

1981 CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING

**PRELIMINARY VIEWS ON THE
NATURE AND CONTENT OF
THE CENSUS**

**AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS
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PREFACE

This paper sets out a number of issues which have to be decided in developing a program for the 1981 Census, including the selection of topics to be included in the census, the protection of confidentiality and the asking of each person's name. Invitations were extended in November 1977 to the public, business organisations and Commonwealth and State Government Departments to make submissions on topics to be included in, or excluded from, the 1981 Census. Replies received have been carefully examined and preliminary plans for the census have been drawn up by the Bureau. They are outlined in this paper, in order to inform interested parties about present thinking in relation to the form and content of the 1981 Census and to invite interested individuals and organisations to give their reactions.

The views expressed in the paper are preliminary only and reflect the results of development work which in some cases has not been finalised. They will be reviewed in the light of reactions received, consultations with major users of census data and the results of further testing.

The Australian Statistics Advisory Council has been kept fully informed and its views sought on all aspects of planning for the census. There will be further consultation with the Council in the near future.

The aim is to make recommendations to the Government by the middle of 1979, in order to allow time for the necessary Government and Parliamentary consideration to be completed and an order placed for printing census forms by about the end of 1979.

In summary, the preliminary views are:

- (a) That the 1981 Census should concentrate on obtaining information needed for population estimates and to meet major demographic, labour force and housing requirements. About 30 person questions and 15 dwelling questions should be included, compared with 44 person and 24 dwelling questions in the 1976 Census. Views about the inclusion or exclusion of individual topics are set out in Appendices I and II.
- (b) Envelopes for census forms should be made available to all persons who request them and their availability should be made known. However, people should be asked not to use them unless they feel strongly about the census collector being able to see the information provided.
- (c) The name of each person should be asked on the census form.

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INTRODUCTION

Planning for the 1981 Census began in mid-1977, that is, about four years before the 1981 Census is to be held. This planning has been undertaken with the following objectives in mind:

- (a) to provide an opportunity for public comment on the topics to be included in the 1981 Census;
- (b) to reduce the form filling burden on the public;
- (c) to investigate the possibility of conducting a census without asking each person's name;
- (d) to minimise invasion of privacy while still collecting accurate data;
- (e) to improve the quality of census data (eg to reduce the number of people missed by the census and reduce the proportion of unanswered questions).

2 The pursuit of these objectives has formed the basis of a comprehensive program of field testing and analysis. The following sections summarise the developmental work and preliminary views formed.

3 At an earlier stage of development of plans for the 1981 Census, an investigation was undertaken of the possibility of reducing the burden on individual households by asking some questions of only a portion of households, an approach known as field sampling. It became apparent that such an approach would involve substantial problems, such as:

- (a) possible bias in the allocation by collectors of different forms among households;
- (b) the limitation that cross-classifications between questions addressed to different samples of households would not be possible;
- (c) the possibility of producing different estimates of a particular characteristic asked of all households, as derived from all households and as shown in cross-classifications with other characteristics collected only from a sample of households;
- (d) the need to have different computer processing systems for forms from different samples of households.

4 Because of these problems and the view formed that substantially fewer questions should be asked in the 1981 Census than in the 1976 Census, development of a field sampling approach has not been proceeded with.

TOPIC SELECTION

5 The ABS advertised nationally in November 1977 requesting persons and organisations to forward submissions for topics they wished to be included in, or excluded from, the 1981 Census. Submissions closed on 28 February 1978, but late submissions have been taken into account to the extent practicable. Users were requested to provide justification for the

inclusion or exclusion of particular topics. Appendix III sets out the criteria issued to users to help them frame their submissions.

6 Over 1600 topic requests were received. Topics most frequently sought related to income, occupation, ethnic origin and religion. Of the 50 submissions received for the exclusion of topics, about 10 sought the exclusion of name. The ABS has investigated this possibility and results are contained in the section of this report entitled ANONYMITY.

7 Each submission was examined to determine whether the topic was adequately justified in terms of the uses proposed to be made of the information sought, and whether information adequate for users' needs was available from an alternative source or was of a kind more suitable for obtaining from field interviews of a small sample of persons.

8 Generally speaking, sample surveys are not suitable for obtaining information that is needed in respect of small areas or small groups of the population, or that users wish to cross-classify with several other characteristics of persons or households. The census is not suitable for obtaining information on topics that require lengthy explanation in order for questions to be quite clearly understood by the general public.

9 Topics requested in census submissions that appear more suitable for sample surveys will be kept under consideration in planning future survey programs.

10 Limiting the number of questions that require expensive and time-consuming coding of answers was also a consideration. For example, this was a factor in the preliminary view formed that the person's address a year ago should be only the State of residence and that the names and addresses of educational institutions being attended should not be asked.

11 For many of the topics requested, tests have been undertaken of the degree and accuracy of responses to alternative wording of questions. Topics included in previous censuses and known to be capable of satisfactory collection have not been tested further. Even though a topic appeared justified for a census, has proven workable and has been included in previous censuses, consideration was also given to the need for the topic to be asked every five years.

12 Several small voluntary census tests were conducted between May and October 1978. The aim of these census tests was to examine the wording of possible census questions and the instructions associated with them and, by using intensive interviewing techniques, to measure the effect of question wording and questionnaire design on the accuracy and completeness of response.

13 The census topic tests each covered approximately 500 households and were held in Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne. Interviewers asked each household to complete a test form, and returned after "census night" to carry out detailed interviews on the answers supplied by each household. These census tests were used to determine for each topic how well the question was understood, the accuracy of answers given, and generally whether it could be collected with acceptable accuracy by a form which has to be filled in by the household.

14 The final step in topic evaluation is to ascertain whether a particular topic is acceptable to the Australian public. If a question is unacceptable for some reason (eg too intrusive or requires too much trouble to fill in for a significant proportion of the population), it will lead to high non-response and adverse public reaction to the census. The low marginal cost of including an additional question in a census, compared with its inclusion in a special survey, has to be weighed carefully against the possible effect it will have on response, particularly if it is of a controversial nature.

15 Some indication of public acceptability is obtained from the small voluntary census tests. However, two larger census tests more closely simulating census conditions are included in the development program and are designed to measure public reaction and to obtain any comments by collectors. The first of these tests was held during September 1978 and the second is planned for March 1979.

16 Appendix I summarises ABS preliminary views on topic selection and Appendix II sets out detailed comments about individual topics.

17 On the basis of the examination of submissions and the testing of topics conducted so far, the ABS's present intention is to recommend that the 1981 Census should contain about 45 questions as outlined in Appendix I. This compares with 68 questions (ie items to be answered not numbered questions) for the 1976 Census and represents a significant reduction in the form filling burden on the public.

18 The Census and Statistics Act includes a list of topics which must be included in each census. This list has remained unchanged since 1905 except for the deletion of 2 topics in 1946. There seems inadequate justification for the inclusion in the 1981 Census of a few of these topics; if preliminary views are confirmed by further consultation, appropriate amendment of the Act will be recommended.

CONFIDENTIALITY

19 The field system (ie the system of census form delivery and collection) used in the 1976 Census was criticised on the grounds of inadequate action to ensure the confidentiality of the information provided on the census forms. In particular, three aspects of the system appeared to cause concern:

- (a) That collectors, who are temporary employees of the ABS engaged only for purposes of the census, might divulge individual information provided in census returns. Although all collectors are required to take an oath that they will not disclose any information collected in the course of their official duties, some people were not convinced that collectors would preserve the confidentiality of the information provided.
- (b) That the collector, having been recruited from the local area, will be known to some of the people from whom forms are being collected. The knowledge that personal information supplied on a census form could be read by someone known to the person filling in the form was disturbing to some people.

- (c) That people were requested by collectors to leave their completed forms in their mail box, meter box or under the mat if they would not be home at any time convenient to the collector. Since it was well known that the census was taking place, a completed form left for some period in a mail box, because the occupants of the household were not home, could have been read by others (eg neighbours) before the collector arrived.

20 Suggestions aimed at meeting these concerns are that:

- (a) collectors should endeavour to collect completed forms personally from a member of each household;
- (b) every household should be entitled to the use of a special envelope in which to seal the completed form and which the collector would not be allowed to open;
- (c) it should be the duty of the ABS to make every person aware of their entitlement to an envelope.

In the two previous censuses, envelopes have been made available upon request, although their availability appears not to have been widely known.

21 As part of the 1981 Census development program, field tests have been conducted to assess the need for envelopes and the likely effect of their use on the quality of data. The following collection systems using envelopes have been tested:

- (a) all households supplied with envelopes;
- (b) envelopes made available on request but their availability not emphasised;
- (c) envelopes made available on request and their availability stated on the schedule and/or on the accompanying brochure.

22 The results of these tests were as follows:

- (a) All households supplied with envelopes - use of envelopes caused a reduction in response for particular questions of about 1-2%. In addition, more than 3% of forms were returned blank whereas only 1% were returned blank when envelopes were not used. This resulted in a significantly increased burden on supervisory census field staff who had to open the envelopes, check all forms and call on households that had returned blank forms. Normally census collectors check forms when they pick them up and resolve queries on the spot. An increase of this size in the proportion of blank forms returned in the 1981 Census would increase the cost by about \$1 million. The test was conducted in a fairly neutral publicity environment, and with adverse publicity the incidence of blank forms could be substantially greater.
- (b) Envelopes available on request but availability not emphasised - in a test carried out in 1977 envelopes were made available on request but less than 0.21% of households requested them.

- (c) Envelopes available on request and availability stated - when envelopes were made available on request in a test in 1978 and their availability was made known on the census form and/or on an accompanying brochure, a much greater number of households requested them than in the test of the second system above. However, the proportion of requests for envelopes was much less than for the 1976 Census, presumably because adverse publicity was not encountered at the time of the test.

23 The view of the ABS is that envelopes should be made available to all people who request them. Their availability should be made known but people should be asked not to use them unless they feel strongly about the collector being able to see the information they have provided.

ANONYMITY

24 In recent censuses, concern has been expressed by a few people over the requirement to provide on the census form the full name of each person in the household.

25 The reason for this requirement is that the information is essential for the collection, processing and evaluation phases of the census operation. In the collection phase the census collector needs name in order to provide a contact point in each household when collecting the completed census forms and to ensure that census forms for all households located are obtained. Name is also used when coding census information to enable the production of statistics on the size and composition of families. Evaluation techniques, to determine the quality of census data, rely on comparing follow-up surveys with census forms for a small sample of households. Without name it would be virtually impossible to measure the quality of census data.

26 The ABS interest in names ceases at that point and in fact names are not included in the computer record from which results of the census are compiled. Following the evaluation stage, the census forms and collectors' records which include names are destroyed, so that it becomes virtually impossible even for ABS officers to locate census information relating to a particular individual or household.

