religion
attendance at an educational institution

For each person aged 15 years or more –

education qualifications
age left school
income (including family income)
labour force status

For each person aged 15 years or more and employed –

occupation
industry
hours worked
journey to work (destination zone coding)
mode of travel to work

For each household –

number of motor vehicles garaged
household address on census night
number of bedrooms
rent
mortgage
private dwelling (classification) – completed by the collector
non-private dwelling and caravan park (classification).

Out of a total of 31 personal and household topics in the 1991 Census, 15 topics relate to each person, 4 to each person aged 15 years or more, 5 to each person aged 15 years or more and employed and 7 to each household. The census collector will complete one of the topics.

18. The topics approved by the Government are considered to represent a reasonable balance between the need for information, the appropriateness of the census as a means of collecting particular kinds of data, costs, and the need to ensure that completing the forms should not impose too great a burden on the public. Assessments of the topics included in the 1991 Census are included in Appendix 1.

19. Topics included in 1991 represent a reduced content over the 1986 Census. The following topics included in the 1986 Census are not considered sufficiently justified for inclusion in the 1991 Census:

- year first married (duration of marriage)
- whether married more than once
- issue (number of children ever born)
- ethnic origin
- reason dwelling unoccupied.

Assessments of these and other topics requested for inclusion in 1991 but rejected are presented in Appendix 2.

3. CONFIDENTIALITY

20. The census collects information relating to each person and household in the country. But it is not concerned with facts about individuals as such. It is taken to provide facts about the community as a whole, and groups within the community. The public have a right to expect that the information they provide will be kept confidential. This protection is provided by provisions in the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

21. To ensure that these provisions are observed a comprehensive set of practices has been adopted by the ABS. In the 1991 Census they will take the following form:

- (a) Temporary staff recruited for collection and processing of the census as well as permanent staff having access to completed census forms are officers of the Australian Bureau of Statistics. All ABS officers are legally bound to secrecy under the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*. Officers sign an undertaking of fidelity and secrecy to ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities in regard to census data. Section 19 of the Act forbids past or present ABS officers from divulging information collected under the Act either directly or indirectly, under penalty of a fine of up to \$5000 or imprisonment for a period not exceeding two years, or both.
- (b) In large urban areas procedures are established to avoid collectors working in the districts in which they live, to minimise the collection of information from people they know personally. However, in other areas, where fewer applications can be expected for census collector positions and travel involves significant costs, collectors will be recruited who might know many householders. If a collector does know a householder they will be instructed to offer the householder an envelope in which to seal the completed form.
- (c) Householders will be advised that anyone who does not want their completed form to be seen by the collector will be able to obtain from the collector an envelope in which to seal the form. The census collectors will be required to pass all such sealed envelopes unopened to their field supervisor who will then scan the form for completeness. In addition, any individual member of a household can request a separate form and envelope in which to record their own details and seal their census form. Persons not in private dwellings generally receive separate forms and envelopes.
- (d) In order to prevent disclosure of census information to third parties, census collectors will be instructed to pick up census forms in person from householders and not to suggest arrangements whereby completed forms are left outside the house at some pre-arranged location.
- (e) In special circumstances, a householder may send a completed form to the ABS by mail.
- (f) Completed census forms will be transferred from the field to the census processing centre under secure arrangements. Full-time security personnel will be employed to prevent any unauthorised access to the processing centre.
- (g) Names and addresses of persons and households collected in the census will NOT be stored on computer files.
- (h) Standard security arrangements are implemented on the ABS computer system which include the use of regularly changed passwords, access control and audit trails.
- (i) Census forms containing names and addresses will be accounted for and destroyed under strict supervision immediately after data have been processed and validated. Destruction will be carried out by pulping to ensure that census forms are not able to be reassembled in a readable form.
- (j) The results of the census will be released in accordance with the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*. This Act requires the results to be disseminated in a manner which is not likely to enable the identification of a particular person or organisation.

22. To ensure this last requirement is met, the ABS will make slight random adjustments to tabulated data. The random adjustments will be insignificant in relative terms except for numbers too small to be of statistical significance. Output will also be specified so that small cells do not dominate in any particular output and to ensure the amount of detail will be appropriate to the level of geographic classification. As for the 1981 and 1986 Censuses magnetic tapes with samples of unidentified census household records will also be released. The level of classification used for the variables will be designed to meet the requirements of the legislation.

Destruction of census forms

23. To assure the public about the preservation of confidentiality of data on individuals, census forms in Australia are destroyed once statistical data have been extracted.

24. The Australian Archives has studied the respective merits of retaining or destroying future census forms. While it concluded that name-identified census records would have value for medical, sociological and genealogical research, it also considered that public attitudes were such for there to be no prospect of retaining 1991 Census records.

25. The purpose of the census is to gather statistical information and the Statistician's legal power to direct people to answer census questions, except one relating to religion, is accompanied by strict measures to ensure the confidentiality of the information provided. The Government believes that it would be inconsistent with that purpose and with that guarantee of confidentiality to retain information on identified persons or households. Consequently the past practice of destroying all records of names and addresses of persons and households and of not storing these names and addresses on computer files will be continued.

26. The decision not to retain information on identified persons and households was reached by the Government after arguments for and against their retention had been carefully weighed. A relevant factor was the very real fear that public confidence in the census and hence the willingness of individuals to provide full and accurate information about themselves could be undermined. A further consideration was the substantial costs which would be incurred in storing and accessing the records.

4. PROCEDURES

General

Scope

27. The scope of the census extends to all persons in Australia on census night, but some exceptions exist such as the exclusion of foreign diplomats and their families and the inclusion of persons outside Australia who are not required to undertake migration formalities such as those on oil and gas rigs off the Australian coast. Visitors to Australia are counted regardless of how long they have been in the country or how long they plan to stay. Australian residents out of the country on census night are generally out of the scope of the census.

28. As in the 1986 Census, the external territories of Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands will be included in the census. Norfolk Island, the only other external territory with a permanent population, will not be included in the Australian census. A census is undertaken locally under the authority of the *Norfolk Island Census and Statistics Ordinance 1961*.

Efficiency

29. Although the Australian census is already conducted at a lower cost per head of population than in most other comparable countries, the ABS has investigated opportunities to further reduce costs. As a result of these investigations, ABS has decided to introduce the following cost-saving measures for the 1991 Census:

- use of respondent marked optical mark recognition (OMR) technology for data entry to avoid keying-in most of the data as was the case in 1986;
- increased use of self-coding of answers by respondents rather than as a separate office coding exercise; and
- computer assisted coding of responses requiring office coding.

30. The use of mailback of census forms as is done in Canada has been investigated and found not to be cost-effective in Australia. No comprehensive list of addresses exists for the use of mail-out and mailback of census forms as done in the United States of America. The method used in the United States of America is far from cost-effective and is used for reasons other than minimising costs. There is little opportunity to reduce collection costs significantly in the 1991 Census without also significantly lowering the accuracy of the results.

Cost

31. To conduct, process and disseminate the results of a census of population and housing in 1991 will require additional funds of approximately \$99 million (in October 1988 prices).

Census date

32. As a result of all mainland States moving to a four-term school year, school holidays would clash with a census held at the end of June 1991, the time of year at which Australian censuses have been conducted since 1933. This led to the ABS proposing in its 'preliminary views' that the 1991 Census be held in early August or end October/early November 1991, the two most suitable times from an operational viewpoint.

33. The State and Territory Governments have been approached to seek advice as to whether school holidays can be avoided in the period around the preferred census day of Tuesday 2 July 1991. School holidays in the period surrounding census day increase collection difficulties and reduce the quality of data obtained as many people will be absent from their normal residence and more likely not to be enumerated.

34. If this approach is not successful, then it is planned to adopt a census day of Tuesday 6 August 1991.

Field Operations

35. The objective of field operations is to develop and operate a secure collection system that achieves maximum coverage of the population in a cost effective manner.

36. Each collector will be responsible for the taking of the census in a clearly bounded local area, known as a collection district. There will be about 30,000 collection districts covering Australia without overlap or omission. The design and mapping of these areas is a most important preliminary to the census and is now underway.

37. People will be counted where they are on census night and to help achieve this approximately 42,000 temporary field staff will be recruited across Australia for short-term field duties. Most of these staff will be group leaders and collectors. Each group leader will be responsible for an average of about 11 collectors who themselves will be responsible for the delivery and collection of census forms from an average of about 200 dwellings. However there is a large variation in the number of dwellings covered by collectors in urban and rural areas to take account of time taken by travel in rural areas. In addition, special collectors will be recruited to undertake census duties in large non-private dwellings (such as hospitals, hotels, and gaols) and caravan parks. Special collectors are usually managers or staff of the establishments involved.

38. Public co-operation and acceptance of the census is essential for statistics of a high quality to be produced. For this reason a public awareness campaign will be conducted prior to and during the census. The aims of the campaign will be to maintain high quality response to the census by convincing the public of the usefulness of the statistics obtained and the confidentiality of the information provided. The availability of assistance for those who may, for language or other reasons, experience difficulty in completing the form will also be made known.

Delivery and collection of census forms

39. Collectors have the responsibility for the delivery of census forms to all households prior to census day and again for collection of completed census forms after census day.

40. A booklet, explaining the purpose of the census, will be delivered with the census form to each household. The collector will also answer any queries and arrange for collection of the completed census form.

41. On collection, the collector will be instructed to scan each form for completeness, seek to resolve any omissions with the household concerned and provide other assistance if requested.

42. While experience has shown that in general this personal contact is welcomed, where a householder does not want the completed census form to be seen by the collector, an envelope will be available from the collector in which the form can be sealed. The envelope will then be passed unopened to the group leader who will then check the form for completeness. In addition any individual member of a household can request a separate form and envelope in which to record their own details.

43. In non-private dwellings (such as hospitals, hotels, and gaols) and caravan parks, persons generally receive separate forms and envelopes in which the completed form can be sealed. Special collectors appointed to cover large establishments are not permitted to open the sealed envelopes. In some cases staff of these dwellings complete the form on behalf of the persons involved (e.g. for frail persons in a nursing home).

Special assistance in completion of census forms

44. In addition to the public awareness campaign and assistance available from collectors, several other methods will be used to assist respondents to understand the nature and purpose of the census and to complete the census form. These include the use of a telephone interpreter service, interpreters for persons who have English language problems and a telephone enquiry service for general public enquiries.

Enumeration of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population

45. Special procedures will be implemented to ensure that the coverage of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is as complete as possible. These procedures will be similar to those used successfully for the 1986 Census.

Non co-operation

46. It is expected that the public awareness campaign on the nature of the census and the uses of statistics from the census will keep problems of non co-operation to a minimum. For people who do not co-operate with the collector, generally an approach will be made by the group leader in an endeavour to overcome problems or objections and then two written requests will be sent. Further action, including legal action, will generally be considered only after these measures have failed.

Data Capture

47. In an effort to reduce costs and risks to staff health from repetitive keying of data in the data transcription process, it is planned to capture data from census forms by the use of optical mark recognition (OMR) technology and to use computer assisted coding (CAC).

48. Increased self-coding by householders when answering questions will also reduce the extent and cost of office coding. For instance, the 1986 Census question on birthplace was as follows:

10. Where was each person born?	1 ☐ Australia 2 ☐ Overseas ↓ Print country of birth
--	---

49. With increased self-coding, the question could be presented as follows:

Where was each person born ?	☐ Australia (go to question ..) ☐ United Kingdom ☐ Italy ☐ New Zealand ☐ Other (please specify)
-------------------------------------	--

50. This would enable the birthplaces for almost 90% of the population to be self-coded rather than the 78% self-coded in the 1986 Census. Testing has indicated that the quality of data from use of such an approach in the 1991 Census will not be adversely affected to any significant extent.