27 As far as can be ascertained, an anonymous census has never been conducted in any country. Therefore, in investigating the possibility of such a census in Australia, there was no overseas experience on which the ABS could draw. The results of several tests undertaken by the ABS have indicated that an anonymous census would have severe adverse effects on the accuracy of the information obtained. This is particularly so if an anonymous census were to be combined with the provision of an envelope. This combination would produce high levels of unanswered questions and census forms being returned blank. In the absence of names on forms there would be no way in which the missing information could be obtained by follow-up action.

28 It is hoped that the measures taken by the ABS to protect the confidentiality of information supplied in the census and greater public awareness of the use made of names on the forms will help to overcome concern about supplying names. Testing has shown that names are essential for effective collection, processing and evaluation of census data. Particularly if associated with even a relatively small use of envelopes by households, an anonymous census would produce results of very doubtful reliability.

APPENDIX I

SUMMARY OF TOPIC EVALUATION

SUMMARY OF TOPIC EVALUATION

APPENDIX I

TOPIC	Preliminary view		Required by Act	Asked in 1976 Census
	Include	Exclude		
DEMOGRAPHIC TOPICS				
Name (See 'Anonymity' Section)	x		Yes	Yes
Age, Sex, Marital Status	x		Yes	Yes
Fertility -				
Duration of marriage		x	Yes	Yes
Issue (all marriages)	x		No	Yes
Issue (present marriage)		x	No	Yes
Issue (all issue)		x	No	No
Relationship	x		Yes	Yes
Usual residents temporarily absent	x		No	No
INTERNAL MIGRATION, LEISURE AND RECREATION				
a) Internal Migration				
Place of usual residence	x		No	Yes
Residence 1 year ago	x		No	Yes
Residence 5 years ago	x		No	Yes
Intercensal change of address*		x	No	No
Reason for internal migration*		x	No	No
b) Leisure and Recreation				
Leisure activities		x	No	No
Travel and trips		x	No	No
Licence to drive a motor vehicle/motor cycle		x	No	Yes
Holiday of 1 week or more in last year		x	No	Yes
Private boat ownership*		x	No	No
Holiday home ownership*		x	No	No
Holidays away from home per year*		x	No	No
Holiday destinations*		x	No	No
Month in which holidays taken*		x	No	No
Ownership of recreational equipment*		x	No	No
Persons playing sport by type of sport*		x	No	No
ETHNICITY				
Ethnic Origin		x	No	No
Birthplace	x		Yes	Yes
Resident/Visitor status	x		No	Yes

* See Appendix II, Part B

TOPIC	Preliminary view		Required by Act	Asked in 1976 Census
	Include	Exclude		
ETHNICITY (Cont'd)				
Period of residence	x		Yes	Yes
Citizenship (nationality)		x	Yes	Yes
Birthplace of parents	x		No	Yes
Language - mother tongue	x		No	No
- languages regularly used		x	No	Yes
- proficiency in English		x	No	No
- all languages spoken		x	No	No
Religion	x		Yes	Yes
Racial Origin (Aboriginal)	x		No	Yes
EDUCATION, HEALTH AND WELFARE				
a) Education				
Attendance at an educational institution	x		No	Yes
Highest qualification obtained	x		No	Yes
Age left school	x		No	Yes
Literacy, illiteracy*		x	No	No
Interest in future qualification*		x	No	No
Direct use of qualification*		x	No	No
b) Health and Welfare				
Childcare		x	No	Yes
Handicaps		x	No	Yes
Retirement benefits cover		x	No	Yes
Welfare service usage*		x	No	No
Life assurance cover*		x	No	Yes
Persons with hearing aids*		x	No	No
Diabetics and method of treatment*		x	No	No
Use of unprescribed stimulants*		x	No	No
Tobacco smoking*		x	No	No
State of health*		x	No	No
Left-handed people*		x	No	No
Partially or totally blind or deaf*		x	No	No
Health insurance cover*		x	No	No
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE				
Income - amount (ranges)	x		No	Yes
Source of income		x	No	Yes
Expenditure on hire purchase contracts*		x	No	No

* See Appendix II, Part B

TOPIC	Preliminary view		Required by Act	Asked in 1976 Census
	Include	Exclude		
LABOUR FORCE				
Occupational status (incl. employment status)	x		No	Yes
Occupation	x		Yes	Yes
Industry	x		No	Yes
Hours worked - actual hours		x	No	Yes
- full-time, part-time	x		No	No
Usual major activity	x		No	No
Voluntary welfare work		x	No	No
Length of time unemployed*		x	No	No
Number of jobs held*		x	No	Yes
Flexible working hours*		x	No	No
Shift work*		x	No	No
Labour force mobility*		x	No	No
Potential labour force occupation*		x	No	No
Reason left job*		x	No	No
Primary industry as second job*		x	No	No
Absences due to industrial accidents*		x	No	No
Unemployed, redundant, retired etc*		x	No	No
Absence from work by reason*		x	No	No
MODE OF TRAVEL				
Mode of travel to work	x		No	Yes
Journey to work	x		No	Yes
Time taken getting to work*		x	No	No
HOUSING				
Type of dwelling	x		No	Yes
Number of rooms	x		Yes	Yes
Nature of occupancy	x		No	Yes
Reason dwelling unoccupied (+)	x		No	Yes
Mortgages - monthly payments	x		No	Yes
- source		x	No	Yes
Rent - amount paid per week	x		No	Yes
- type of landlord	x		No	Yes
- furnished or unfurnished	x		No	Yes
First home ownership		x	No	No
Age of dwelling		x	No	Yes
Household fuel	x		No	Yes
Telephone		x	No	No
Water supply		x	No	Yes
Motor vehicles garaged		x	No	Yes

* See Appendix II, Part B

(+) The census collector will provide information on this topic.

TOPIC	Preliminary views		Required by Act	Asked in 1976 Census
	Include	Exclude		
HOUSING (Cont'd)				
Mobile homes used as permanent residences*		x	No	No
Ambition to own home*		x	No	No
Rent paid to real estate agent*		x	No	No
Years mortgage held*		x	No	No
Rates paid*		x	No	No
Number of garages per dwelling*		x	No	No
Home accidents*		x	No	No
Length of tenure, period of occupancy*		x	No	No
Material of roof*		x	No	No
Verandahs and balconies*		x	No	No
Housing alterations and additions*		x	No	No
Home insurance*		x	No	No
Future housing intentions*		x	No	No
Insulation*		x	No	No
Dwelling facilities*		x	No	No
Fire damage*		x	No	No
Sewage disposal*		x	No	No
Rural holding*		x	No	Yes
Material of outer walls*		x	No	Yes
OTHER			Yes	Yes
Household size (+)	x		No	Yes
Membership of armed forces in times of previous hostilities*		x	No	No
Ownership of domestic animals*		x	No	No
Membership of social organisation*		x	No	No
Membership of library*		x	No	No
Involvement in a natural disaster*		x	No	No

*See Appendix II, Part B

(+) Does not require a specific question because it is basic to census methodology.

Note: A topic may require more than one question; therefore the number of topics does not equal the number of questions. See 'Topic Selection' - pages 1 - 3.

APPENDIX II

PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF INDIVIDUAL TOPICS

Part A of this appendix comprises analysis of each of the more important topics submitted for inclusion in the 1981 Census and Part B (pages 81 to 84) lists the other topics submitted that are regarded as unsuitable for inclusion.

PART A

DEMOGRAPHIC TOPICS ..	pages 12 to 17
INTERNAL MIGRATION, LEISURE AND RECREATION TOPICS ..	pages 18 to 24
ETHNICITY TOPICS ..	pages 25 to 37
EDUCATION, HEALTH AND WELFARE TOPICS ..	pages 38 to 47
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE TOPICS ..	pages 48 to 51
LABOUR FORCE TOPICS ..	pages 52 to 59
MODE OF TRAVEL TOPICS ..	pages 60 to 62
HOUSING TOPICS ..	pages 63 to 77

PART A

DEMOGRAPHIC TOPICS

1 Description of Topics

Individual topics included under this heading are name, age, sex, marital status, duration of marriage, issue, relationship and usual residents temporarily absent. Generally submissions requested either a repetition of the 1976 Census questions or an extension of categories. The general advertisement and associated documentation calling for topic submissions specified that age, sex and marital status would not require any justification. These topics are basic items of census information and practically all statistics relating to people are enhanced in value when classified by age, sex and marital status. The need to ask 'name' has been covered previously under 'Anonymity'.

2 Topic Evaluation

A detailed evaluation follows in respect of:

Duration of marriage

Issue (present marriage)

Issue (all marriages)

Issue (all issue)

Relationship

Usual residents temporarily absent

TOPIC: DURATION OF MARRIAGE

Required by present Act	Yes	Asked in 1976	Yes
		1971	Yes

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	2	10	2	-
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Data on duration of marriage are used in:

- (a) assessing fertility trends; and
- (b) projecting population growth.

However, the ABS is not satisfied that census data are necessary for the purposes described and proposes to consult further with users.

Non-census data available

A Birth Expectation Survey was held in November 1976 and information on the duration of marriage was obtained.
A further survey is proposed for June 1979.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

The Birth Expectation Survey would appear to meet the needs of most users. Where it would not (eg very detailed cross-classifications are required) a further sample survey would not meet the needs.

Question evaluation

Duration of present marriage was evaluated in a follow-up survey to the June 1978 test by asking the question in two forms: date of marriage; and duration of marriage. Results indicate that there is no difference in the quality of data obtained by the two methods.

ABS preliminary view

Exclude. Inadequate justification provided. Amendment of Act required.

TOPIC: ISSUE (LIVE BIRTHS)

This topic involves three questions:

- 1 issue of present marriage;
- 2 issue of all marriages; and
- 3 all issue.

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976	Yes	(1&2 above)
		1971	Yes,	(1&2 above)

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	9	29	4	3
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Data on issue can be used in :

- (a) assessing fertility trends and differentials; and
- (b) projecting population growth.

However, the ABS is not satisfied that sufficient use has been made of census data to warrant its collection and will consult further with users as to whether survey data would meet their needs.

Non-census data available

Issue (of present marriage) - data are available from the November 1976 Birth Expectation Survey.

Total issue (of all marriages) - birth registrations are available, but there are problems in using registration data to estimate total issue for ever married women and in assessing socio-economic differentials.

On grounds of intrusiveness the ABS is not prepared to collect in the census ALL issue of ALL women, which is the ideal statistic from a demographic viewpoint.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Further discussion with users is necessary for this to be established.

.../cont'd.

ISSUE (Cont'd.)