51. Census forms will require some redesign to facilitate the use of OMR. On the basis of testing undertaken to date this redesign is not likely to cause any major difficulties to most householders. In fact a form designed for use with OMR and with greater use of self-coding by respondents requires less effort by the public to complete.

52. The forms will be read by OMR machines and the marks on the forms will be automatically transferred to computer disk. This method eliminates the key-entry phase of data capture used in the 1986 Census where a clerk was required to read the data on the form and then key it using a keyboard. The new method will significantly reduce errors that occur during the data capture phase and reduce the potential incidence of occupational overuse injuries.

53. Coding those questions which require a written response, such as a person's occupation, will be undertaken by computer assisted means. This coding method will not only be less expensive, but it will also increase the data quality by ensuring a more consistent application of coding than can be achieved by using only manual methods. Written responses will be entered into the computer initially but only the allocated codes will be stored on the computer files. All coding will be subject to a quality assurance system that will check, on a sample basis, that the coded data is correct.

Imputation

54. In processing the 1986 Census the fields of age, sex, marital status, relationship and State of usual residence were imputed in instances of non-response. Imputation also occurred for Aboriginal origin, birthplace, birthplace of parents and labour force status where the appropriate response was clear from other information available on the census form. It is planned that these items will be imputed in 1991. There will be improvements made to random allocation tables to ensure a more accurate imputation of age in specific circumstances. Advice from users has indicated little requirement for any further increase in imputation. 'Not-stated' will be used to describe non-response where imputation does not occur.

Classifications

55. Most classifications proposed to be used for various data items are similar to those used in the 1986 Census. The ABS intends to seek comments from users during 1989 on classifications proposed to be used in the 1991 Census. Users wishing to be consulted on the classifications and who have not already been approached by ABS should advise the relevant contact officer listed in Appendix 3.

Results

Preliminary

56. Because of the planned use of OMR for data capture, preliminary data can be made available as a by-product rather than from an extra initial processing of the forms. It is expected that the first results of the 1991 Census will be preliminary census counts by age and sex for Australia, States, Territories, available within 9 months of census day. Other preliminary data may also be available.

Final

57. Output products based on final data will be released as they become available in the form of statistical publications, microfiche, magnetic tape, floppy disk, compact disk-read only memory (CD-ROM) and possibly other media. Results will be available for various geographic areas such as collection districts, statistical local areas, local government areas, localities, urban centres, statistical divisions, postcodes and Commonwealth and State electoral divisions. Details of the proposed output strategy and products will be canvassed with users during 1990.

58. As for the 1981 and 1986 Censuses, files containing samples of unidentifiable household records will also be released. These files will allow users to manipulate the data to meet their own specialised needs.

59. The ABS will operate a special data service to respond to requests from users for customised outputs.

Evaluation

60. An integral step in the conduct of the census is an evaluation aimed at providing a measure of the extent of underenumeration. For this purpose a survey will be conducted soon after census night. In addition evaluation studies will be conducted to assist users of census data with information about data quality and to provide feedback for improvements to be made for the next census.

5. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

61. Regulations associated with the taking of the census have been tabled in Parliament at the same time as the release of this information paper. Final testing of census form design, field procedures and processing systems will be undertaken in 1989, followed by a census dress rehearsal to be held in Melbourne in July 1990. Consultation on the output classifications to be used will take place in 1989, and other consultation on the output program, including on small area and cross-classified tabulations and the medium for different data releases will occur during 1990.

APPENDIX 1

ASSESSMENT OF TOPICS INCLUDED IN THE 1991 CENSUS

Topic	Page
Name	14
Basic demography	
Age and Sex	15
Marital status	16
Relationship (family structure)	17
Usual residence at census time	19
Internal migration	20
Ethnicity	
Birthplace	22
Birthplace of parents	23
Year of arrival	24
Citizenship	25
Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander origin	26
Language use	27
Religion	29
Education	
Attendance at an educational institution	30
Education qualifications	32
Age left school	34
Income (including family income)	35
Labour force	
Labour force status	37
Occupation	39
Industry	41
Hours worked	43
Transport	
Journey to work (destination zone coding)	44
Mode of travel to work	45
Number of motor vehicles garaged	46
Household address on census night	47
Dwelling	
Number of bedrooms	48
Rent	49
Mortgage	51
Private dwelling (classification)	53
Non-private dwelling and caravan park (classification)	55

In this appendix, types of question shown represent question designs used for a test held in February 1989. Questions eventually included in 1991 Census forms may be slightly different.

NAME**Historical background**

Names have been requested in all previous censuses.

Type of question(s)

Name of each person (INCLUDING VISITORS) who spent the night of Tuesday, 21 February 1989 in this household :	PERSON 1
- Record details for all adults, children, babies and VISITORS. - Include any person who returned on Wednesday, 22 February 1989, without having been counted elsewhere. - Enter the householder or any adult household member as "Person 1" and if present, the spouse/partner as "Person 2".	Christian or given name Surname

Justification

Names are essential to the conduct of an accurate census. The inclusion of names on census forms reduces the incidence of inaccurate responses and non-completion of forms. The Australian Law Reform Commission, in its 1979 report on Privacy and the Census, found that an anonymous census would result in an unacceptable level of non-response and an equally unacceptable bias in responses.

Names are also used with other information to help determine, for coding purposes, the composition of households, especially where households consist of more than one family. They are also used by collectors should they need to refer back to individuals within households.

Names are essential for the conduct of the post-enumeration survey which measures the level of underenumeration in the census. These estimates are an important component of revisions to estimated resident populations for each of the States and local government areas.

Assessment

Names are essential for the conduct of an accurate census.

The inclusion of names in the census does raise privacy concerns but the confidentiality of data provided is carefully guarded. Names of persons are not stored on computer files and no identifiable information about an individual is made available to any other person, government agency or private organisation. All census forms will be destroyed once the processing of the data has been completed (see Section 3).

AGE and SEX

Historical background

The topics of age and sex have been included in every Australian census.

Type of question(s)

Sex Mark one box for each person (for example <input 215="" 275"="" 640="" 845="" type="checkbox/>). </td> <td data-bbox="/> ☐ Male ☐ Female	
Mark each person's age last birthday. - If age is less than one year, mark box "0". - Mark <u>one</u> box for each person. For example, for a person aged 31 years: Example Years: ☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 1 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 1 ☐ 1 ☐ 1 ☐ 6 ☐ 1 ☐ 7 ☐ 1 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 2 ☐ 2 ☐ 2 ☐ 2 ☐ 6 ☐ 2 ☐ 7 ☐ 2 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 1 ☐ 3 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 3 ☐ 3 ☐ 6 ☐ 3 ☐ 7 ☐ 3 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 1 ☐ 4 ☐ 2 ☐ 4 ☐ 4 ☐ 4 ☐ 6 ☐ 4 ☐ 7 ☐ 4 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 1 ☐ 5 ☐ 2 ☐ 5 ☐ 5 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 5 ☐ 7 ☐ 5 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 1 ☐ 6 ☐ 2 ☐ 6 ☐ 6 ☐ 6 ☐ 6 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 6 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 1 ☐ 7 ☐ 2 ☐ 7 ☐ 7 ☐ 7 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 7 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 1 ☐ 8 ☐ 2 ☐ 8 ☐ 8 ☐ 8 ☐ 6 ☐ 8 ☐ 8 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 1 ☐ 9 ☐ 2 ☐ 9 ☐ 9 ☐ 9 ☐ 6 ☐ 9 ☐ 9 ☐ 9 ☐ 90 years or more	Years: ☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 1 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 1 ☐ 1 ☐ 1 ☐ 6 ☐ 1 ☐ 7 ☐ 1 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 2 ☐ 2 ☐ 2 ☐ 2 ☐ 6 ☐ 2 ☐ 7 ☐ 2 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 1 ☐ 3 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 3 ☐ 3 ☐ 6 ☐ 3 ☐ 7 ☐ 3 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 1 ☐ 4 ☐ 2 ☐ 4 ☐ 4 ☐ 4 ☐ 6 ☐ 4 ☐ 7 ☐ 4 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 1 ☐ 5 ☐ 2 ☐ 5 ☐ 5 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 5 ☐ 7 ☐ 5 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 1 ☐ 6 ☐ 2 ☐ 6 ☐ 6 ☐ 6 ☐ 6 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 6 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 1 ☐ 7 ☐ 2 ☐ 7 ☐ 7 ☐ 7 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 7 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 1 ☐ 8 ☐ 2 ☐ 8 ☐ 8 ☐ 8 ☐ 6 ☐ 8 ☐ 8 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 1 ☐ 9 ☐ 2 ☐ 9 ☐ 9 ☐ 9 ☐ 6 ☐ 9 ☐ 9 ☐ 9 ☐ 90 years or more (please specify) years

User requirements

Age and sex counts are essential for the production of accurate population estimates. Users require counts by single year age and sex for small geographic areas and small groups of the population as a basic input to many planning and policy development activities. The age and sex variables are also widely used with other characteristics of the population in cross-classified tables.

Assessment

The topics age and sex are essential items for the production of accurate State population estimates, a major objective of the census, and for sub-State population estimates. They are valuable items in their own right for planning and policy development and data on age and sex are essential for virtually all demographic studies.

MARITAL STATUS

Historical background

A question on marital status has been included in all previous censuses.

Type of question(s)

What is each person's present marital status ?	☐ Never married ☐ Married ☐ Separated, not divorced ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed
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User requirements

Marital status is a basic demographic characteristic. It is important for the analysis of other social and economic topics included in the census. Its use as a cross-classifier enhances the value of most other census items.

Data from this topic are used by the ABS to maintain the accuracy of the estimated resident population by marital status series. This series is the benchmark for the calculation of many rates and ratios used in socio-economic studies.

Assessment

The major value of the topic is in its use as a cross-classifier to enhance the value of other census items.

RELATIONSHIP (FAMILY STRUCTURE)

Historical background

Information on relationships between persons in a household is obtained by defining type of household and family groups within households. A question on relationship has been included in all Australian censuses.

Several improvements to census data on families and households were made for the 1986 Census. First, the inclusion of a question on usual residents temporarily absent allowed family members temporarily absent on census night to be included in the coding of family and household structures. This helped overcome the problem created by absent spouses in previous censuses which led to a net overstatement of the number of single-parent families and an understatement of the number of families with both parents normally resident in a household. Second, a change in the question on relationships within a household made it possible to produce statistics on de facto living arrangements and children in blended families. Third, in response to many user requests, statistics were produced for the first time on the family structure of persons residing in caravans, mobile homes or other structures in caravan parks.

The concepts of household heads and family heads are no longer recognised by the census. In 1986, householders were instructed to complete the household form with the householder or any adult household member as 'Person 1' and, if present, the spouse/partner as 'Person 2'. Family structures were created with reference to Persons 1 and 2. Outputs no longer contain tables with the variables household and family head.

Type of question(s)

For a person staying in a non-private dwelling on census night, mark whether hotel guest, patient, staff member etc. No response required for Person 1.

What is each person's relationship to Person 1/Person 2 ?		Husband/Wife of Person 1 De facto partner of Person 1 Child of Person 1 Stepchild of Person 1 Brother/Sister of Person 1 Flatmate/Cotenant of Person 1 Other relationship to Person 1 (please specify)		Child of both Person 1 and Person 2 Child of Person 1 only Child of Person 2 only Brother/Sister of Person 1 Flatmate/Cotenant of Person 1 Other relationship to Person 1 (please specify)	
* Examples of other relationships: son-in-law, granddaughter, uncle, boarder, visitor, etc. * Mark one box for each person (for example ☐)					
Are there any persons who usually live in this household who were not present on the night of Tuesday, 21 February 1989 ? ☐ No (please sign below) ☐ Yes $\rightarrow$ Please complete one separate column for each person absent					
Name of each person who usually lives in this household but was not here on the night of Tuesday, 21 February 1989	Christian or given name	Christian or given name	Christian or given name	Christian or given name	Christian or given name
Surname	Surname	Surname	Surname	Surname	Surname
Sex	☐ Male ☐ Female	☐ Male ☐ Female	☐ Male ☐ Female	☐ Male ☐ Female	☐ Male ☐ Female
Age last birthday	☐ 0-14 years ☐ 15-20 years ☐ 21 years and over	☐ 0-14 years ☐ 15-20 years ☐ 21 years and over	☐ 0-14 years ☐ 15-20 years ☐ 21 years and over	☐ 0-14 years ☐ 15-20 years ☐ 21 years and over	☐ 0-14 years ☐ 15-20 years ☐ 21 years and over
What is each person's relationship to Person 1 (as listed on page 1) ?	☐ Husband/Wife ☐ De facto partner ☐ Child ☐ Flatmate/Cotenant ☐ Other relationship ▼ (please specify)	☐ Husband/Wife ☐ De facto partner ☐ Child ☐ Flatmate/Cotenant ☐ Other relationship ▼ (please specify)	☐ Husband/Wife ☐ De facto partner ☐ Child ☐ Flatmate/Cotenant ☐ Other relationship ▼ (please specify)	☐ Husband/Wife ☐ De facto partner ☐ Child ☐ Flatmate/Cotenant ☐ Other relationship ▼ (please specify)	☐ Husband/Wife ☐ De facto partner ☐ Child ☐ Flatmate/Cotenant ☐ Other relationship ▼ (please specify)
What is each person's present marital status ?	☐ Never married ☐ Married ☐ Separated, not divorced ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed	☐ Never married ☐ Married ☐ Separated, not divorced ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed	☐ Never married ☐ Married ☐ Separated, not divorced ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed	☐ Never married ☐ Married ☐ Separated, not divorced ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed	☐ Never married ☐ Married ☐ Separated, not divorced ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed
Is the person a full-time student ?	☐ Yes, full-time ☐ No	☐ Yes, full-time ☐ No	☐ Yes, full-time ☐ No	☐ Yes, full-time ☐ No	☐ Yes, full-time ☐ No

User requirements

Questions on this topic allow the identification of different types of households and the structure of family groups within each household. Statistics relating to families and households are required at small area level and over time at this level for the development, implementation and monitoring of many social and economic policies.

Non-census data available

Data on family structure are available from many ABS household surveys. However, because of restricted sample sizes, surveys do not provide reliable data for small areas and small groups of the population which are needed for many purposes.

Assessment

Data on households and families are of fundamental value in their own right and households and families are basic units for analysis of many other census characteristics. Detailed data are available only from the census and provide a benchmark for the analysis of changing family structures and characteristics over time.

Analysis of 1986 Census results indicate that the accuracy of coding of household and family structures has been much improved by the inclusion of the question on usual residents temporarily absent. The value of family statistics has been enhanced by the additional information collected on blended families and families in caravan parks.

USUAL RESIDENCE AT CENSUS TIME

Historical Background

A question on a person's place of usual residence at census time was first included in the 1961 Census when persons who were temporarily absent from their usual residence were asked to name their State or Territory of usual residence (or overseas if appropriate). The topic has been included in all censuses from and including the 1971 Census.

Type of question(s)

What is each person's usual address ? • "Usual" address is that address at which a person has lived or intends to live for a total of 6 months or more in 1989. • For persons who now have no usual address, regard this dwelling as their usual address. • For boarders at boarding school or college, give address of school or college. • If usual address is Cocos (Keeling) or Christmas Islands, mark "Elsewhere" and give address. • If usual address is overseas, mark "Elsewhere" and write "O/S". →	PERSON 1 ☐ The address shown on the front of this form. ☐ Elsewhere (please specify address) No. and street..... Suburb or rural locality..... City or town..... Postcode.....
In which State or territory does each person usually live ? • State "usually" lived in is the State in which a person has lived or intends to live for a total of 6 months or more in 1989. • For persons who now have no usual State of residence, mark State now in.	☐ NSW ☐ Vic ☐ Qld ☐ SA ☐ WA ☐ Tas ☐ NT ☐ ACT ☐ Elsewhere

User requirements

The most important use for data on place of usual residence at census time is to obtain usual residence census counts for the estimation of usual resident populations for States and local government areas. These population estimates are used in determining the number of seats in the House of Representatives allocated to each State, and the distribution of Commonwealth funds to the States, Territories and local government authorities.

Non-census data available

Many ABS surveys include questions on usual residence of members of the household but small sample sizes do not enable generation of data of sufficient accuracy to use in compiling resident population estimates for local government areas.

Assessment

The cost of processing usual residence at census time is high as it requires office coding of responses for those persons enumerated away from their usual residence. Data on usual residents are essential to the production of accurate State and local government population estimates, the primary objective of the census.

INTERNAL MIGRATION

Historical Background

Since 1971 persons have been required to state their usual residence 5 years ago to enable statistics on internal migration to be compiled. A further question on usual residence one year ago was included in the 1976, 1981 and 1986 Censuses. From 1976 to 1986 full addresses were requested and subsequently coded to statistical local areas or census local government areas. Only a locality code, not the actual address, is stored on the computer files.

Type of question(s)

Which State or territory did each person live in one year ago (ie at 21 February 1988) ? • If the person is less than one year old, leave blank.	☐ NSW ☐ Vic ☐ Qld ☐ SA ☐ WA ☐ Tas ☐ NT ☐ ACT ☐ Elsewhere
Where was each person's usual address five years ago (ie at 21 February 1984) ? • If the person is less than five years old, leave blank. • For persons who had no usual address on 21 February 1984, give the address at which they were then living. • If usual address was Cocos (Keeling) or Christmas Islands, mark "Elsewhere" and give address. • If usual address was overseas, mark "Elsewhere" and write "O/S". →	☐ Same as in question .. ☐ Elsewhere (please specify address) No. and street..... Suburb or rural locality..... City or town..... Postcode.....

User requirements

Data on a person's usual residence at some prior point in time (e.g. 1 or 5 years ago), when combined with detailed responses to the question on usual residence at census time, provide information on the extent of internal migration of the population. Coupled with other questions on the form, the questions on usual residence provide information on characteristics of the migratory population as well as the non-migratory population. Such data are used in the production of intercensal and postcensal population estimates, all of which are compiled on the basis of usual residence. In addition internal migration data is an important basis for projections of the population in particular areas.

Information on the internal migration patterns of the population at national, State, regional, local government and collection district levels is required for many planning purposes. In particular the data are used in:

- forecasting short and medium term housing requirements;
- planning transport, health and educational services; and
- zoning, release and development of land for residential and commercial purposes.

Non-census data available

- Residence one year ago – the ABS has collected these data in the Internal Migration Surveys in the period 1970–1987 but statistics were not available at small area level and the survey has now been discontinued.
- Administrative by-product data such as from the Medicare and family allowance schemes give regular statistics on the number of movements, but only very limited details on the characteristics of movers. Such data are subject to changes in their coverage as instanced by the introduction of means testing of family allowances.
- Residence five years ago – the census has been the only source of these data.

Assessment

The cost of processing responses to the questions on usual residence 1 year ago and usual residence 5 years ago are very high, with the latter being more expensive as it involves more persons who have moved. Data on usual residence 1 year ago are more reliable as less recall error can be expected. Usual residence 1 year ago at the State level is required for the calculation of ratios for use in the postcensal estimation of interstate migration. These in turn are an essential component of population estimates.

Five year migration data provide a better measure of long-term movement than one year data. Data on long-term movements are considered by users to be more useful than those on annual movements, particularly at the sub-State level.

Usual residence 5 years ago at State level only is required for analysis of internal migration and for revision of State population estimates for the immediate past intercensal period. Census data allow a direct measure of this component of population estimate revisions.

For the 1991 Census, data will be obtained for usual residence 1 year ago at State/Territory level only and at the statistical local area level for usual residence 5 years ago.

BIRTHPLACE

Historical background

A question on a person's birthplace has been included in every Australian census since Federation. Before the 1981 Census, with the exception of the 1921 Census, respondents were required to provide details of the State or Territory of birth if born in Australia, or country of birth if born overseas. The 1921, 1981 and 1986 Censuses did not require State or Territory details.

Type of question(s)

Where was each person born ?	☐ Australia (go to question ..) ☐ United Kingdom ☐ Italy ☐ New Zealand ☐ Other (please specify)
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User requirements

Data on birthplace are critical in targeting settlement assistance to migrants. Data on country of birth are used for the examination of the need for, and the utilisation of, health, education and other social services for migrant groups, for labour force training and recruitment and for the formulation and monitoring of many other government policies and programs related to migrants. For these purposes the data is mostly required at a small area level and is often cross-classified with year of arrival data.

The inclusion of the birthplace topic in the census will enable the ABS to maintain the accuracy of the estimated resident population by birthplace series.

Non-census data available

A question on birthplace is included in every ABS population survey, although detailed birthplace information is not available from these surveys because of high sampling error on estimates relating to many small birthplace groups.

Regular statistics on overseas arrivals and departures classified by birthplace are available from the processing of passenger cards required to be completed for each movement.

Assessment

Most of the important uses of country of birth information require detailed data for the large number of source countries of Australian migrants. Such data are also required for small areas. These needs cannot be met with acceptable quality from sample surveys nor overseas arrivals and departures statistics. The value of the data is greatly enhanced when cross-classified with data on period of residence in Australia which enables recent migrants to be distinguished from those who arrived some time ago. The data are widely used in planning and policy development.

BIRTHPLACE OF PARENTS

Historical background

A question on birthplace of parents was first asked in 1921, when the data were used to investigate the extent of the relationship between birthplace and race of persons born in Asia who were resident in Australia. The results showed that an appreciable proportion of persons born in Japan and other Asian countries, and a majority of those born in India, were of European parentage. No tabulations of birthplace of parents were released.

A question of birthplace of parents was not asked again until 1971 and has been asked in all subsequent Australian censuses.

Type of question(s)

Where was each person's father born ?	☐ Australia ☐ United Kingdom ☐ Italy ☐ Greece ☐ Yugoslavia ☐ Other (please specify)
Where was each person's mother born ?	☐ Australia ☐ United Kingdom ☐ Italy ☐ Greece ☐ Yugoslavia ☐ Other (please specify)

User requirements

Data on birthplace of parents indicate the ethnic background of Australians and are used in planning the delivery of services to migrants and in access and equity reviews.

The data are used in assessments of community sizes which in turn affects allocation of resources/facilities that are made on a community basis.

They are also used in analysis of the impact of migration flows from particular countries through to the second generation. Most uses of the data require detailed data for the large number of source countries and for small areas.

Non-census data available

The only regular data on birthplace of parents published by the ABS are derived from birth and marriage registrations. Data on birthplace of parents has been occasionally obtained in ABS surveys.

Assessment

The cost of processing this topic is high because some office coding is required.

The questions on birthplace of parents provides objective data on ethnicity in general and on the second-generation population in particular. The data provides important background information to planning decisions including those relating to access and equity.

YEAR OF ARRIVAL

Historical background

A question on date of first arrival in Australia or number of completed years of residence in Australia, has been asked of overseas born residents in all Australian censuses since Federation.

Type of question(s)

When did the person first arrive in Australia ?	☐ Before 1975 ☐ 1975-1979 ☐ 1980-1984 ☐ 1985 ☐ 1986 ☐ 1987 ☐ 1988 ☐ 1989
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User requirements

Data on year of arrival, when cross-classified with other census data, are used to analyse changes in the characteristics of migrants to Australia over time. In addition, users have identified the following needs for these data:

- for the separate identification of recent compared with 'older' migrant groups, with the former generally requiring more services; and
- in analysis of various aspects of migrant participation in the labour force.

The data are generally required at a small area level.