Question evaluation

Issue of all marriages was asked in the 1976 Census of all women who had ever been married but in the September 1978 test total issue was asked of all women, aged between 15 and 50 years of age, regardless of marital status. Some antagonism resulted and this means fewer women answered the question. Issue of present marriage has not been included in the topic testing programme for the 1981 Census as it is considered that asking this question in addition to one on issue of all marriages is not justified. Of the two, issue of all marriages is the more important. As a result of further discussions with users, a test in March 1979 will include questions on:

- (a) issue of all marriages;
- (b) duration of first marriage; and
- (c) number of times married.

ABS preliminary view

Include - Issue (all marriages) - subject to further discussion and testing.

Exclude - Issue (present marriage)
 Issue (all issue)

TOPIC: RELATIONSHIP

Required by present Act	Yes (As relationship to head of household)
Asked in 1976	Yes
1971	Yes

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	10	22	2	-
Exclusion	-	2	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

The major user of the data on relationship is the ABS itself. The question enables the coding of family groups and their structure within each household. It is an indispensable aid in the processing of census forms.

Non-census data available

Families are coded in certain labour force supplementary surveys (the last full coding was in November 1974) but primary and secondary families are not separately identified (primary families are those whose head is also head of the household). The purpose of these surveys is to determine family income and family structure.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

These would be unlikely to be able to provide the wide range of family and household data required by users but may be more efficient in identifying single parent families.

Question evaluation

The term 'household head' has been used in all past censuses in Australia. However, with changing social attitudes and living patterns opposition to the use of the term has increased. To enable family coding to be carried out it is essential that relationships to one person be stated. Consequently 'Relationship to Person 1' (ie the person for whom information is shown first on the census form for each household) was tested in June 1978 and was found to be workable. This concept was further tested in September 1978 and the results were acceptable.

To enable identification of true single parent families, a question asking for details of usual members of the household who were absent on census night and their relationship to person 1 was also included in the September 1978 test. The proportion of people not answering the question was reasonable although there are still minor problems remaining.

ABS preliminary view

Include in the form of 'Relationship to Person 1'. This probably would require amendment of the Act.

TOPIC: USUAL RESIDENTS TEMPORARILY ABSENT

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976	No
		1971	No

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	1	-	-	-
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

(See also 'Relationship' and 'Place of Usual Residence').

Justifications advanced by users

The ABS requires this information to refine family coding for the census where spouses are absent on census night. Because the census collects data according to where people actually are on census night, previous censuses have overstated the number of single parent families.

Non-census data available

This topic is only relevant within the context of census.

Extent to which sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Sample surveys could not be used to obtain the benchmark data required.

Question evaluation

This question was tested in September 1978 and the proportion of people who did not answer it was about 7%. The question will be tested again in March 1979.

ABS preliminary view

Include.

INTERNAL MIGRATION, LEISURE AND RECREATION TOPICS

1 Description of Topics

Questions on place of usual residence, leisure activities, holidays, travel and possession of a licence to drive a motor vehicle/motor cycle were requested in a large number of submissions.

(a) Internal Migration

Submissions concerning change in place of usual residence (these questions are used to obtain internal migration data) generally requested a repetition of the 1976 Census questions or some minor variations to that series of questions. Three submissions requested new questions.

(b) Leisure and Recreation

Submissions concerning holidays and licence to drive a motor vehicle/motor cycle mostly requested a repetition of the 1976 Census question. Submissions about leisure activities and recreation requested new census topics.

As shown in Appendix 1, no leisure or recreation topics are recommended for inclusion in the 1981 Census, because the census is not a suitable method of gathering data on those activities.

2 Topic Evaluation

A detailed evaluation follows in respect of:

Internal migration - Place of usual residence

- Residence one year ago
- Residence five years ago

Leisure activities

Travel

Licence to drive a motor vehicle/motor cycle

Holiday of one week or more in last year

TOPIC: INTERNAL MIGRATION

The internal migration topic is not a single question but a series of three questions - place of usual residence, residence one year ago and residence five years ago.

Required by present Act No

	Place of usual residence	Residence one year ago	Residence five years ago
Asked in 1976	Yes	Yes	Yes
1971	Yes	No	Yes

Submissions received

	Question	Cwltb	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	Place of usual residence	21	27	9	2
	Residence one year ago	14	21	4	2
	Residence five years ago	14	24	9	2
Exclusion	All internal migration questions -	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Reliable, up-to-date information on the internal migration patterns of the population at national, State, regional, local government and collection district levels is required for the majority of public sector planning projects. In particular data are used in:

- . forecasting short and medium term housing requirements;
- . planning transport, health and educational services;
- . zoning, release and development of land for residential and commercial purposes; and
- . demographic research projects (such as urbanisation and decentralisation studies).

The ABS intends to use information on place of usual residence to estimate population on a resident basis.

Non-census data available

Place of usual residence - in most ABS household surveys questions relate mainly to usual residents of a household.

However, it is not feasible to use these surveys to provide estimates of the resident population of local government areas that are required from the census.

Residence one year ago - this information is collected each year in a sample survey, which cannot yield data for small areas.

.../cont'd.

INTERNAL MIGRATION (Cont'd.)

Residence five years ago - this information is available only from the census.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Additional sample surveys could not produce the data for small areas required by users.

Question evaluation

Testing prior to the 1976 Census indicated that the questions gave satisfactory results, and it is considered that further testing and evaluation are not needed.

ABS preliminary view

Include - Place of usual residence

- Residence one year ago (to be sought at State level only. While this does not allow the identification of population flows between local government areas, it does allow for the identification of interstate components of growth for small areas such as collection district or local government areas)

- Residence five years ago.

TOPIC: LEISURE ACTIVITIES

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976	No
		1971	No

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	1	4	-	1
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Data on leisure activities would be used in:

- (a) promoting and developing the performing arts;
- (b) assessing actual utilisation of facilities provided by the National Parks and Wildlife Service; and
- (c) planning facilities for recreation.

Non-census data available

Information was collected by the ABS on this topic in the 1975 General Social Survey. This sample survey included questions on the type and frequency of leisure activities, the ones most enjoyed, additional activities desired, reasons why desired activities were not pursued and leisure equipment possessed.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Sample surveys could be used to indicate the level of participation by the public in various leisure activities. Use of interviewers would enable problems of recall and definition to be better controlled.

Question evaluation

A question on leisure activities was tested in the June 1978 test. Fifteen categories of leisure activities were listed and the question asked 'On what leisure activities did each person spend 3 hours or more during the last 2 weeks?' The relevant categories were to be ticked for each person.

The two main problems identified by the test were that a high proportion of people did not adhere to either:

- 1 the recall period (ie 'the last 2 weeks'); or
- 2 the duration of activity (ie '...spend 3 hours or more').

ABS preliminary view

Exclude.

TOPIC: TRAVEL

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976 1971	No No
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Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	2	-	-	-
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

The data would be used to maintain an accurate and continuing assessment of the medium and long term demand for travel (particularly air travel) to assist in the provision of adequate transport facilities.

Non-census data available

No information is collected by ABS on the number of trips taken. However, the Bureau of Transport Economics conducted a National Travel Survey during 1977-78. This sample survey was concerned with long distance travel within Australia. Data collected included the number of vehicles available to households, trip destinations, accommodation used, reasons for trips and the number of nights away from home.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

On the basis of submissions received there does not appear to be strong demand for either detailed cross-classification of data or for data for small areas. If this is the case an additional sample survey would meet user requirements.

Question evaluation

This topic was tested in June 1978 in two parts:

- 1 number of trips of 150 km or more from home in the month preceding 'census day'; and
- 2 number of trips overseas in the two years preceding 'census day'.

Evaluation of the results of the test showed that numerous problems exist in the collection of this type of data in the census (eg difficulties for people in remembering details of trips taken some time ago).

ABS preliminary view

Exclude.

TOPIC: LICENCE TO DRIVE A MOTOR VEHICLE/MOTOR CYCLE

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976 1971	Yes No
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Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	3	22	3	-
Exclusion	1	2	-	1

Justification advanced by users

The only request for this information considered to justify a census rather than a sample survey topic was to provide a better basis for the understanding and evaluation of road accident statistics.

Non-census data available

Some information on drivers' licences is available from State Motor Registries. The 1974-75 and 1975-76 Household Expenditure Surveys collected information on the expenditure on motor vehicle and motor cycle licences. No detailed cross-tabulations will be produced. Information on drivers' licences is also collected in the Survey of Motor Vehicle Usage.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

In most cases sample surveys would be more appropriate than the census for the collection of additional information on drivers' licences.

Question evaluation

This question was not further evaluated as the question used in the 1976 Census proved successful.

ABS preliminary view

Exclude. There does not appear to be a need to collect census data every five years.

TOPIC: HOLIDAY OF ONE WEEK OR MORE IN LAST YEAR

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976	Yes
		1971	No

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	1	10	1	-
Exclusion	1	2	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Holiday data will be used in:

- (a) developing a clearer picture of the travelling and holiday habits of the population; and
- (b) regional studies and transport planning.

Non-census data available

Information on holidays was collected in the 1974-75 and 1975-76 Household Expenditure Surveys and a supplementary labour force survey on 'Annual Leave' was conducted in August 1976 and a further one is proposed for May 1979.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Additional sample surveys would be more appropriate than the census as a series of related questions could be asked and useful results could be obtained despite the fact that data for small areas would not be available.

Question evaluation

In a test held in June 1978 a question on holidays was generally poorly answered. The number of people not answering the question was high when the question was tested again in September 1978. This was due to problems in question design including lack of consistent interpretation of the phrase 'away from home'.

ABS preliminary view

Exclude.

ETHNICITY TOPICS

1 Description of Topics

The term ethnicity means different things to different people and even though some users requested information on ethnic origin, no clear or consistent definition has been suggested. Consequently, for census purposes, it is thought that the topics:

- . birthplace
- . birthplace of parents
- . resident/visitor status
- . period of residence
- . citizenship (nationality)
- . languages spoken (mother tongue and languages used frequently)
- . religion
- . racial origin

would be the most useful to provide information that would enable users to draw conclusions on ethnicity or the multi-cultural nature of Australian society.

One approach suggested is self-identification of ethnic origin rather than complex analysis based on the series of related topics listed above.

2 Topic Evaluation

A detailed evaluation follows in respect of:

Ethnic Origin

Birthplace

Resident/visitor status

Period of residence

Citizenship (nationality)

Birthplace of parents

Language - mother tongue

- languages regularly used

- proficiency in English

- all languages spoken

Religion

Racial origin.