Non-census data available

Most ABS population surveys collect information on the year of arrival for the overseas born population. Regular statistics on overseas arrivals are available from the processing of passenger cards required for each movement.

Assessment

To facilitate capture of data by Optical Mark Recognition equipment, respondents will be required to mark pre-coded ranges rather than specifying the actual year of arrival. This will result in less detail being available from the 1991 Census than from the 1986 Census.

Year of arrival is an important cross-classifier for analysing data on the overseas-born population. Survey data cannot provide the small area data needed and cross-classified tables on the many birthplace groups that are possible with census results.

CITIZENSHIP

Historical background

A question on nationality was first asked in 1921, when respondents were required to indicate what national subject they were by means of birthplace, parentage or naturalisation. From 1933 to 1961 'nationality' was asked. In 1966 and 1971 the term 'nationality or citizenship' was used, and since 1976 the question has used the word 'citizenship'.

In 1986, the question on citizenship was made self-coding with only two response categories (Australia, Other).

Type of question(s)

Is the person an Australian citizen ?	☐ Yes, Australian citizen ☐ No
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User requirements

Data on citizenship are used for targeting electoral roll maintenance and citizenship promotion activities and costing reciprocal social security agreements with overseas countries. The data are often cross-classified with birthplace, year of arrival and age data.

Non-census data available

Data on the country of citizenship of settler arrivals are available from the processing of passenger cards completed for each movement into and out of Australia. Data on the number of migrants who become Australian citizens are available from the Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs.

Assessment

Data on citizenship is important for ensuring the effectiveness of electoral and citizenship promotion activities and in costing reciprocal social security agreements with overseas countries.

ABORIGINAL/TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ORIGIN

Historical background

In all censuses prior to 1971 respondents were required to state their race and, where race was mixed, to specify the proportions of each. In the 1971 and 1976 Censuses a question with response categories of European, Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Other was included. In the 1981 and 1986 Censuses the question identified only persons of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin. In these censuses, special interview forms were used in remote areas to facilitate enumeration of the population.

An objective of the 1986 Census was to obtain as complete a coverage as possible of the Aboriginal population. Special action included increased census awareness activities directed at Aboriginals, greater use of Aboriginal collectors and assistants, greater involvement of Aboriginal organisations, and better co-ordination of special field operations. An extra check was implemented during processing to ensure the responses to the Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander origin question were key-entered accurately and, where appropriate, responses to the ancestry question were used to impute for non-response.

Type of question(s)

Is the person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin ? * For persons of mixed origin, indicate the one to which they consider themselves to belong.	PERSON 1
	☐ No ☐ Yes, Aboriginal ☐ Yes, Torres Strait Islander

User requirements

The main purpose of this topic is to identify the number and distribution of persons of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin.

Data on the distribution and characteristics of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations are of importance to Commonwealth and State authorities responsible for developing policies for Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders in such fields as housing, health services, education, social security and special assistance programs. Because of the small size of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, the census is virtually the only source of reliable data. The Commonwealth Grants Commission requires accurate data on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations for use in the allocation of funds to the States and Territories for services directed at these populations.

Non-census data available

There have been some improvements in recent years on the extent to which data on Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders are available from relevant Commonwealth and State government authorities. However, the available data are still limited in coverage and quality.

Assessment

While the cost of processing this topic is low, costly supplementary field procedures are required to obtain as complete a coverage as possible.

In the absence of comprehensive and reliable data on Aboriginals from administrative systems, the census is the only source of detailed socio-demographic data on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

An alternative question like the 1986 Census ancestry question will not produce reliable data on the population of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders because some Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders choose to state their ancestry as Australian. It is considered essential to include a question identical to that used in 1986 in order to maintain comparability.

LANGUAGE USE

Historical background

A language question has been asked in five Australian censuses. In 1921 the question asked whether the person could read and write; in 1933 the question asked whether the person could read and write a foreign language if unable to read and write English. Language was not included again until 1976, when a question on languages regularly used was included.

In 1981 a question was asked on proficiency in spoken English for those persons speaking a language other than English at home. In 1986, two questions were asked: one on whether a language other than English is spoken at home, and if so what language; and the other dealing with proficiency in spoken English.

Type of question(s)

Does the person speak a language other than English <u>at home</u> ? • If the person is less than five years old, leave blank.	☐ No, speaks only English (go to question ..) ☐ Yes, Italian ☐ Yes, Greek ☐ Yes, Chinese ☐ Yes, German ☐ Yes, Arabic ☐ Yes, other (please specify)
How well does the person speak <u>English</u> ? • If the person is less than five years old, leave blank.	☐ Very well ☐ Well ☐ Not well ☐ Not at all

User requirements

Data on languages used are required:

- for the investigation and development of language services such as interpretation/translation and education;
- for the implementation of the national language policy; and
- as an indicator of 'active' ethnicity.

Data on proficiency in English are needed for:

- the development of English teaching programs;
- the development of multilingual information programs;
- the provision of interpretation/translation services; and
- the provision of migrant welfare services.

Data on languages used and proficiency in English are required at small area level and for small population groups for the planning and delivery of the above services.

Non-census data available

A language usage survey was conducted by the ABS in May 1983. This survey obtained data on languages regularly used and language first spoken.

Assessment

Language use questions have importance in implementation of national and State policies on language. They are used for study of language acquisition and inter-generational language retention.

Users in all levels of Government and community groups require data on proficiency in English at small area level and for small groups for use in targeting both language services and welfare or community services aimed at migrants.

The Government's objectives in its access and equity policy require language use data to be available for monitoring and implementing associated programs.

RELIGION

Historical background

A question on a person's religion has been asked in all Australian censuses. The *Census and Statistics Act 1905* specifies that response to this question is optional.

Type of question(s)

What is each person's religious denomination ? • This question is optional.	☐ Catholic ☐ Anglican ☐ Uniting Church ☐ Presbyterian ☐ Greek Orthodox ☐ No religion ☐ Other (please specify)
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User requirements

Data on religious affiliations of the population are required for the planning of all types of religion-related or religion-sponsored services, including:

- location of churches, education facilities, aged persons care and other social services;
- the allocation of chaplains to hospitals, prisons and the armed services;
- the accreditation of marriage celebrants; and
- allocation of Government grants to non-government schools and religious groups, sociological research and the allocation of air time on public radio.

In addition, the 1986 Population Census Ethnicity Committee in its April 1984 Report considered that information on a person's religion was, to some extent, useful as a surrogate measure of ethnicity.

Non-census data available

Data on the religious affiliations of the population are not available from other sources but some data on religion are obtained from marriage registrations in the form of rites used by marriage celebrants.

Assessment

Users have argued that religious organisations are the largest providers of services to the community outside those provided by Governments and the census is the only source of data they can use for the effective and efficient planning of such services.

Although the cost of processing this topic is high, the data are widely used in the religious community, and by Government agencies which provide services which complement services provided by religious organisations.

ATTENDANCE AT AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

Historical background

A variety of questions enabling the identification of full-time students has been included in all censuses. Questions on type of educational institution being attended by students have been asked in varying degrees of detail in the 1911, 1921, 1933, 1976 and 1986 Censuses.

A question on type of institution being attended by students was reinstated in the 1986 Census to enable comprehensive statistics to be produced on the characteristics of people attending various types of institutions.

Type of question(s)

Is the person attending a school or any other educational institution ? • Include external or correspondence students. • School students mark "Yes, full-time student".	☐ No ☐ Yes, full-time student ☐ Yes, part-time student
What type of educational institution is the person attending ? • Include external or correspondence students.	☐ Pre-school ☐ Infants/primary school ☐ Government ☐ Non-Government ☐ Secondary school ☐ Government ☐ Non-Government ☐ Tertiary institution ☐ Technical and Further Education (TAFE) College ☐ College of Advanced Education (CAE) ☐ University ☐ Other institution (please specify)

User requirements

Users require data on demographic, family, economic and social characteristics of persons attending particular types of educational institutions.

Information on whether each person under 15 years or aged 15-20 years and a full-time student is used by ABS for identifying dependent family children in family coding.

It also enables education planners to compare the current participation levels of small groups in the population. It also assists in developing policies affecting the labour market.

Information on the relationship between educational and labour market activities of young people in particular is required for Governments to monitor the impact of their policies and programs relating to people in the labour market. While much of this need is met by surveys, the census provides data for small areas and for small groups which assists in planning the delivery of programs.

Data on type of institution being attended further enhance analysis by providing data on the participation of different groups in the population in the various levels of education.

Non-census data available

Data on attendance at schools, universities, colleges of advanced education and colleges of technical and further education are collected each year from administrative sources but limited socio-economic data are available from these sources.

Monthly labour force surveys ask people aged 15-20 years whether or not they are attending school. Data are also available from the annual ABS Surveys 'Transition from Education to Work' and 'Labour Force Status and Educational Attainment' surveys.

Assessment

Information on whether a person is attending an educational institution is essential for identifying dependent family children in family coding. It also has important uses for education and labour market planning.

The census provides a wider range of information on the characteristics of students than is currently available from the statistics derived from administrative sources. This topic is considered to be of high priority by education planners at Commonwealth, State and community level. Significant changes are occurring in education participation and further changes are anticipated. Data from this question cross-classified with other characteristics will be very important in monitoring the changes as they occur.

EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS

Historical background

An education question in which respondents reported their highest level of achievement was included in the 1911 Census. However, a question directly asking about education qualifications was not included until 1966 when respondents were asked to provide details of the qualification name and institution at which it was obtained. Since 1971, persons aged 15 or over have been asked whether they had obtained a qualification. If so, information on the name of the highest qualification obtained, the field of study, the institution from which it was granted, and the year obtained was collected to enable the coding of the highest qualification to a detailed classification incorporating both level and field of study.

Type of question(s)

For persons aged 15 years or more.

Has the person obtained a trade or any other qualification since leaving school ?	☐ No (go to question ...) ☐ Still at primary or secondary school (go to question ...) ☐ Yes (please specify name of <u>highest</u> qualification obtained)
In which field of study was the person's qualification obtained ? For example, nursing, plumbing, computer programming, history.	Field of Study.....
From which institution was the person's qualification obtained ?	Name of Institution.....
In which year did the person complete that qualification ?	☐ Before 1970 ☐ 1970-74 ☐ 1975-79 ☐ 1980-84 ☐ 1985 ☐ 1986 ☐ 1987 ☐ 1988 ☐ 1989

User requirements

Data on education qualifications are important for the assessment of the skill level of the labour force and are therefore valuable for the planning and implementation of labour force training programs. The Department of Employment, Education and Training uses the data also as a basis for the preparation of the 'Occupational Demand Schedule' for use by the Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs in recruiting skilled migrants.

Some users require data on level of qualifications as a general indicator of education advantage in a socio-economic analysis of groups in the population.

For labour market analysis, level of qualification is of little use without knowledge about field of study. Field of study is required in considerable detail for studies of skill wastage or underutilisation, and for planning vocational education and training courses.

Data on year qualification obtained is vital in allowing an assessment of the rate at which qualified people move out of the occupations for which they were qualified, enter into other occupations or out of the labour force.

Non-census data available

Educational institutions collect details of qualifications awarded each year.

Data on leavers from schools, universities and other educational institutions are collected in population surveys run periodically by the ABS. Information on level of qualification and broad field of study are collected in an ABS survey on Labour Force Status and Educational Attainment conducted every February. While these surveys all provide useful education data the use of sampling means that detailed field of study data and small area data cannot be made available.

Assessment

The cost of processing this topic is high, requiring extensive office coding of responses.

In 1986 this topic was covered by a four-part question incorporating name of qualification, name of institution, field of study and year the highest post-school qualification obtained. The responses to name of institution were used only to assist in coding and were not included in output.

Questions on qualifications suffer from a fairly high level of non-response biased towards those without formal qualifications.

Testing has indicated that trade and secretarial qualifications tend to be under-reported. There are also coding problems with 'field of study' responses, particularly for overseas qualifications, qualifications obtained some time ago and where inadequate descriptions are provided by respondents.

Despite some problems with the data, qualifications information from the census is very important given policy changes occurring in the area of education and training.

AGE LEFT SCHOOL

Historical background

A question relating to level of school attainment was first asked in 1966 when a question on the highest level of schooling was included. In 1976 the question was changed to age left school to overcome reporting problems due to the lack of standardisation of schooling across States and different systems used overseas. This question was retained in 1981 and 1986.

Type of question(s)

For persons aged 15 years or more.

How old was each person when he/she left school ? • For persons who are primary or secondary school students, mark first box. • For persons who did not go to school, mark second box.	☐ Still at primary or secondary school ☐ Did not go to school ☐ 12 years or younger ☐ 13 years ☐ 14 years ☐ 15 years ☐ 16 years ☐ 17 years ☐ 18 years ☐ 19 years ☐ 20 years ☐ 21 years or older
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User requirements

Data on age left school are used as a surrogate for the highest level of schooling attained and are primarily required for:

- assessing the likely usefulness of extension courses or other educational programs; and
- an indicator of disadvantage because it shows the level of education reached by persons with no post-school qualifications.

Non-census data available

Statistics on age left school and highest grade attended are collected annually as a supplement to the Labour Force Survey. The most recent survey, 'Labour Force Status and Educational Attainment' was conducted in February 1988.

Administrative data provide detailed information on age participation rates at school for contemporary students, and the age at which students leave school.

Assessment

Some users requested the inclusion of a question on highest level of schooling, rather than age left school, because 'age left school' was not considered an adequate approximation of education attainment at school. However, testing has shown that changes in education systems over time and differences in school systems and grading terminology between States (and overseas) continue to make a question on highest level of schooling unsuitable for a census.

This topic is an important adjunct to qualifications data for people without post-school qualifications (60% of persons 15 years and over in the 1986 Census were recorded as having no post-school qualifications), as well as an important indicator of educational need or disadvantage. Information on 'age left school' is particularly important because of the extent of change occurring in education participation and in labour market adjustment.

INCOME (INCLUDING FAMILY INCOME)

Historical background

A question on income was first asked in the 1933 Census in an attempt to measure the effects of the Depression. It has subsequently been asked in 1976, 1981 and 1986. Each person is asked to indicate the range within which their gross income from all sources lies. Statistics on personal, family and household income are produced.

Type of question(s)

For persons aged 15 years or more.

What is the gross income (including pensions and allowances) that the person usually receives each week from all sources ? - Count all income including: - family allowance (child endowment); - pensions; - unemployment benefits etc; - worker's compensation; - superannuation; - wages; - salary; - overtime; - dividends; - rents received; - business or farm income (less expenses of operation); - interest received. - Do not deduct tax, superannuation, health insurance etc.	☐ Less than \$58 per week (Less than \$3001 p.a.) ☐ \$58 to \$115 per week (\$3001 to \$6000 p.a.) ☐ \$116 to \$172 per week (\$6001 to \$9000 p.a.) ☐ \$173 to \$230 per week (\$9001 to \$12000 p.a.) ☐ \$231 to \$307 per week (\$12001 to \$16000 p.a.) ☐ \$308 to \$384 per week (\$16001 to \$20000 p.a.) ☐ \$385 to \$498 per week (\$20001 to \$26000 p.a.) ☐ \$499 to \$613 per week (\$26001 to \$32000 p.a.) ☐ \$614 to \$958 per week (\$32001 to \$50000 p.a.) ☐ Over \$958 per week (Over \$50000 p.a.)
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Income categories will be adjusted to allow for the effects of inflation since the 1986 Census.

User requirements

Information on the income levels of various small groups of the population and the geographic distribution is used in public and private sector planning activities. In particular it helps identify the location of the disadvantaged for the planning of social services. Broad income is a useful indicator of socio-economic status and hence is extensively used, cross-classified with other census variables.

Non-census data available

Data on income are available from surveys of income and household expenditure conducted regularly by the ABS. A question on income is usually asked in most household surveys for use as a classificatory variable. Family income and type of income unit are separate variables available from these surveys.

Assessment

Testing of the topic has shown that there is a general tendency among respondents to understate their income. In particular social welfare payments (e.g. family allowances) and investment income such as rent and interest are often omitted. Similarly, pensioners sometimes state that they receive no income as they do not regard their pension as income.

Family income is currently calculated for members present on census night. There are problems in the collection and processing of data on income of family members who are temporarily absent. There are also problems associated with the derivation of family income from incomes of individuals which are reported in ranges.

In spite of a non-response rate (7% in the 1986 Census) higher than most other census questions, and a clear tendency for income to be understated, the income topic is sufficiently important as a data item in its own right and as a cross-classifier for inclusion in the census. The census enables data on income for small areas and small groups of the population to be produced to supplement the detailed data available from regular surveys for large groups and areas.

LABOUR FORCE STATUS

Historical background

Data on labour force status, employment status and status of workers have been obtained in every Australian census since 1911. In the 1981 and 1986 Censuses, respondents were required to answer a series of questions from which labour force status was coded.

For the 1986 Census, the concepts used in the labour force questions were made more consistent with those used in ABS labour force surveys. A person was classified as unemployed if he or she looked for work in the last four weeks, rather than last week as in the 1981 Census. The question on unemployment also required that the person be actively looking for work. Unpaid workers in a family business who worked less than 15 hours in the reference week were included in the labour force in 1986; in 1981 only unpaid workers who worked for 15 hours or more a week were included in the employed labour force. Unemployed persons in 1986 were classified as looking for full-time work or looking for part-time work.

Type of question(s)

For persons aged 15 years or more.

LAST WEEK, did the person have a full-time or part-time job of any kind ? • A job means any type of work, including casual or temporary work and part-time work, even if it was only for one hour.	☐ Yes, worked for payment or profit (go to question ...) ☐ Yes, but absent on holidays, on sick leave, on strike or temporarily stood down (go to question ...) ☐ Yes, unpaid work in a family business (go to question ...) ☐ Yes, other unpaid work ☐ No, did not have a job
Did the person actively look for work at any time in the LAST 4 WEEKS ? • Actively looking for work means checking or being registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service; writing, telephoning or applying in person to an employer for work; or advertising for work.	☐ No, did not look for work (go to question ...) ☐ Yes, looked for full-time work ☐ Yes, looked for part-time work
Was the person available to start work LAST WEEK ?	☐ Yes, could have taken a job (go to question ...) ☐ No, already had a job to go to (go to question ...) ☐ No, temporarily ill or injured (go to question ...) ☐ No, other reason (go to question ...)
In the main job held LAST WEEK, was the person : • Mark one box only. • If the person had more than one job last week, then "main job" refers to the job in which the person usually works the most hours.	☐ A wage/salary earner? ☐ Conducting own business but not employing others? ☐ Conducting own business and employing others? ☐ A helper not receiving wages or salary?

User requirements

The questions used to determine a person's labour force status enable:

- each person aged 15 years or over to be classified as in the labour force or not in the labour force;
- persons in the labour force to be classified as employed or unemployed; and
- employed persons to be classified as wage/salary earners, self-employed, employers or unpaid helpers in family businesses.

Users require these data to provide benchmarks for assessing labour force changes for small population groups and within small geographic areas. Because the census provides small area data, analysis of the economic condition of small areas is possible. In addition, labour force participation rates can be determined for small groups of the population – Aborigines, migrants from particular countries, detailed age groups, etc. Conversely, it also provides data on those persons not in the labour force. To further improve comparability of census data and data from the Labour Force Survey, an additional question on a persons availability to start work is being considered for the 1991 Census.

Non-census data available

ABS Monthly Labour Force Surveys provide data on labour force status of persons for States and a small number of regions within States.

Assessment

While regular ABS surveys provide data on the labour force status of persons, the need for such data at small area level and for small groups of the population can only be met by inclusion of the topic in the census.

OCCUPATION

Historical background

A variety of questions on occupation has been included in all previous censuses.

Occupation data were coded using the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO) for the first time in 1986. Also, an extra question on the main tasks or duties that a person usually performs in his or her job was included to assist in the coding of occupations at the unit group level. These steps have considerably improved the quality of occupation data because ASCO is a classification which reflects modern occupations, the distribution of employed persons is spread more evenly throughout major groups and its implementation has reduced significantly the number of occupations coded to 'not classifiable'.

Type of question(s)

For persons aged 15 years or more and employed.

In the main job held LAST WEEK, what was the person's occupation ? • Give full title. • For example, Civil Engineering Draftsman, Accounts Clerk, Fast Foods Cook, Floor Tiler, Extruding Machine Operator, Office Cleaner. • For public servants, state official designation as well as occupation. • Armed Services personnel, state rank as well as occupation.	Occupation.....
What are the main tasks that the person HIMSELF/HERSELF usually performs in that occupation ? • Describe as fully as possible. • For example, preparing drawings for dam construction, recording and paying accounts, cooking hamburgers and chips, fixing cork tiles, operating plastic extruding machine, emptying waste-paper baskets and vacuuming carpets.	Tasks or duties.....

User requirements

Detailed occupation data are needed for analysing current and potential imbalances in the supply and demand for labour of varying skills, at the national, regional and local area level. These analyses provide the input to the development of policies and programs in the fields of education, training, immigration, industry and industrial relations and also for the monitoring of changes taking place in specific occupational labour markets. The usefulness of data on occupation is considerably enhanced when analysed with detailed data on industry of employment and qualifications.

Small area and regional data about the structure of the labour market are required for the purpose of advising Governments (at all levels) and their agencies responsible for delivering programs and providing services at a regional level.

Non-census data available

A question on occupation is included each quarter in ABS Labour Force Surveys. Information is also available from ABS special supplementary surveys and professional registration boards.

Assessment

The need for extensive office coding of responses makes the cost of processing this topic very high.

There are many important needs for occupation data at small area level and/or for finely classified occupations. Regular data on ASCO unit group occupations are available from the ABS Labour Force Surveys but some survey data can be subject to quite high sampling variability. Data from surveys are not available for small geographic areas.

INDUSTRY

Historical background

A question on the industry of a person's employment has been included in one form or another in all censuses. In recent censuses, industry has been coded from the names and addresses of respondents' workplaces. Coding is assisted by the use of details of businesses on the central register of businesses maintained by the ABS. Use of the Australian Standard Industrial Classification (ASIC) codes on the register of businesses provides for more accurate coding of industry and greater consistency of the data with that from other ABS collections based on the register. A direct question on the kind of industry, business or service carried out at the workplace has also been asked to assist coding in cases where the name and address of the respondent's workplace cannot be located on the ABS central register of businesses. Names and addresses of workplace are also used for the coding of work destination zones used in journey to work studies (see Journey to work).

Type of question(s)

For persons aged 15 years or more and employed.

Information on employer's name is used solely to determine the industry classification and is not stored on the computer record. Address is also used in determining the industry classification and in identifying a general location (e.g. Central Business District) for journey to work coding. The address is not stored on the computer record, only the general location code.

For the main job held LAST WEEK, who did each person work for ? • For persons conducting their own business, print name of business. • For government employees, print full name of Department, Division, Branch or Section. • For teachers, print name of school.	Business or trading name Name of Division, Branch or Section (if any) in which the person worked
For the main job held LAST WEEK, where did each person work ? • Print full address of actual place of work. • For persons with no fixed place of work, provide address of depot or office.	No. and street..... Suburb, town or locality..... State..... Postcode.....
What kind of industry, business or service is carried out by the employer at the address given in reply to question .. ? • Describe as fully as possible, using two words or more (for example, dairy farming, footwear manufacturing).	Kind of industry.....