TOPIC : ETHNIC ORIGIN

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976	No
		1971	No

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	-	3	3	1
Exclusion	-	-	1	1

Justifications advanced by users

Users stressed the importance of information on this topic for planning and research purposes. However, as stated earlier, no definition was provided by the users and follow-up discussions have indicated some confusion about the term.

Non-census data available

No ABS collection has ever asked a question on ethnic origin although data are available on all topics listed at the beginning of this section on ethnicity.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

If a generally acceptable definition could be arrived at, a sample survey could be used to collect data on ethnic origin, with the interviewer posing a series of questions to ensure the concept is understood. However, some users need data on birthplace, language and other related topics at a very small geographical level for planning and research purposes, which could not be met by a sample survey.

Question evaluation

One approach to determining ethnic origin is by self-identification. Superficially this approach is far simpler than attempting to form a composite measure of ethnic origin based on the answers to a series of related questions (eg birthplace, period of residence), but answers would inevitably be subject to varying interpretation of the concept. However, the self-identification approach will be tested in March 1979.

ABS preliminary view

Exclude as a specific question unless successfully tested in March 1979. Ethnic origin could be derived from a number of other questions whose inclusion is proposed.

TOPIC : BIRTHPLACE

Required by present Act	Yes	Asked in 1976	Yes
		1971	Yes

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	12	20	8	2
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

As well as its value in its own right, it is necessary for cross-classification with other characteristics (eg income, occupation, resident/visitor status).

Non-census data available

In 1973 the then Department of Immigration conducted a survey of recently arrived migrants. A question on birthplace is included in the monthly labour force survey.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Nation-wide sample surveys may not measure accurately particular migrant groups which may be small in number or clustered geographically.

Question evaluation

Follow-up studies to previous censuses have shown the question on birthplace was accurately answered.

ABS preliminary view

Include.

TOPIC : RESIDENT/VISITOR STATUS

The topic is aimed at identifying whether people are usual residents of Australia or not.

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976	Yes
		1971	Yes

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	13	11	4	-
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

The ABS will be a major user of data on this topic because, following the 1981 Census, Australia's population estimates will be based on the usually resident population (ie short term visitors from overseas will be excluded from the estimates and Australian residents temporarily overseas at 30 June will be included in the population).

Non-census data available

Information on the number of visitors in Australia or on Australians temporarily overseas is obtained from migration statistics. These figures are published quarterly and are calculated from passenger cards.

The Australian Tourist Commission conducted an International Visitors Survey up until 1975 and plans to resume the survey in 1979.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Because overseas visitors comprise a small proportion of Australia's population, it is unlikely that useful data could be collected by a sample survey of households. However, surveys at arrival/departure stations would enable most information to be obtained (eg the Australian Tourist Commission's International Visitors Surveys).

Question evaluation

The 1976 Census question asked only overseas born people whether they were residents or visitors to Australia, whereas all people were asked their place of usual residence. Some confusion resulted and the place of usual residence question should be used to establish resident/visitor status.

ABS preliminary view

Include, as part of the place of usual residence question rather than as a separate question.

TOPIC : PERIOD OF RESIDENCE

Required by present Act	Yes	Asked in 1976	Yes
		1971	Yes

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	7	7	4	-
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Users have asked for these data to analyse various aspects of migrants (eg participation in the labour force, settler loss, other characteristics of the overseas born population, eligibility for pensions, and provision of services for migrants).

Non-census data available

The Immigration Survey conducted in 1973 collected period of residence information and details are also collected in the monthly labour force survey.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

The purposes for which data are needed - for small areas, when cross-classified with a number of other characteristics (eg birthplace, occupation, industry) - cannot be satisfied by sample surveys.

Question evaluation

The question asked in the 1976 Census was not answered by more than 35% of overseas born people, which means the data are not reliable. The topic test in September 1978 included a redesigned question, which was answered by a higher, but still inadequate, proportion of people. A further test will be conducted in March 1979.

ABS preliminary view

Include, subject to acceptable results being obtained in the March 1979 test.

TOPIC : CITIZENSHIP (NATIONALITY)

Required by present Act	Yes	Asked in 1976	Yes
		1971	Yes

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	5	9	1	-
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

The major justification for asking citizenship or nationality is the need to identify the size of groups eligible for pension rights, voting rights etc. In cross-tabulation with birthplace and period of residence, it gives a measure of 'propensity to naturalise' for different birthplace groups. As size is the sole measure required, and no data for small areas or very detailed cross-classifications are required, there seems to be little justification for inclusion of the topic in a census.

Non-census data available

Some data on citizenship and nationality were collected in the May 1972 Labour Force Survey.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Additional sample surveys could meet most user needs as data for small areas are not required.

Question evaluation

This question performed acceptably in the 1976 Census.

ABS preliminary view

Exclude. Amendment of Act required.

TOPIC : BIRTHPLACE OF PARENTS

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976	Yes
		1971	Yes

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	4	14	4	1
Exclusion	-	1	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Data on birthplace of parents are used in studies of the origin and composition of the Australian population ie it allows the identification of the impact of migration flows from particular countries through to the second generation (eg the number of Australian born people with a parent from a particular country).

Non-census data available

No other data are known to exist.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

The data could be collected in a sample survey, except that people whose parents were born in countries not represented significantly in the population would not be identified in sufficient numbers to yield reliable data.

Question evaluation

Results from preceding censuses have been satisfactory. The question was included in the September 1978 test and an acceptable level of replies was obtained.

ABS preliminary view

Include.

TOPIC : LANGUAGE

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976	Yes (languages regularly used)
		1971	No

Submissions received

	Cwltb	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	7	14	4	-
Exclusion	-	2	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Four distinct concepts of languages were identified from submissions received:

- 1 mother tongue (generally described as the language first spoken) ;
- 2 proficiency in English (could the person hold a conversation in English?);
- 3 languages regularly used;
- 4 all languages spoken (reflecting desire to measure potential translator market).

No adequate justification was made for the fourth concept- all languages spoken; the other concepts were justified as follows:

(a) Mother tongue - the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs and other users consider that a question on mother tongue would provide a valuable measure of ethnicity, and a more reliable measure than that provided by the birthplace question.

(b) Proficiency in English - this question, if feasible, would give a broad indication of the nature and distribution of the potential demand for English language tuition.

(c) Languages regularly used - an important measure of migrant assimilation is a migrant's willingness or ability to communicate in English and a question on this concept would assist in developing this measure. It is also an aid in assessing the demand for interpreter/translator services, in the development of adult migrant education programmes, as a measure of the need for multi-lingual information and in a variety of welfare services.

Non-census data available

The Immigration Survey conducted in 1973 by the then Department of Immigration is the only other collection obtaining some information on proficiency in English.

.../cont'd.

LANGUAGE (Cont'd.)

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Surveys cannot be used to obtain the data for small areas or for small groups which are required.

Question evaluation

(a) Mother tongue - the United Nations recommends that the most sensitive indicator of ethnic origin is 'mother tongue' as linguistic differences tend to persist into the second generation.

There are numerous ways of defining mother tongue such as the language first learnt, the language first learnt and still understood, the language spoken most in the person's childhood home.

As part of the testing of possible 1981 Census topics the respondent's application and understanding of the term mother tongue was investigated. Those who were native English speakers could generally give a fairly logical definition of the term but migrants in general could not understand the term.

Therefore, it was decided to test the definition of mother tongue preferred by the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, ie 'What language did each person first learn to speak?'.

This question obtained fairly accurate and reliable figures. However, those who first learnt two languages or more at the same time were not catered for (but this did not cause any bias in results) and a few other people did not tick the VERY first language learnt (ie they did not apply the word 'learnt' to their mother tongue and therefore gave the first foreign language learnt). To overcome the latter problem, the question was modified to 'What language did each person first speak?' This was included in the September 1978 test, but a large number of people did not answer the question. There are several complex factors which may have caused this result. Further tests are to be conducted.

(b) Proficiency in English - a question attempting to measure proficiency in English (ie 'Can this person speak English well enough to hold a conversation?') was tested but it did not clearly or reliably identify those whose English is so poor that they cannot hold a conversation.

(c) Languages regularly used - a question on the number of languages regularly used had been included for the first time in the 1976 Census but people included languages being learnt at school, languages used very infrequently and languages for which only a few words were known.

In an attempt to overcome these problems a question about the use of languages in the previous week was tested but a small number of people still reported languages being learnt at school. A further problem of people not including languages which are used regularly but were not used in the previous week was also identified.

Therefore, a longer reference period (a month) was tested in September 1978 and the number of people not answering the question was moderately high. Again this was a result of a number of complex factors whose influence has been difficult to separate.

.../cont'd.

LANGUAGE (Cont'd.)

ABS preliminary view

Include - mother tongue, subject to further testing.

Exclude - all languages spoken

- proficiency in English
 - languages regularly used.
-

TOPIC : RELIGION

Required by the present Act	Yes	Asked in 1976	Yes
		1971	Yes

NOTE: This is the only topic specified in the Act where it is not compulsory to answer the question.

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	2	6	14	1
Exclusion	-	2	-	2

Justifications advanced by users

The users of this information fall into two categories:

- 1 those who require the data for broad sociological studies including measures of ethnicity; and
- 2 those who require the data for planning educational and religious facilities.

Non-census data available

The information is not included in any other ABS collection.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

For those users who require the data for broad sociological purposes (eg can fertility patterns of particular religious groups be detected?), sample survey data would be adequate. However, for users, who wish to use the data as part of a social indicator measure or as a measure of ethnicity, or for planning educational or religious facilities, sample surveys could not provide the necessary small area detail.

Question evaluation

As some users requested data on frequency of attendance at places of worship, a question was included in the follow-up to the May 1978 test. Interviewers found people were embarrassed and in some cases hostile, and no further testing is to be undertaken on frequency of attendance at places of worship.

ABS preliminary view

Include, with an indication against the question that an answer is not compulsory.

TOPIC: RACIAL ORIGIN

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976	Yes
		1971	Yes

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	7	18	2	1
Exclusion	1	-	-	1

Justifications advanced by users

The major reason for asking a question on racial origin is to identify the number and location of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders in Australia. However, data on other racial origins available from previous censuses have been used by demographers and community groups and these users asked that the 1981 Census include other racial groups (eg Indian, Asian). Because of some adverse public reaction to the question on racial origin in the 1976 Census, and because of the difficulty of obtaining adequate response, attention is being directed to obtaining information on Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders only.

The data on the number of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders are used to:

- (a) determine the characteristics and locations of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders;
- (b) enable policies to be developed for meeting the special needs of these people, such as housing, medical services, education and special assistance programmes; and
- (c) study Aboriginal mortality and fertility.

Non-census data available

The National Survey of Income conducted by ABS in 1973 on behalf of the Commission of Enquiry into Poverty asked a question on racial origin and there is a question to identify Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders in the ABS September 1979 Labour Force Survey. The question is not asked in any other ABS collection.