User requirements

Employment data by industry are needed for analysing and monitoring the rate of structural change in detailed industries at a national and local area level. Detailed analyses are undertaken on the demographic and labour force characteristics of employees in industries and in locations which are facing structural change and heavy job losses. Recent examples of this are in the textile, steel and heavy engineering industries. The utility of data on industry is considerably enhanced when analysed with detailed data on occupation and qualifications.

Small area and regional data about the structure of the labour market are required for the purpose of advising Governments (at all levels), and their agencies responsible for delivering programs and providing services at a regional level.

Data on industry sector (i.e. whether establishment of employment is owned by one of the various levels of government or by the private sector) are used to assess the impact of government activity in small areas.

Non-census data available

The ABS Labour Force Survey each quarter asks employed persons for their industry of employment. Industry data at the ASIC group level are available quarterly from the Labour Force Survey, but some survey data can be subject to quite high sampling variability. Unemployed persons are asked each month their previous industry of employment. Personal characteristics of the employed and unemployed are collected each month from the Labour Force Survey.

The ABS undertakes a range of surveys of businesses collecting information on employment by industry. Only limited industry detail is available, and personal characteristics of workers are not collected. ABS economic censuses also provide industry data but personal characteristics of the employed are not collected.

Assessment

The cost of processing this topic is extremely high as extensive office coding of responses is required. Moreover, a relatively large amount of detail is required from respondents to code industry data to ASIC using whenever possible the ASIC codes for businesses on the ABS register.

An alternative method to that used in the 1986 Census of obtaining industry data using only information on kind of industry, business or service carried out at the workplace was proposed by ABS but rejected by some major users. The less costly and less accurate coding method was unacceptable not only due to a lowering in quality of industry data but also because of concerns about comparability between successive population censuses and between census data and that from other ABS sources. Coding from information obtained from ABS's central register of businesses needs to be retained.

Although a substantial amount of information on employment by industry is available from other ABS surveys and economic censuses it is not available at the detailed level for most industries. Extensive industry restructuring is occurring, so data on the geographic distribution of industry employment is needed to monitor these changes.

HOURS WORKED

Historical background

A question relating to the number of hours worked by employed persons has been asked in each census since 1966. The question in 1966 related to the total hours usually worked in the job held last week. The question was expanded in 1971 and 1976 to include the main job and other job(s) held last week. Because tests showed that the use of ranges for hours worked gave more accurate answers, respondents in 1981 and 1986 were asked to indicate the appropriate ranges of hours worked in their main job only.

The number of response categories in the hours worked question was increased in the 1986 Census. The 1981 category of '35 hours or more' was split into four categories (35-39, 40, 41-48 and 49 or more). The categories have been made comparable with those available for other ABS labour force statistics.

Type of question(s)

For persons aged 15 years or more and employed.

In the main job held LAST WEEK, how many hours did the person work ? • Subtract any time off; add any overtime or extra hours worked.	PERSON 1 ☐ None ☐ 1-15 hours ☐ 16-24 hours ☐ 25-34 hours ☐ 35-39 hours ☐ 40 hours ☐ 41-48 hours ☐ 49 hours or more
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User requirements

Information on hours worked, preferably classified by industry and occupation is required by labour market economists as it allows shifts in the labour force to be analysed within small geographic regions. It is also important for labour market analyses of small groups such as Aboriginals, migrants, sole parents and the aged.

Data on the extent of part-time employment are used in the study of changing work patterns and growth in leisure. Information on hours worked is needed to estimate child care needs.

Non-census data available

As part of the Monthly Labour Force Survey, information is collected on the number of hours people work each week. Extensive information is also available from ABS employer based surveys but not for small population groups or for small geographic regions.

Assessment

Census data on hours worked by employed persons are important for labour market analysis of small areas. The data are also important as a cross-classifier for labour force variables and for users to derive a classification of full-time/part-time work. Survey data are inadequate for analyses for small areas or for small groups of the population.

JOURNEY TO WORK (DESTINATION ZONE CODING)

Historical background

Journey to work is a topic derived from coding of address of usual residence and address of place of work to obtain origins and destinations of travel to work. The questions which enable the derivation of journey to work data were included in 1971, 1976, 1981 and 1986 Censuses.

User requirements

The coding of addresses of place of work to destination zones allows census data to be produced on journey to work patterns and on daytime populations of employed persons working in 'destination zones' or larger areas such as statistical local areas. Journey to work data are required by transport authorities for the analysis of travel pattern within major metropolitan areas, the modelling of fuel usage, the forecasting of public transport patronage and the analysis of catchment areas for transport routes. The data also assist policy makers in the planning of transport systems, industrial development and release of residential and industrial land.

Information on daytime populations is required for analysis of the distribution of industry across regions and for planning of private and public facilities in employment centres.

Non-census data available

No ABS survey data are available on this topic.

Assessment

The cost of processing this topic is very high, resulting from the office coding required. Names and addresses of workplace used for coding industry are also used for the coding of destination zones. The processing of both the industry and journey to work (destination zone coding) topics are therefore closely linked.

Detailed data on the direction and magnitude of journeys are required for both transport and land use planning. Journeys to and from work form the largest proportion of the total number of journeys and are concentrated in the peak periods which place the critical load on transport systems.

MODE OF TRAVEL TO WORK

Historical background

A question on mode of travel to work was asked for the first time in the 1976 Census. It was repeated in the 1981 and 1986 Censuses with slight modifications.

The 1986 question on mode of travel to work included an extra response option for 'walked only'. In the 1981 Census, write-in responses of 'walked' were separately coded provided no other mode was reported.

Type of question(s)

For persons aged 15 years or more and employed.

How did the person get to work on Tuesday, 21 February 1989 ? • Mark boxes for each person to show all methods used.	☐ Train ☐ Bus ☐ Ferry or Tram ☐ Taxi ☐ Car - as driver ☐ Car - as passenger ☐ Motorbike or motor scooter ☐ Bicycle ☐ Walked only ☐ Worked at home ☐ Did not go to work ☐ Other (please specify)
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User requirements

Users have indicated that data on mode of travel to work are fundamental to journey to work analysis and to transport planning in general.

Data are also used to:

- identify public transport customer groups;
- measure public transport patronage; and
- assist in energy conservation studies.

Non-census data available

Limited data are available from some past ABS household surveys. However there are no recent ABS surveys providing this information. Some additional information could be obtained from transport authority records such as details of bus/train fares.

Assessment

Mode of travel to work data are mainly used in conjunction with journey to work data for transport planning. For example, it helps identify public transport usage between a particular origin and destination and can be used for assessing car parking requirements at a particular destination.

NUMBER OF MOTOR VEHICLES GARAGED

Historical background

A question on number of vehicles was asked in the 1971 Census. Since 1976, households have been required to record the number of registered motor vehicles owned or used by members of the household garaged at or near their dwelling.

Type of question(s)

How many registered motor vehicles owned or used by members of this household were garaged or parked at or near this dwelling on the night of Tuesday, 21 February 1989 ?

- Exclude motor bikes, motor scooters, tractors.
- Include company vehicles kept at home.

- ☐ None
- ☐ 1 motor vehicle
- ☐ 2 motor vehicles
- ☐ 3 motor vehicles
- ☐ 4 motor vehicles or more

User requirements

Information on number of vehicles garaged at a dwelling is required for:

- analysing and predicting car ownership patterns;
- indicating the availability of sources of transport other than public transport;
- input to development of transport policies and priorities, e.g. car parking requirements, traffic planning, traffic management and public transport provision; and
- providing a socio-economic profile of the population as well as the mobility of segments of the population.

Non-census data available

Some aspects of the utilisation of motor vehicles are available every three years from the ABS Survey of Motor Vehicle Use. A further survey is being considered for 1991. Data will be available from the 1988-89 Household Expenditure Survey on vehicles associated with households. Data from motor vehicle registration records can provide some indication of the geographic distribution of motor vehicles.

Assessment

Users have emphasised that data on this topic have two main uses. One is as part of a journey to work 'package', with the topics of destination zone coding and mode of travel to work, and used by major transport planning authorities and local authorities. The second use is as a socio-economic indicator, for which it is frequently required on a small area basis.

Registration records do not provide an adequate substitute because the registration address does not equate with garaging address in many cases (e.g. fleet vehicles) and cross-classification with other census items would not be possible.

HOUSEHOLD ADDRESS ON CENSUS NIGHT

Historical background

Census counts classified by statistical areas where persons spent census night are available from every national census.

Type of question(s)

At what address did this household spend Test Census night, Tuesday, 21 February 1989 ?

No. and street.....

Suburb, town or locality.....

.....Postcode.....

Justification

The majority of census output is available on a place of enumeration basis for individual collection districts or aggregations thereof. Household address on census night is used to confirm the geographic code allocated to the household. Household address on census night is also essential for the conduct of the post-enumeration survey which measures the level of underenumeration in the census. Estimates of underenumeration in the census are an important component of revisions to estimated resident populations for each of the States and local government areas.

Assessment

Household address on census night is essential for the conduct of an accurate census. Confidentiality of the data provided is carefully guarded and the information is not stored on computer files. No identifiable information about an individual is made available to any other person, government agency or private organisation. All census forms will be destroyed once the processing of the data has been completed (see Section 3).

NUMBER OF BEDROOMS

Historical background

A question on number of rooms/bedrooms has been included in every Australian census since 1911.

Type of question(s)

How many bedrooms are there in this dwelling ?

- ☐ 0 or 1 bedroom
- ☐ 2 bedrooms
- ☐ 3 bedrooms
- ☐ 4 bedrooms
- ☐ 5 bedrooms
- ☐ 6 bedrooms or more

User requirements

A question on number of rooms/bedrooms is required:

- to provide some indication of dwelling size; and
- to provide an indication of overcrowding by calculating occupancy ratios (i.e. the number of people per room/bedroom).

Occupancy ratios are used as a broad measure of housing standards when assessing the nature and utilisation of the Australian housing stock. Data on the number of bedrooms are one of several factors used to calculate weights for the rent and mortgage component of the Consumer Price Index.

Virtually all user requirements are met by a question on the number of bedrooms.

Non-census data available

Data on number of bedrooms are available from the 1985-86 Income Survey and 1988-89 Household Expenditure Survey. 1988 Survey of Housing will also collect data on number of bedrooms.

Assessment

While the 1986 Census household form asked householders to indicate the numbers of various room types, only the number of bedrooms was entered into the computer record. A review of the processing budget resulted in the total number of rooms not being captured because of the high cost of deriving the total.

Tests have found that the understanding of a question on number of rooms varies because:

- respondents incorrectly count rooms such as, kitchens and bathrooms as 'other rooms';
- respondents have difficulty in recording the number of rooms they use for several purposes (e.g. bedroom/study), often double counting a room; and
- the concept is not usually relevant for tents and caravans and there is considerable incorrect inclusion of the communal bathrooms, toilets and laundries associated with these dwellings.

Housing authorities and other users of statistics have indicated that data of this kind are needed as a measure of overcrowding and of the adequacy of dwelling stock. While a small number of users would prefer a question on number of rooms, given the definitional problems and extra costs involved with such a question, data on number of bedrooms are acceptable. Data on number of bedrooms are required at small area level.

RENT

Historical background

Weekly rent paid for each dwelling has been asked in every Australian census since 1911. In 1947 householders were also required to indicate whether the dwelling was rented furnished or unfurnished. Since 1971, in addition to stating the weekly rent and whether the dwelling was furnished or unfurnished, householders have been required to indicate the type of landlord.