Some data on Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders are available from relevant State government authorities.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Surveys could not satisfy user requirements for data for small areas and extensive cross-classifications.

.../cont'd.

RACIAL ORIGIN (Cont'd.)

Question evaluation

Results of the 1976 Census race question indicate that the quality of the data is suspect. In particular the number of people in Tasmania claiming to be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander rose by nearly 340% compared with the 1971 Census. Increases were recorded of over 200% in the ACT and over 130% in Victoria.

A redesigned question was included in the September 1978 test: 'Is this person an Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander?' The number of replies obtained was not satisfactory and it will be necessary to examine more closely the reaction of Aboriginal people to this question.

ABS preliminary view

Include question on Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders subject to further testing.

EDUCATION, HEALTH AND WELFARE TOPICS

1 Description of Topics

a Education Topics

Generally, the requests for education information ask for a repetition of the 1976 Census questions. However, there are 12 submissions for additional data.

An Education Topic Evaluation Committee comprising representatives of relevant Commonwealth Government departments and education research bodies recommended that:

- i if a person has more than one tertiary qualification, information on two of them should be collected and the question should ask for each qualification, the name of the qualification, the field of study, the year the qualification was obtained and the name of the awarding institution;
- ii highest level of schooling reached should be collected;
- iii the possibility should be investigated of collecting data on educational attainment prior to initial entry into the labour force; and
- iv those currently attending educational institutions should be asked the names of the courses being studied or the qualifications being sought.

b Health and Welfare Topics

Users of childcare data requested categories additional to those provided in the 1976 Census as well as coverage of children 0 - 12 years of age inclusive. (The 1976 Census included children 0 - 5 years only).

Submissions on the handicap topic asked for the type as well as the effect of handicaps, whereas the 1976 Census topic asked for the effect of handicaps only.

A question on retirement benefits cover was asked in the 1976 Census. Submissions for the 1981 Census asked for a similar question.

As shown in Appendix 1; no health or welfare topics are recommended for inclusion in the 1981 Census. Experience both in Australia and overseas has shown that the interview method is more appropriate for the collection of data in this field. The ABS has undertaken a number of surveys in the health/welfare area and plans to conduct further surveys in the future to meet requests for information in this field.

.../cont'd.

EDUCATION, HEALTH AND WELFARE (Cont'd.)

2 Topic Evaluation

A detailed evaluation follows in respect of :

Attendance at an educational institution

Highest qualification obtained

Age left school

Childcare

Handicaps

Retirement benefits cover .

TOPIC: ATTENDANCE AT AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976	Yes
		1971	Yes

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	9	15	2	-
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Answers to the question, suitably coded, enable analysis at a fine geographic level of students' characteristics according to the type of institution they attend, thereby helping education planners make decisions about the provision of facilities. These data, together with other data collected on the census form (eg income, occupation, place of birth), give an indication of the possible need for assistance schemes in particular areas.

Non-census data available

Information is collected each year on schools, universities, colleges of advanced education and colleges of technical and further education. The emphasis of this data is on educational institutions rather than students' characteristics. Monthly labour force surveys ask people aged 15-19 years whether or not they are attending school; if they are not they are asked the year they left school.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Additional sample surveys could provide useful socio-economic data using as benchmarks the annual schools census and collections from post-secondary educational institutions. These surveys could be useful in estimating attendance at other educational establishments.

Question evaluation

A question designed to measure the ability of people to supply this information was included in the September 1978 test.

Although the 1976 Census question was answered consistently the results from the recent test were inconclusive.

ABS preliminary view

Include - ask whether each person is attending an educational institution full-time, part-time or not at all, but not the name and address of the institution as was done in the 1976 Census.

TOPIC: HIGHEST QUALIFICATION OBTAINED

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976	Yes
		1971	Yes

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	19	20	5	-
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Users of data on highest qualification need information to study the incidence and geographical distribution of people with particular qualifications. The Education Topic Evaluation Committee considered that if more than one qualification was requested this would provide the ABS with greater control over the treatment of dual qualifications and decisions about highest qualifications. If more than one qualification is collected ABS would wish to collect details about all qualifications. Details on qualifications are essential for the accurate coding of occupation in censuses.

Non-census data available

The universities and colleges of advanced education collect details of qualifications awarded each year. This does not, of course, give the total stock of qualified people in Australia or their geographical distribution.

The General Social Survey conducted by the ABS in 1975 asked for qualifications obtained and for qualifications currently being studied. A question on qualifications obtained was also asked in the supplementary collection to the May 1977 Labour Force Survey on Childcare, Persons Not in the Labour Force and Persons Looking for Work. The February supplement to the monthly labour force survey asks persons currently in the labour force or who have been in the labour force in the past year their highest qualification.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Because data for small geographical areas and extensively cross-classified data are essential for user needs, sample surveys are unsuitable for collection of data.

Question evaluation

The 1976 Census question on highest qualification was modified and included in a test in September 1978. The number of people not answering the question was unacceptably high because people with no qualifications did not respond, but it is considered that this problem can be rectified.

ABS preliminary view

Include.

TOPIC: AGE LEFT SCHOOL

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976 1971	Yes Yes (Highest level of schooling)
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Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	12	19	1	1
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Data on age left school will be used to:

- (a) indicate the highest educational level attained by people who have no formal qualifications; and
- (b) identify differences in school leaving ages in various ethnic and minority groups.

Non-census data available

The ABS has collected data on age left school in the 1975 General Social Survey and every two or three years as part of a labour force supplementary survey on leavers from educational institutions. The February 1979 supplement to the labour force survey asks persons currently in the labour force or who have been in the labour force in the past year the age they left school.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Sample surveys cannot provide detailed cross-classification of data with other characteristics nor can information be provided for small areas, each of which is required by users.

Question evaluation

ABS tests and results of previous Censuses indicate that memory bias seriously affects the quality of answers to questions on age left school, highest level of schooling and highest qualification obtained at school. There are less problems with collection of data on age left school but it can only be regarded as a guide to educational attainment.

ABS preliminary view

Include.

TOPIC: CHILDCARE

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976 1971	Yes No
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Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	6	14	1	-
Exclusion	-	1	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Data on childcare arrangements and the characteristics of families with children would be used to assess the adequacy of existing childcare arrangements and the need for new facilities.

Non-census data available

South Australia and Queensland hold annual collections on pre-school attendance as part of the annual school censuses. In addition ABS has conducted childcare surveys in May 1969, 1973 and 1977 to determine the type of childcare arrangements made for children, including after school and holiday care, the time of departure for work and arrival home, the usual period of absence from home and the cost of childcare arrangements.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Because of the sensitive nature of this topic, especially for people who feel their children are inadequately cared for, collection of reliable data is difficult. Although surveys do not enable extensive cross-classification of data or the production of data for small areas, the survey approach is considered to be more suitable.

Question evaluation

A question similar to that asked in the 1976 Census, but broadened to cover all children aged 0-12 years, was tested in May 1978. However, the test showed that there were many unreported cases of childcare arrangements. The question also attempted to identify the incidence of children who usually looked after themselves, but the responses appear to under-estimate the situation.

CHILDCARE (Cont'd.)

Because there was some need shown by users for data on the number of children who attend the different types of childcare facilities (eg pre-schools, play groups, kindergartens), the September 1978 test included a question on this aspect. The advice of the Education Topic Evaluation Committee was that the information would be more appropriately collected as part of the 'attendance at an educational institution' question.

ABS preliminary view

Exclude.

TOPIC: HANDICAPS

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976	Yes
		1971	No

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	8	13	9	3
Exclusion	-	2	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Data on handicaps would be used to:

- (a) identify the handicapped and therefore provide the means for analysing this group according to other characteristics such as age, sex, occupation, etc;
- (b) assist in the planning and location of facilities for handicapped people (such as domiciliary, special transport and educational facilities and occupational therapists); and
- (c) identify areas with high concentrations of handicapped people.

Non-census data available

The ABS has conducted a Health Interview Survey (1977-78) and a Chronic Illness Survey (1974). A survey in September 1978 collected information on adult hearing while the February to May 1979 Supplementary Survey will provide information on children's hearing and, for adults and children, sight and dental defects.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

The 1976 Census question on the effects of handicaps on various activities produced data of poor quality. Collection of information by personal interview enables greater control to be exercised over interpretation of the term 'handicapped' and should therefore produce more accurate data.

Question evaluation

A survey following the 1976 Census showed that approximately 60% of the people who indicated in the census that they were handicapped answered in the survey that they were not handicapped.

ABS preliminary view

Exclude.

TOPIC: RETIREMENT BENEFITS COVER

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976	Yes
		1971	No

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	3	4	2	-
Exclusion	-	2	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Data on retirement benefits cover are needed for:

- (a) researching the need for superannuation programmes;
- (b) ascertaining how individuals and particular groups make provision for their old age; and
- (c) developing alternative retirement benefits schemes.

Non-census data available

A supplementary collection to the February 1974 Labour Force Survey obtained retirement benefit data by asking whether or not each person contributed to an organised retirement benefit scheme. The February-May 1979 Supplementary Survey asks people if they belong to a retirement benefit fund or superannuation scheme.

The ABS has never collected information on the financial arrangements being made for retirement by people who do not belong to an organised scheme.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Now that questions have been asked in the 1976 Census regarding contribution to, or receipt of payment from, organised superannuation schemes, there is a good base for further sample surveys. There is little to be gained in repeating the 1976 Census question. To establish the magnitude and type of alternative arrangement (eg property investments) a sample survey is the only satisfactory approach which could be used. It is also the sort of topic for which data at State level is usually satisfactory for most users' needs.

Question evaluation

A question on membership of a retirement benefits scheme was tested in June 1978. Two main problems evident in this test were:

- 1 People tended to ignore the words 'for retirement purposes' and included whole-of-life assurance policies, term insurance policies and other policies taken out for non-retirement purposes. It was also evident that although some people contributed or belonged to a retirement benefits scheme, they had a variety of motives for doing so other than for retirement purposes.

RETIREMENTS BENEFIT COVER (Cont'd.)

2 The question was confusing to people already retired and receiving superannuation payments.

ABS preliminary view

Exclude.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE TOPICS

1 Description of Topics

Questions on the financial situation of individuals, families and households, including personal income and the source(s) from which it is derived, were requested in a large number of submissions.

Generally submissions requested either a repetition of 1976 Census questions or an extension of categories in those questions.

2 Topic Evaluation

A detailed evaluation follows in respect of:

Income - amount (ranges)

Source of income

TOPIC: INCOME - AMOUNT (RANGES)

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976 1971	Yes No
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Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other Bodies	Individual
Inclusion	30	31	14	1
Exclusion	-	1	-	1

Justifications advanced by users

Information on the income levels of the population is basic to most public sector planning activities. Of particular importance is the use of income data in assessing the impact of government policies aimed at structural adjustment in industry and agriculture. Income data are also important in health, education and transport planning and for the activities of public and private welfare agencies.

Non-census data available

Nearly all recent social surveys (eg Household Expenditure Surveys, Income Survey, Health Interview Survey) conducted by the ABS collected information on income because of its importance as a cross-classificatory characteristic.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Sample surveys cannot fulfill the need for income data for small areas or for detailed cross-classifications.

Question evaluation

The question was tested extensively prior to the 1976 Census and further tests were undertaken in June and September 1978. The proportion of people not answering the income question in the September 1978 test was moderately high and a significant percentage of people reported their net income instead of gross income.

Although some difficulties have been experienced in obtaining completely satisfactory data on income it is considered that further testing is not warranted.

ABS preliminary view

Include.

TOPIC: SOURCE OF INCOME

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976	Yes
		1971	No

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	11	12	3	-
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Data on pensions and benefits received would be used, when cross-classified with other census information, to provide a clearer picture of those groups in society dependent on welfare or other payments. In addition it would provide valuable information about the characteristics and circumstances of those people not covered by pensions or benefits.

Information on other sources of income is required by a number of users but, for the most part, the specific uses to which they would put the data are unclear.

Non-census data available

The Income Distribution Survey (November '74), the 1974-75 and 1975-76 Household Expenditure Surveys obtained data on source of income and pensions received.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

A large sample would be required to produce accurate estimates for various sources of income other than wages and salaries, especially for various types of pensions and specific benefits.

Question evaluation

A source of income question was tested in June 1978. This test examined two main issues:

- 1 were all income sources reported?
- 2 were income sources reported accurately?

Problems detected were:

- (a) some people failed to answer both the source of income and the income question;

SOURCE OF INCOME (Cont'd.)

- (b) a number of people mentioned sources of income additional to those reported in answer to the question initially (eg interest from banks, building societies, shares, investments). These additional sources were most often reported for people aged over 50 years, and the income of that group could therefore be seriously understated;
- (c) some people mentioned sources of income but failed to include that income in the amount of income question.

ABS preliminary view

Exclude.

LABOUR FORCE TOPICS

1 Description of Topic

The majority of submissions received on labour force data requested either a repetition of the 1976 Census questions or an extension of categories in those questions. Related requests were for the identification of each person's usual major activity, particularly those people who are not in the labour force, and requests relating to voluntary welfare work.

In order to meet needs for labour force data and to establish accurately a person's employment and occupational status, a series of questions is required. These questions have been designed to meet United Nations census recommendations and to be comparable with ABS survey procedures. The aim is to determine:

- . whether a person is employed, unemployed or not a member of the labour force (employment status);
- . hours worked and number of jobs held by employed people in the labour force;
- . occupational status of people in the labour force (ie whether employer, self-employed, employee, etc);
- . occupation of people in the labour force; and
- . industry in which a person works.

2 Topic Evaluation

A detailed evaluation follows in respect of:

Occupational status (including employment status)

Occupation

Industry

Hours worked - actual hours
 - full-time, part-time

Usual major activity (ie of those not in the labour force)

Voluntary welfare work

TOPIC: OCCUPATIONAL STATUS (INCLUDING EMPLOYMENT STATUS)

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976	Yes
		1971	Yes

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	25	36	7	1
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Many users attach importance to data classified into the following categories of occupational status:

employed

- . employer, ie conducting own business and employing others
- . self-employed, ie conducting own business but not employing others
- . wage or salary earner
- . helper, unpaid, ie not receiving wages or salary

unemployed

not in labour force

not applicable, ie 0-14 years of age.

Non-census data available

A wide range of data is available from labour force surveys conducted by ABS.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Surveys yield State totals quickly and cheaply. However, there is a need to include this topic in the census every five years so that data for small areas are obtained and detailed cross-classifications with other data are possible.

Question evaluation

Evaluation of the results of the 1976 Census showed that the series of questions on occupational status was answered consistently. A different 'looking for work' question (ie people were asked to indicate every method they had used in looking for work) was tested in September 1978 but a very high proportion of people did not answer the question.

ABS preliminary view

Include.

TOPIC: OCCUPATION

Required by present Act	Yes	Asked in 1976 1971	Yes Yes
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Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	24	31	10	-
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Information about occupation is regarded as an important element of labour force data.

Non-census data available

The ABS asks occupation each quarter as part of a supplement to the monthly labour force surveys. However, the data collected can only be classified to 73 occupation groups, not to full occupation code level (ie 395 codes). Other information is available from professional registration boards (ie number of doctors, number of registered builders).

Extent to which sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Sample surveys are not adequate to compile data for small areas or to provide detailed cross-classifications of data.

Question evaluation

Survey results following the 1971 and 1976 Censuses showed that people answered the occupation question very consistently.

The September 1978 test investigated the possibility of asking unemployed people their former occupation but the results were not satisfactory.

ABS preliminary view

Include.

TOPIC: INDUSTRY

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976 1971	Yes Yes
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Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	17	28	4	-
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Industry of employment which is coded from the industry and address of place of work, is required in many economic and labour force studies. Information on geographical location of the labour force is used to determine traffic flows (when linked with place of residence) and also to calculate the daytime population of areas where large numbers of people are employed.

Non-census data available

Every quarter the ABS monthly labour force survey asks the industry of employed people but the answers are not coded in as much detail as census data. The former industry of unemployed people is asked each month. Industry data is available from the civilian employees series each month.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Surveys can assist by providing broadly classified data at State level quickly. However, only a census can provide detailed information for small areas and extensively cross-classified data for larger areas.

Question evaluation

Two questions are required on the schedule to determine a person's industry classification. Users' requirements from this topic have not changed since the 1976 Census.

ABS preliminary view

Include.

TOPIC: HOURS WORKED

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976	Yes {actual hours}
		1971	Yes { " " }

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	8	10	3	-
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

The inclusion of a question on hours worked provides users with data on the extent of labour force participation and part-time employment. However, because of differences in the number of hours that constitute a full working week according to the award under which people are employed there is some risk in using the total hours worked as a definition of full-time or part-time employment. The question allows the ABS to determine the labour force in accordance with United Nations definitions and, in 1971 and 1976, also provided a measure of multiple job holders.

Non-census data available

As part of the monthly labour force survey information is collected on the number of hours people worked per week.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Surveys would be able to satisfy most users' requests. The existing ABS monthly labour force surveys provide useful information on the number of hours worked per week.

Question evaluation

Although survey results following the 1976 Census showed that people answered the hours worked question consistently, they also suggest that the accuracy of answers obtained is doubtful.

ABS preliminary view

Exclude - actual hours worked. This information is obtained in monthly labour force surveys.

Include - usually worked full-time or part-time, as a measure of labour force participation and part-time employment.

TOPIC: USUAL MAJOR ACTIVITY (OF THOSE NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE)

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976 1971	No Yes
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Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	3	-	1	-
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Census questions indicate the employment status and occupation of people in the labour force, but there is no comparable information collected for people aged 15 years or over who are not in the labour force. The major activity question in the 1971 Census asked people not in the labour force to indicate whether they were:

- (a) engaged in home duties;
- (b) a child not yet attending primary school;
- (c) a child at primary or secondary school; or
- (d) a full-time student (other than school child).

Users asked for other details in the 1981 Census such as care of an aged relative. More attention is being paid by planners and research bodies to people not in the labour force as evidenced by the interest in 'mature-age' students and the arguments advanced for the payment of women in the home performing domestic duties.

Non-census data available

A question on major activity was included in all labour force surveys until November 1977. Currently no other information is collected by the ABS on this topic.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Before collecting data of this type, decisions have to be made on the basis to be used in determining major activity. In addition careful interviewing is necessary to ensure that people record activities correctly. The census does not lend itself to an accurate response and the information could be better obtained by a sample survey approach, even though the importance of small area data is recognised.

Question evaluation

The September 1978 test included a main activity question for people not in the labour force. Some confusion was evident and this affected response rates. It is not possible to satisfactorily determine usual major activity using only one question.

.../cont'd.

USUAL MAJOR ACTIVITY (Cont'd.)

ABS preliminary view

Include, but not as a separate question. A broad classification of usual major activity can be derived from answers to questions on other topics recommended for inclusion (eg hours worked - full-time or part-time, attendance at an educational institution, age, sex and marital status).

TOPIC: VOLUNTARY WELFARE WORK

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976	No
		1971	No

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	1	-	2	1
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Considerable attention is being focused on the contribution of particular groups of unpaid welfare workers (eg Meals on Wheels staff, Red Cross workers and tuck-shop helpers). Users require these data to enable the contribution by voluntary welfare workers to be measured.

Non-census data available

No ABS collection has attempted to measure this type of work.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

The many different types of unpaid voluntary work, the varied periods and frequency of duty and the many organisations involved inevitably lead to problems of scope and definition.

Question evaluation

A question on voluntary welfare work was included in the September 1978 test but it was not successful as people had difficulty in distinguishing between different types of welfare work.

ABS preliminary view

Exclude.

MODE OF TRAVEL TOPICS

1 Description of Topics

Many submissions requested data on the mode of travel to work and school, as well as basic data on the journey to work.

The requests for statistics on mode of travel basically require a repetition of the 1976 Census questions along with minor modification or extension of categories of mode of travel.

2 Topic Evaluation

A detailed evaluation follows in respect of:

Mode of travel to work

Journey to work

TOPIC: MODE OF TRAVEL TO WORK

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976 1971	Yes No
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Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other Bodies	Individual
Inclusion	7	22	5	-
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

For planning purposes it is highly desirable that data on the journey to work should be classified by mode of travel (car, bus, train, etc.). Information obtained on place of usual residence and place of work enables the direction and magnitude of peak-hour population flows in large urban centres to be measured.

Non-census data available

Data on mode of travel to work and to school were collected in the May 1970 and August 1974 Labour Force Surveys. Other related details included fares paid, time taken for the journey to work or school and time left home.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Additional sample surveys could provide useful data on the modes of transport used and a wide range of related issues which are too detailed for inclusion in a census. However surveys cannot provide data for small areas.

Question evaluation

Survey results following the 1976 Census showed that people answered the question on mode of travel satisfactorily.

ABS preliminary view

Include.

TOPIC: JOURNEY TO WORK

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976 1971	Yes Yes
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Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	9	18	8	1
Exclusion	-	-	-	1

Justifications advanced by users

Data on journey to work are used in:

- (a) transport research such as studies of urban transport systems;
- (b) estimation of road needs in relation to journey to work patterns;
- (c) broader social planning such as the provision of services for people living in one local government area and working in another;
- (d) the positioning of retail outlets; and
- (e) the production of statistics of daytime populations of areas.