Type of question(s)

Is this dwelling rented by you or any usual member of this household ? ☐ No ☐ Yes	
To whom is rent paid ? ☐ State Housing Authority ☐ Other Government Agency ☐ Other	Is the dwelling owned (or being bought) by you or any usual member of this household ? ☐ Yes, owned (paid off) ☐ Yes, being bought ☐ No
What is the weekly rent ? ☐ \$0 - \$25 ☐ \$26 - \$50 ☐ \$51 - \$75 ☐ \$76 - \$100 ☐ \$101 - \$125 ☐ \$126 - \$150 ☐ \$151 - \$175 ☐ \$176 - \$200 ☐ \$201 or more	If being bought: What monthly payment (or average monthly payment) is being made on the loan(s) for this dwelling ? ☐ \$0 - \$100 ☐ \$101 - \$200 ☐ \$201 - \$300 ☐ \$301 - \$400 ☐ \$401 - \$500 ☐ \$501 - \$600 ☐ \$601 - \$700 ☐ \$701 - \$800 ☐ \$801 - \$900 ☐ \$901 - \$1000 ☐ \$1001 or more
Is the dwelling rented furnished or unfurnished ? ☐ Furnished ☐ Unfurnished	

Weekly rental categories will be adjusted to allow for the effects of inflation since the 1986 Census.

User requirements

Users have indicated that the rental question is important for housing policy planning in Australia, as it provides an objective assessment of the housing market and allows regional variations in housing ownership trends and conditions to be monitored and appropriate housing policies developed. In particular, rental information produced from the census aids in the identification of housing needs and of the extent to which specific groups (e.g. low income households, aged persons and Aborigines) have access to adequate housing.

Rent data from the census are used by the ABS in calculating estimates of imputed rent for the National Accounts and checking the representativeness of dwelling samples used in the Consumer Price Index.

Used in conjunction with income, rent data provide an indication of disposable income.

Data on rent, together with data on mortgage, are used to derive a nature of occupancy classification which classifies dwellings as either rented or owned or being purchased. The classification also subdivides the rented component between government and private landlords and whether rented as furnished or unfurnished.

Non-census data available

Data on rent are/will be available from:

- 1985-86 Income and Housing Survey
- 1988 Survey of Housing
- 1988-89 Household Expenditure Survey
- 1990 Income and Housing Survey

However, because of small sample sizes, surveys cannot provide small area data.

Assessment

To facilitate capture of data by OMR, respondents will mark pre-coded ranges rather than specifying the actual dollar amounts. This will result in less detail being available from the 1991 Census than from the 1986 Census.

The census is the only source of rent data for small areas and for small groups of the population. Such data are important for housing policy-making and planning, and for studying the housing conditions of minority populations.

MORTGAGE

Historical background

A question on mortgage was asked for the first time in the 1976 Census. The question was simplified for the 1981 and 1986 Censuses to ask only whether there was a mortgage and the monthly payments on the total mortgage on the dwelling.

Type of question(s)

Is this dwelling rented by you or any usual member of this household ? ☐ No ☐ Yes	
To whom is rent paid ? ☐ State Housing Authority ☐ Other Government Agency ☐ Other	Is the dwelling owned (or being bought) by you or any usual member of this household ? ☐ Yes, owned (paid off) ☐ Yes, being bought ☐ No
What is the weekly rent ? ☐ \$0 - \$25 ☐ \$26 - \$50 ☐ \$51 - \$75 ☐ \$76 - \$100 ☐ \$101 - \$125 ☐ \$126 - \$150 ☐ \$151 - \$175 ☐ \$176 - \$200 ☐ \$201 or more	If being bought: What monthly payment (or average monthly payment) is being made on the loan(s) for this dwelling ? ☐ \$0 - \$100 ☐ \$101 - \$200 ☐ \$201 - \$300 ☐ \$301 - \$400 ☐ \$401 - \$500 ☐ \$501 - \$600 ☐ \$601 - \$700 ☐ \$701 - \$800 ☐ \$801 - \$900 ☐ \$901 - \$1000 ☐ \$1001 or more
Is the dwelling rented furnished or unfurnished ? ☐ Furnished ☐ Unfurnished	

Monthly payment categories will be adjusted to allow for the effects of inflation since the 1986 Census.

User requirements

Users require data on mortgages classified by household characteristics to measure access to home ownership and provide benchmark data for evaluation of housing needs, housing finance and housing demand. Regional and small area (local government area) data are required.

Used in conjunction with income, mortgage data provide an indication of disposable income.

Data on mortgage, together with data on rent, is used to derive a nature of occupancy classification which classifies dwellings as either rented, being purchased or owned.

Non-census data available

Data on mortgage are/will be available from:

- 1985-86 Income and Housing Survey

- 1988 Survey of Housing
- 1988-89 Household Expenditure Survey
- 1990 Income and Housing Survey

However, because of small sample sizes, surveys cannot provide small area data.

Assessment

To facilitate capture of data by OMR, respondents will mark pre-coded ranges rather than specifying the actual dollar amounts. This will result in less detail being available from the 1991 Census than from the 1986 Census.

The census is the only source of mortgage data for small areas and small groups of the population. Such data are important for housing policy-making and planning, and for studying the housing conditions of minority populations.

PRIVATE DWELLING (CLASSIFICATION)

Historical background

A question on class of dwelling was asked at every Australian census from 1911 through to 1966. In 1971 respondents were presented with a sketch to indicate which classification best described their dwelling. In 1976 both respondents and collectors had to provide details of structure, and in 1981 and 1986 the census collectors only were asked to provide this information.

Caravans have been included as a response option since 1961. However, caravans in caravan parks were first enumerated with household forms in 1986 to enable statistics to be produced for the first time on the family structure of persons residing in caravan parks.

Traditionally the census has defined a dwelling as the space occupied by a household. Therefore, where a dwelling unit was shared by more than a single household, the procedure results in an overcount of the stock of dwellings. To measure this effect, attempts have been made to identify dwellings that comprised a sharing of private house or flat (1954, 1976) or in which a kitchen or bathroom was shared (1971, 1976). However, the quality of response to these questions was poor.

Type of question(s) (Answered by collector)

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| ☐ | Separate house |
| ☐ | Semi-detached house |
| ☐ | Row or terrace house |
| ☐ | Medium density housing |
| ☐ | Flat, unit in building
over three storeys |
| ☐ | Caravan, tent, cabin etc.
in caravan park |
| ☐ | Caravan not in caravan
park, houseboat etc. |
| ☐ | Improvised home |
| ☐ | House or flat attached
to a shop, office etc. |

User requirements

Users require data in terms of the types of private dwelling structure for the analysis of personal and household (including family) characteristics in relation to the physical structure that houses them and for providing the benchmark for regular estimates of the different types of housing available.

The results are used:

- to determine changes in housing patterns;
- to advise on housing policies for reviewing existing housing stock;
- for land use forecasting; and
- for transport planning.

Non-census data available

The ABS conducts a quarterly Building Activity Collection which provides data on additions to the stock of private dwellings. Information on type of dwelling has also been collected in housing and energy surveys conducted by ABS.

Assessment

There is a strong user demand for data on dwelling structure, especially at small area level and for small groups of the population, to determine living standards. The question is answered by the collector which increases collection costs but requires no response by the public.

Users and collectors reported problems with the 1986 Census classification and a revision of the classification is being considered.

There are problems in some areas with an overcount of dwellings resulting from the definition outlined in 'historical background' above.

NON-PRIVATE DWELLING AND CARAVAN PARK (CLASSIFICATION)

Historical background

Non-private dwellings have been enumerated and classified in all Australian censuses since Federation. In the 1986 Census, caravan parks were enumerated using household forms rather than personal forms to enable statistics to be produced for the first time on families residing in caravan parks.

Type of question(s)

Information required for the classification of non-private dwellings is collected from persons-in-charge. A list of non-private dwellings is compiled prior to the census based on those identified in the previous census, those identified as part of ABS's population survey operations and from information provided by relevant government departments. This list is used to improve coverage of non-private dwellings.

User requirements

Information on non-private dwellings and caravan parks is required for:

- analysis of programs for the aged and disabled;
- policy analysis and policy formulation in the development and financing of projects in the areas of health, the aged, children and rehabilitation; and
- better planning of services for residents of caravan parks.

Non-census data available

Government departments have information on government funded institutions although generally only limited details are available on the characteristics of residents.

Assessment

The classification of non-private dwellings is dependent on the perceptions of persons-in-charge and arrangements made for collecting data. As a result, information about non-private dwellings and persons in such dwellings is less accurate than that for private dwellings.

APPENDIX 2

ASSESSMENT OF OTHER MAJOR TOPICS REQUESTED BUT EXCLUDED FROM THE 1991 CENSUS

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YEAR FIRST MARRIED (DURATION OF MARRIAGE)

Historical background

A question related to the duration of a person's present marriage has been included in all previous censuses except the 1986 Census. In 1986, persons were asked to state the year in which they were first married. Data from the 1986 question when tabulated by whether married more than once, give the duration of the present marriage for those who had married once and the total period from first marriage for those who had remarried.

1986 Census question(s)

The 1986 Census question was asked of persons who were ever married.

Answer questions 20 and 21 for all persons who have ever been married.	
20. In what year was the person <u>first</u> married?	Year 19.....

User requirements

Data on duration of marriage are required for both fertility analysis and family studies, including analysis of trends in divorces. In particular, the number of married persons by duration of marriage provides the population base on which frequencies of births and divorces can be analysed.

Non-census data available

Information on date of the first marriage and date of most recent marriage were collected in the 1986 Family Formation Survey.

Assessment

The usefulness of data on duration of marriage for fertility analysis is greatly reduced because of the increase in the incidence of births outside marriage. The increased incidence of remarriages and de facto living arrangements also reduces the usefulness of the data for family studies. The extension of the question to include duration of cohabitation would overcome some of these deficiencies. However, collecting information on cohabitation history is likely to be considered by respondents as intrusive and is therefore not suitable for a population census.

Data on duration of marriage are not required for small groups of the population nor for small areas, so user needs can be better met by surveys.

WHETHER MARRIED MORE THAN ONCE

Historical background

A question asking whether a person has been married more than once was included in the 1981 and 1986 Censuses.

1986 Census question(s)

This question was asked of persons who were ever married.

21. Has the person been married more than once?	1 ☐ No, married once only 2 ☐ Yes
---	--

User requirements

Data on whether a person has been married more than once are used in fertility analysis and in the study of the family. In particular, the data allow the separate family and fertility analyses of those persons who have married once and of those who have remarried.

Non-census data available

Information on the number of times married is available from the 1986 Family Formation Survey. Data on marriages by whether the marriages are first or remarriages are also available from marriage registrations annually.

Assessment

Data from this question complement those from questions on relationship, number of children ever born, and duration of marriage, for use in studies of family and fertility analyses. The data can also be used to identify persons who have remarried and would allow the analysis of families formed by remarriages. However, given that the questions on number of children ever born and duration of marriage are not included in the 1991 Census, the value in including this question would be limited to the identification of persons remarried and families formed by remarriages. Some information on families formed by remarriages would be available from the census 'relationship' question which allows the identification of 'blended' families.

Data are not required for small areas nor for small groups of the population.

ISSUE (NUMBER OF CHILDREN EVER BORN)

Historical background

A question on the number of children ever born has been asked in all Australian censuses except in the 1933 Census. Up to and including the 1966 Census the number of children born to the existing marriage was asked of both males and females, although tabulations were not produced for males after the 1947 Census. In the 1971 and 1976 Censuses, the number of children from all marriages and from the present marriage was asked of women aged 15 years and over. In the 1981 and 1986 Censuses, all females aged 15 and over were asked the total number of children they have ever had.

1986 Census question(s)

The 1986 Census question was asked of females aged 15 years or more.

25. For each female, how many babies has she ever had? • Do not include still-births. • If none, tick box 21.	21 ☐None Total Now living
---	---

User requirements

Data on fertility are required for investigations of fertility differentials between various socio-economic groups, including the Aboriginal population, and for predicting future fertility of subgroups for forming related policies.

Analysis of fertility can be enhanced by relating data on number of children to data on marital status, duration of marriages or cohabitation, and whether married more than once.