Non-census data available

Details on journey to work and to school were collected in the May 1970 and August 1974 Labour Force Surveys. These included mode of travel to work, origins and destinations, fares paid, time taken for journey and time left home.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Additional sample surveys could provide useful information on modes of transport and a wide range of related issues which are too detailed for inclusion in a census. However surveys cannot provide data for small areas and would not be capable of meeting all requests.

Question evaluation

The data are coded from location of home and work.

ABS preliminary view

Include - the uses made seem to justify the substantial cost of coding required.

HOUSING TOPICS

1 Description of the Topics

To help assess the submissions on housing topics the ABS convened a committee of experts. Membership comprised representatives of: the Australian Association of Permanent Building Societies; the Department of Environment, Housing and Community Development; the Master Builders Federation of Australia; and the ABS. Dr Neutze of the ANU Urban Research Unit was also called upon for his expertise. The recommendations of the committee are included in the individual topic descriptions. All topics recommended by the committee as essential were tested in September 1978. Some of the highly desirable topics were also included in that test or were tested in the intensive interview phase prior to the September test.

2 Topic Evaluation

A detailed evaluation, including where applicable the recommendation of the Dwelling Topic Evaluation Committee follows in respect of:

Type of dwelling

Number of rooms

Nature of occupancy

Reason dwelling unoccupied

Mortgages - monthly payments

- source

Rent - amount paid per week

- type of landlord

- furnished or unfurnished

First home ownership

Age of dwelling

Household fuel

Telephone

Water supply

Motor vehicles garaged

TOPIC: TYPE OF DWELLING

Submissions required two type of dwelling concepts:

- 1 the living arrangements of each household; and
- 2 the structure type of each dwelling unit (eg flat, house).

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976	Yes
		1971	Yes

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	24	47	7	-
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Data on number of dwellings by type are required for a variety of projects including:

- (a) the study of past, present and future patterns of urban development;
- (b) the detailed study of the total housing stock; and
- (c) analysis of changes in living arrangements.

Census collection is necessarily based upon the concept of a household, which is defined as a person or group of people who live and eat together as a single domestic unit.

Non-census data available

Dwelling structure - ABS collects data on dwelling completions and classifies dwellings as 'separate house' or 'other'. The November 1978 Labour Force Survey classified dwellings to six types of dwelling structure. A dwelling structure question was also included in the November 1974 Aged Persons Housing Survey.

Number of dwelling units - ABS collects data on dwelling units in its quarterly building collection.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Sample surveys could be used to determine broad patterns and trends in living arrangements but could not be used to determine the stock of dwellings without census data as benchmarks. Data required by users for small areas or extensively cross-classified data are not obtainable from sample surveys.

Question evaluation

To collect the data required by users it is necessary to determine for each household:

..../cont'd.

TYPE OF DWELLING (Cont'd.)

- (a) the structure-type of each dwelling unit which each household occupies (eg separate house, block of flats, mobile dwelling);
- (b) the number of households living in each dwelling unit; and
- (c) whether living arrangements for each household are self-contained or not (ie do they share a kitchen and/or bathroom with another household?).

Of the three items of information needed, only one need be obtained from the householder, that is, whether the dwelling is self-contained or not. An evaluation of this topic has shown that the information can be satisfactorily derived from answers to the shared bathroom and shared kitchen questions.

Structure type of each dwelling unit and the number of households in each dwelling unit can be obtained through questions asked of the census collector. Tests have shown that collector response to, and understanding of, these questions is satisfactory.

ABS preliminary view

Include.

TOPIC: NUMBER OF ROOMS

Required by present Act	Yes	Asked in 1976	Yes
		1971	Yes

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	11	22	3	-
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Nearly all users require data on the number of rooms in order to calculate occupancy ratios (ie the number of people per room). Occupancy ratios are used to assess the nature and utilisation of the Australian housing stock as a broad measure of housing standards. Data on the number of rooms are also used by the ABS to calculate Consumer Price Index weights for home ownership and rent.

Details of each type of room are required for two reasons:

- 1 as a 'prompt' to ensure all rooms are included: and
- 2 to determine if the dwelling is self-contained on the basis of whether kitchen and/or bathroom facilities are shared.

Non-census data available

The Census is the only ABS collection in which these data are obtained.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Surveys can yield some broad indications but not data for small areas or data that can be cross-classified with other characteristics of the household.

Question evaluation

The Dwelling Topic Evaluation Committee saw the question as having two purposes:

- 1 to provide a measure of the number of rooms in a dwelling unit and therefore some indication of size; and
- 2 provide an indication of overcrowding.

On the first point the Committee suggested that the 'principal' householder be asked to detail the number of rooms in the dwelling, and that all householders be asked to detail the rooms they used. The Committee noted the problems in defining shared facilities, and suggested that the United States 'separate entrances' concept should be examined. On the second point, significant advantages were seen in maintaining an approach consistent with that in past censuses. The Committee recommended that the classification: total rooms, bedrooms, kitchen and bathrooms (with, for the latter two, an indication of whether or not they are shared) was essential. A rewording of this question was suggested to reduce the amount of information requested.

.../cont'd.

NUMBER OF ROOMS (Cont'd.)

Different methods of asking this topic have been tried. The test in September 1978 made use of a four question approach and the results were acceptable, although caravan dwellers had some reporting problems.

ABS preliminary view

Include.

TOPIC: NATURE OF OCCUPANCY

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976	Yes
		1971	Yes

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	8	6	4	-
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Nature of occupancy is a classification derived from a series of questions which ask if the dwelling is rented, being purchased or owned; if rented, whether it is furnished or unfurnished and the type of landlord (State Housing Commission, employer etc); and if being purchased how many mortgages there are on the dwelling. This classification is fundamental to the assessment of the housing stock and provides indicators related to urban housing and welfare policies.

Non-census data available

The General Social Survey (1975), the 1974-75 and 1975-76 Household Expenditure Surveys and a recently conducted labour force supplementary survey on Housing Rental (Nov 1978) all contain questions on the nature of occupancy. Also surveys conducted on behalf of other departments by ABS or outside bodies (eg the 1974 Aged Persons Housing Survey and the 1974-1975 Finance of Housing Survey) asked questions on occupancy.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Requirements for small area data and detailed cross-classifications necessitate the collection of basic data in the census.

Question evaluation

See comments under 'Mortgages' and 'Rent'.

ABS preliminary view

Include, subject to further consideration of deriving the data from questions on rent and mortgage.

TOPIC: REASON DWELLING UNOCCUPIED

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976 1971	Yes Yes
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Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	2	-	-	-
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Although only two requests were received for the number of unoccupied dwellings, the data are important:

- (a) to check census collector performance and evaluate the quality of census data; and
- (b) to facilitate analysis of the number of unoccupied dwellings by reason ie
 - . for sale
 - . to let (other than holiday home)
 - . newly completed and awaiting occupancy
 - . vacant for repairs or alterations
 - . holiday home
 - . condemned or awaiting demolition
 - . usual resident temporarily absent
 - . other

Non-census data available

The census is the only ABS collection in which these data are obtained.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

The Dwelling Topic Evaluation Committee saw vacancy rates as becoming increasingly important, and expressed doubt as to the accuracy and adequacy of the 1976 Census question.

Question evaluation

Three categories were considered essential for the 1981 Census: holiday homes; dwellings usually occupied but temporarily vacant; and all others. The subdivision of the 'other' category into 'for sale', 'to let', and 'other' was considered highly desirable.

This question worked quite well in the September 1978 test with the proportion of collectors not answering the question substantially lower than in previous tests.

ABS preliminary view

Include.

TOPIC: MORTGAGES

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976 1971	Yes No
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Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	10	11	2	-
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Data on mortgages are required for studies of mortgage payments in relation to income levels and in relation to ethnicity, for comparisons between housing costs in the public and private sectors, and for examination of the success of various home purchase financing schemes.

Non-census data available

Data on source of mortgages were collected in the 1974-75 and 1975-76 Household Expenditure Surveys.

Amount of mortgage repayments data were collected in the 1974-75 and 1975-76 Household Expenditure Surveys and in the 1974 Aged Persons' Housing Survey.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Additional sample surveys using the census data as a benchmark would allow this topic to be examined on a more specialised and comprehensive basis than is possible in a census. However it would not be possible to obtain small area data or extensive cross-classifications from surveys.

Question evaluation

The Dwelling Topic Evaluation Committee recommended against collecting the total amount and date of the first mortgage. It nevertheless considered it worth asking for the source of the mortgage and thought that much of the value of the question being included in 1976 would be lost were it excluded in 1981. The Committee recommended the inclusion of an 'amount of first mortgage payments' question, but that establishing the existence of second and subsequent mortgages was not warranted. However ABS considers that total mortgage payments should be obtained, which is done most reliably by asking for payments on first mortgages and on subsequent mortgages, and that data on first mortgage payments cannot be usefully interpreted without data on all mortgage payments.

ABS preliminary view

Include - monthly mortgage payments

Exclude - source of mortgages.

TOPIC: RENT

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976	Yes
		1971	No

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	11	17	3	-
Exclusion	-	1	-	-

Justification advanced by users

Rent is considered to be one of the most important measures of the cost of housing. It is needed as a measure of housing ownership trends and as an indicator, together with income data, of areas of poverty. The ABS uses rent data in the calculation of weights for home ownership and rent in the Consumer Price Index.

Non-census data available

These data were collected in the 1974-75 and 1975-76 Household Expenditure Surveys, in the 1974 Aged Persons' Housing Survey and in the labour force supplementary survey of November 1978 on Housing Rental.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Additional sample surveys could be used to assess trends in types of occupancy.

Question evaluation

The Dwelling Topic Evaluation Committee felt that some topics requested could be considered intrusive, in particular requests for precise rental payments and for a category enumerating those who pay rent to relatives. A submission requesting that real estate agents be mentioned explicitly when asking to whom the rent is paid was not considered to be important. On the other hand, it was felt that 'other government agencies' should be included in the 'employer' category. Problems with caravan renters were discussed, specifically the question of whether a lot charge constitutes rent. The Committee suggested that, since caravans were an increasingly important source of low-cost accommodation, the ABS should look closely into such matters. It was also thought that the furnished/unfurnished distinction should be retained as an aid to interpreting rents. The Committee considered that rent is an essential topic and should be included.

ABS preliminary view

Include - amount of rent paid per week
 - type of landlord
 - furnished or unfurnished

TOPIC: FIRST HOME OWNERSHIP

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976	No
		1971	No

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	2	-	-	-
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

The Dwelling Topic Evaluation Committee considered that data on this topic could be useful in determining the effects of the Home Savings Grant Scheme.