Data on the number of children ever born and the number of surviving children can be used to estimate infant and childhood mortality of small groups of the population, including the Aboriginal population.

Non-census data available

Information on the number of children ever born is available from the 1986 Family Formation Survey but not for small groups of the population including Aboriginals. Registrations of births by all States and both Territories also provide extensive annual data but Aboriginals are not always identified.

Assessment

With Australia's fertility now remaining rather stable at a low level, and given that variations in fertility among most small groups of the population have considerably narrowed, it is not essential for data on number of children ever born to be collected every five years. Extensive data on fertility are available annually from the registration of births.

A possible exception is fertility data for the Aboriginal population. Negotiations with most States and Territories to include Aboriginal identification in birth and death registrations are well advanced. Data from most State and Territory registrars and from some health authorities are available or are becoming available. These data, together with data from the relationship and age questions included in the census, should enable estimates to be made of Aboriginal fertility.

The use of data on the number of surviving children for assessing potential family support to the aged is not sufficient to justify the inclusion of the question in a national census. Data required for the assessment of family support to the aged extends beyond the number of surviving children and would be better collected from surveys.

During the 1986 Census, the exclusion of stillbirths from the question on how many babies were born to each woman caused distress to some parents of stillborn babies.

ETHNIC ORIGIN

Historical background

A question on each person's ancestry was asked for the first time in the 1986 Census.

In response to demands for better data on ethnicity of the population a committee was established to advise the ABS in respect to ethnicity data collected for the 1986 Population Census. In its report in April 1984 the committee recommended a question based on ancestry. Such a question was included in the 1986 Census to provide a direct measure on ethnicity in addition to indirect measures provided by data from other questions.

1986 Census question(s)

The following advice appeared with the information booklet distributed with the 1986 Census form:

'Ancestry' means the ethnic or national group from which you are descended. It is quite acceptable to base your answer on your grandparents' ancestry. Persons of mixed ancestry who do not identify with a single group should answer with their multiple ancestry. Persons who consider their ancestry to be Australian may answer 'Australian'.

15. What is each person's ancestry? For example, Greek, English, Indian, Armenian, Aboriginal, Chinese etc.	Ancestry.....
--	---

User requirements

The requirements of users for data on people's ethnic origin can be classified into two broad categories: data based on a self-perceived identification concept; and data on an historical/ancestry origin concept. However, the distinction is not always clear in the mind of users and some users seek data on both concepts.

The main uses of data on ethnicity are:

- the planning of services directed at the special needs of ethnic groups in the areas of social welfare, health and education;
- the allocation of funds from government agencies to ethnic groups;
- the development of language policies;
- the measurement and assessment of the economic and social well-being of various ethnic groups; and
- as a description of society for studies of population.

Non-census data available

Data on ethnic origin are not available from other sources.

Assessment

The cost of processing this topic is high because office coding is required.

The 1986 Population Census Ethnicity Committee was unable to suggest a suitable question based on self-identification and recommended that a question on a person's ancestry be included in the 1986 Census. Tests conducted for the Committee indicated, however, that this question would not be without problems. Nevertheless, in view of the interest in ethnicity data, the ABS recommended that an ancestry question be included in the 1986 Census, and that it be subject to a full analysis of its adequacy and reliability to determine its suitability for inclusion in future censuses.

There has not been time to undertake the full analysis of the performance of this question in the 1986 Census. Further time is required by ABS and users to assess the reliability and usefulness of the data before an assessment can be made on inclusion in future censuses.

Given that other information relevant to the determination of ethnicity (e.g. birthplace, birthplace of parents and language used) are proposed for inclusion in a 1991 Census, the cost of including this topic again in 1991 is not justified.

DISABILITY

Historical background

Questions relating to disabilities of respondents were included in the 1911, 1921 and 1933 Australian Censuses. Respondents were required to indicate whether they were deaf, dumb or blind. A more general question on the effect of disabilities was asked in 1976.

1976 Census question(s)

15. Is the person handicapped by a SERIOUS long-term illness or physical or mental condition?	In his or her education..... ☐ 1
• If yes, tick appropriate boxes for each person to show types of handicap.	In getting or holding a job... ☐ 2
• If not handicapped tick box 8.	In getting about alone ☐ 3
• If no illnesses or conditions tick box 8.	In doing housework..... ☐ 4
	In sporting or recreational activities..... ☐ 5
	In acts of daily living, e.g. dressing, bathing..... ☐ 6
	In other ways ☐ 7
	Not handicapped ☐ 8

User requirements

Data are required for developing Federal and State Government policies and community based programs. While much of this data is only required for large geographic areas, detailed data at the small area level are required for planning service delivery.

Non-census data available

A survey on Disability and Aging was conducted in 1988.

Data are available from the Department of Social Security in relation to recipients of invalid pensions, sickness benefits, child disability allowance and mobility allowance. Data are available for postcode areas and social security regions for the first three types of recipient. However many severely handicapped persons do not receive invalid pensions.

Assessment

Experience gained in the 1976 Census, when a question about disabilities was asked, indicated that the information elicited was unreliable and suggested that the best way to collect personal information of this type was by means of interview conducted by appropriately skilled ABS interviewers. The ABS used this means of data collection in the conduct of a survey of handicapped persons in Australia in 1981 and in the 1988 Disability and Aging Survey.

The need for small area data on disabilities is recognised. However, information is required on the type and severity of handicaps which in turn requires a large number of questions. As a result, the topic is not suitable for inclusion in the census.

CHILD CARE

Historical background

A question on child care was included in the 1976 Census.

1976 Census question(s)

<i>Answer question 17 for each child under 6 years old.</i> 17. Is the child minded by someone other than his/her parent(s) for some part of each working day? . Tick boxes which apply.	Yes -- at child-care centre (including child-minding centres, pre-schools, day care centres, creches, day nurseries, play groups) ☐ 1 Yes -- at home (not by child's parents) ☐ 2 Yes -- at another's home ☐ 3 Yes -- elsewhere ☐ 4 No ☐ 5
---	--

User requirements

Data on child care at the local level and for small groups of the population are required for planning local services and for analysing areas of special need (i.e. labour force issues for disadvantaged groups).

Non-census data available

Data are available from ABS Child Care surveys conducted in 1980, 1984 and 1987. Further surveys are planned to occur every three years.

Assessment

The concept of child care is complex and difficult to define for census purposes when only a limited number of questions can be asked. Experience gained in the 1976 Census showed that there were many cases of child care arrangements not reported in response to a question in that census. The question was also considered by some respondents to be sensitive. Since reliable data on child care are difficult to collect in a census, the best way to collect this type of information would be by personal interview, which is used in the conduct of the ABS surveys.

The data collected in a census would be on utilisation (or non-utilisation) of child care services. Estimates of demand for such services, as required by users, can be derived from other data collected in the census on number and age of children, families, labour force status of parents and hours worked.

USUAL MAJOR ACTIVITY

Historical background

A question on usual major activity was asked in the 1971 Census.

1971 Census question(s)

2. What is this person's usual major activity? (Tick one box only)	
1 ☐ Working in a job, trade, business or profession	4 ☐ Child at primary or secondary school
2 ☐ Engaged in home duties	5 ☐ Full-time student (other than school child)
3 ☐ Child not yet attending primary school	6 ☐ Other, specify:

User requirements

The main use of data on usual major activity is to ascertain the extent of involvement in unpaid 'home duties'. There are no major requirements for such data to be available for small areas or small groups of the population.

Non-census data available

Data on the topic are collected each September, in the 'Persons Not in Labour Force' survey, and to a lesser extent in the 'Labour Force Status and Education Attainment' survey conducted each February.

A more effective means of obtaining data more detailed than that currently available would be a time use survey. An information paper on the Time Use Pilot Survey, Sydney, May-June 1987 (Catalogue No. 4111.1) has been released. ABS is seeking to ascertain the extent of support for and value of such a time use survey now that results of the pilot survey are available.

Assessment

Consideration was given to the inclusion in the 1986 Census of a question on a person's usual activity in which one of the response categories could have been 'home duties'. However, it was decided that the inclusion of such a question was not justified in its own right, in part because non-census data on this topic are available. There are no major requirements for such data to be available for small areas or small groups of the population. Also, there are doubts that an adequate question could be developed for a census which would produce reliable data. The inclusion of a response category of 'home duties' as part of the labour force status topic was also considered but testing indicated that there were adverse effects on the data produced for labour force status if the category was added to one of the questions.

SOURCE OF INCOME

Historical background

A question on receipt of Commonwealth pensions and benefits only was included in the 1976 Census. No question requiring respondents to indicate all sources of income has been included in any Australian census.

User requirements

There are three main areas for which data on sources of income are required. Welfare agencies requested the data to assess the needs of low income groups and plan services for them; users investigating labour force issues requested the data to assess the training needs and economic circumstances of low-skilled, non-working females; and other users requested the data for an analysis of major economic patterns and regional differences in income distribution. The Department of Social Security has asked for data on types of Commonwealth cash benefits received to assist in their program development and operations.

Non-census data available

The ABS has conducted several surveys of income. The next survey is planned for 1991. A Household Expenditure Survey conducted in 1988-89 will also provide data on source of income.

Assessment

There is a strong demand for data on source of income for small groups in the population. However, testing of possible questions prior to the 1986 Census indicated that the topic is sensitive to some sections of the community, to an extent that it may affect the coverage of disadvantaged groups including Aboriginals. Tests have also shown that some sources of income were not reported by respondents (e.g. interest, rents, family allowance etc), and there was inconsistency between reported source of income and reported amount of income.

REASON DWELLING UNOCCUPIED

Historical background

This topic has been included in each census since 1971. The collector has been required to indicate, for unoccupied dwellings, the type of dwelling and the reason for the dwelling being unoccupied.

1986 Census question(s) (Answered by collector)

C2. If dwelling unit is unoccupied, why is it unoccupied?	
10 ☐	For Sale
11 ☐	To let (other than holiday home)
12 ☐	Newly completed and awaiting occupancy
13 ☐	Vacant for repairs or alterations
14 ☐	Holiday home
15 ☐	Condemned or awaiting demolition
16 ☐	Usual resident temporarily absent
17 ☐	Other
↓ Please state	

User requirements

Information on unoccupied dwellings is required for assessing vacancy and occupancy rates, counting holiday homes and determining conditions of housing stock. The information also provides benchmark data for housing assessments, for checking the reliability of other statistical collections, and for determining trends and dwelling types in available housing accommodation.

Non-census data available

The census is the only ABS collection which collects data on unoccupied dwellings.

Assessment

Users primarily require statistics of the number of unoccupied dwellings for dwelling stock estimates and this information will be available from the 1991 Census. Data on reason dwelling unoccupied are used to refine these estimates. However, in many cases the collector would not be aware of the reasons a dwelling was unoccupied and as a consequence there are doubts about the reliability of the data. Given the data quality problems the topic has not been included in the 1991 Census.

Only one or two submissions for the following topics were received. They did not meet all the criteria for inclusion in the census which were as follows:

- major national importance;
- the census is an appropriate method of collecting data, given alternative sources and methods; and
- the topic is suitable for inclusion in the census.

TOPIC	ALTERNATIVE DATA SOURCES	COMMENTS
Domestic animals	Some data may be available through council registration of pets	Not sufficiently justified to be of major national importance
Sports participation	Data on participation can be obtained from population surveys	Census is not an appropriate method of collecting the data.
Energy consumption	1988-89 Household Expenditure Survey. National Domestic Energy Survey 1985-86	Data from other sources available
Telephone ownership	Household Telephone Connections Survey, March 1986. Data on telephone ownership available from Telecom Australia	Data from other sources available and not sufficiently justified to be of major national importance
State/Territory of birth	—	Census is not an appropriate method of collecting the data
Race	—	Not sufficiently justified to be of major national importance and not suitable for inclusion in the census

APPENDIX 3

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