Non-census data available

A question on first home ownership was asked in the 1974-75 Finance of Housing Survey commissioned by the then Department of Housing and Construction. However, the survey only covered people purchasing new homes.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

A sample survey using interviewers could provide a more comprehensive picture of this topic by including a wider range of relevant issues.

Question evaluation

Although the Committee felt that this topic could be rather specialised for a census, a question on first home ownership was included in the September 1978 test. Question performance was acceptable although there was some degree of confusion about the meaning of 'first home', especially amongst migrants.

ABS preliminary view

Exclude. This topic would only be useful if first home owners were asked an additional question on how long they had owned the dwelling.

TOPIC: AGE OF DWELLING

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976	Yes
		1971	Yes

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	5	17	1	-
Exclusion	--	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

The Dwelling Topic Evaluation Committee considered that data on this topic would assist the prediction of demolition activity and the ABS uses the data, cross-classified with other dwelling characteristics, to calculate a weight for home purchase costs in the Consumer Price Index.

Non-census data available

The census is the only ABS collection in which these data are obtained.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

An additional survey could provide sufficiently accurate information for Consumer Price Index housing weight calculations if the problems of recall, confusion and lack of knowledge could be overcome.

Question evaluation

The Committee considered that the relationship between personal characteristics and age of dwelling is important, that the relationship between the quality and the age of dwellings is worth investigating and that an age distribution may help in predicting demolition activity. The limited questions asked in the 1971 and 1976 Censuses were not seen as providing adequate information.

Obtaining information on the age of dwelling by means of a census question is difficult because many householders do not have the information.

This question was tested in September 1978. It was found that the moderately high level of unanswered questions was almost entirely because people did not know the answer (eg people in rented accommodation and people living in homes they did not build themselves).

ABS preliminary view

Exclude. Unsuitable for census.

TOPIC: HOUSEHOLD FUEL

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976	Yes
		1971	Yes

Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	8	16	1	-
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Users requested this information for studies of household energy usage and changes in usage patterns over time. These data were also requested for the planning of future power facilities and the calculation of weights for the Consumer Price Index.

Non-census data available

The Household Expenditure Surveys (1974-75 and 1975-76) collected data on the amount spent on types of fuel for home heating.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Additional sample surveys could provide information on energy usage patterns and data for calculation of Consumer Price Index weights.

Question evaluation

The Dwelling Topic Evaluation Committee considered that 'fuel for cooking' and 'fuel for lighting' asked in 1976 need not be repeated in 1981.

The September 1978 test asked only about living room heating and bathroom water heating. Even though the proportion of unanswered questions was higher for the second, it is still within acceptable levels.

ABS preliminary view

Include living-room heating and bathroom water-heating only.

TOPIC: TELEPHONE

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976 1971	No No
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Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	1	3	1	-
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Users advanced the following reasons for the collection of data on telephone connections:

- (a) it would allow more accurate estimation of the extent of penetration of telephones and therefore assist the development of more successful marketing strategies; and
- (b) it would provide valuable data on social communication.

Non-census data available

A question on whether or not a household had a telephone was included in 1975 General Social Survey and the Household Expenditure Surveys of 1974-75 and 1975-76. Labour force surveys collect the information, primarily as a central measure for editing and follow-up.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Data on penetration of telephones could be better satisfied by the more intensive approach of a sample survey. Additionally, it is not considered that one measure of social communication, which is all the census would provide, is sufficient basis for a study of the subject.

Question evaluation

A question asking 'Is there a telephone on which you can be contacted in case of any queries about your form?' was asked in the September 1978 test. The response to this question was good. No analysis has been undertaken of households which gave a positive reply and only four people raised an objection to this question. However, given the time delay between actual collection and processing of the census and the size of the operation, it is not considered feasible to use this method of follow-up.

ABS preliminary view

Exclude.

TOPIC: WATER SUPPLY

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976 1971	Yes No
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Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	4	13	2	-
Exclusion	-	-	-	-

Justifications advanced by users

Data on the source of each dwelling's water supply are required for studies of the adequacy and utilisation of existing water supplies; the identification of those facing a health risk through inadequate water supply; and international comparisons of housing.

Non-census data available

The census is the only ABS collection in which these data are obtained.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

Because this information is required to identify areas where there is an inadequate water supply, sample surveys would not be appropriate.

Question evaluation

The Dwelling Topic Evaluation Committee considered that this information could be collected at ten yearly intervals, and hence recommended its exclusion from the 1981 Census.

ABS preliminary view

Exclude.

TOPIC: MOTOR VEHICLES GARAGED

Required by present Act	No	Asked in 1976 1971	Yes Yes
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Submissions received

	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual
Inclusion	4	18	6	-
Exclusion	-	-	-	1

Justifications advanced by users

Users say that data on the number of motor vehicles garaged at or near the dwelling is used for a variety of planning projects. In particular data on the access of household members to vehicles assist in estimating the number of potential public transport users and their location. It is also used to help estimate traffic volumes and movements, and to measure access to health and other facilities.

Non-census data available

Information on the garaging address of particular registered vehicles was collected by questionnaire in the ABS Survey of Motor Vehicle Usage in September 1976. A similar sample survey will be conducted in September 1979.

Extent to which additional sample survey(s) could meet user requests

The concept of access to motor vehicles would be more appropriately covered by a sample survey in which several questions investigating the concept could be asked. One census question does not provide sufficient information to clarify the concept.

However, a sample survey with this aim would have to be based on household rather than vehicle, as information on the individual's use or non-use of vehicles is required. This topic could be usefully linked with a journey to work survey.

Question evaluation

This question was included in the September 1978 test and the proportion of people not answering the question was not unduly high.

ABS preliminary view

Exclude, subject to further examination of the use made of the data by traffic or urban planners.

APPENDIX II

PART B

OTHER TOPICS REGARDED AS UNSUITABLE

FOR INCLUSION IN THE CENSUS

PART B

OTHER TOPICS REGARDED AS UNSUITABLE FOR INCLUSION IN THE CENSUS

These topics were considered as either not sufficiently justified for inclusion in a census, or adequately catered for by data from other sources, or not capable of being treated satisfactorily in a census.

TOPIC	Number of submissions received for inclusion				Possible survey data source
	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual	
INTERNAL MIGRATION, LEISURE AND RECREATION					
a) Internal Migration					
Intercensal changes of address	-	2	-	-	Internal Migration Survey Feb. 1977, Oct 1978
Reason for internal migration	1	4	-	-	
b) Leisure and Recreation					
Private boat ownership	-	1	1	-	General Social Survey 1975
Holiday home ownership	-	1	-	-	" " "
Holidays away from home per year	-	-	1	-	
Holiday destinations	-	4	4	-	BTE National Travel Survey 1977-78
Month in which holidays taken	-	1	-	-	" " "
Ownership of recreational equipment	-	2	-	-	General Social Survey 1975
Persons playing sport by type of sport	-	-	1	-	
EDUCATION, HEALTH AND WELFARE					
a) Education					
Literacy, illiteracy	-	4	-	1	
Interest in future qualification	-	-	-	1	
Direct use of qualification	-	1	-	-	Special Supplementary Survey, Feb-May 1979.

TOPIC	Number of submissions received for inclusion				Possible survey data source
	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual	
b) Health and Welfare					
Welfare service usage	5	-	-	-	
Life assurance cover	1	2	1	-	
Persons with hearing aids	-	-	2	-	Hearing Defects - Sept 1978 Special Supplementary Survey Feb-May 1979
Diabetics and method of treatment	-	-	2	-	Health Inter- view Survey, 1977-78
Use of unprescribed stimulants	-	-	-	1	
Tobacco smoking	-	-	1	-	Alcohol and Tobacco Consumption, Feb 1975
State of health	-	1	-	-	Health Inter- view Survey, 1977-78 Chronic Illness Survey May '74
Left handed people	-	-	1	1	
Partially or totally blind or deaf	-	-	1	-	Special Supplementary Survey, Feb-May 1979
Health insurance cover	-	-	1	-	Health Insur- ance Cover, Mar. 1979 (planned) General Social Survey 1975
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE					
Expenditure on hire purchase contracts	-	-	1	-	Household Expenditure Survey 1974- 75, 1975-76
LABOUR FORCE					
Length of time unemployed	-	1	-	-	Labour Force Experience, Feb 1979

TOPIC	Number of submissions received for inclusion				Possible survey data source
	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual	
LABOUR FORCE (cont'd)					
Number of jobs held	2	-	1	-	Multiple Job Holdings Aug 1971, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1979(planned)
Flexible working hours	-	2	-	-	Special Supplementary Survey Feb-May 1979
Shift work	1	-	-	-	Evening and Night Workers Nov 1976
Labour force mobility	1	-	-	-	Labour Mobility 1978 (Feb 1979)
Potential labour force occupation	-	1	-	-	
Reason left job	1	-	-	-	Persons Looking for Work, May 1976, Nov 1976, May 1977
Primary industry as second job	-	1	-	-	July 1978 Multiple Job Holding, Aug 1973, 1975, 1977, 1979 (planned)
Absences due to industrial accidents	-	1	-	-	Health Interview Survey 1977-78
Unemployed redundant, retired etc	-	-	-	1	Persons Looking for Work (see above)
Absence from work by reason	1	-	-	-	Monthly labour force surveys

TOPIC	Number of submissions received for inclusion				Possible survey data source
	Cwlth	State	Other bodies	Individual	
MODE OF TRAVEL					
Time taken getting to work	-	1	1	1	Journey to Work and School, Aug 1974
HOUSING					
Mobile homes used as permanent residences	-	1	-	-	
Ambition to own home	-	-	1	-	
Rent paid to real estate agent	1	1	1	-	Rents, Nov '78
Years mortgage held	1	4	-	-	
Rates paid	1	-	-	-	Household Expenditure Survey, 1974-75, 1975-76
Number of garages per dwelling	-	1	1	-	
Home accidents	-	-	-	1	
Length of tenure, period of occupancy	1	4	-	-	
Material of roof	-	-	1	1	
Verandahs and balconies	-	1	-	-	
Housing alterations and additions	1	1	-	-	Household Expenditure Survey, 1974-75, 1975-76
Home insurance	1	1	-	-	" " "
Future housing intentions	-	2	-	-	
Insulation	-	-	-	1	
Dwelling facilities	3	7	1	-	" " "
Fire damage	1	-	-	-	
Sewage disposal	5	10	2	-	
Rural holding	3	6	1	-	
Material of outer walls (a)	7	11	1	-	
OTHER					
Membership of armed forces in times of previous hostilities	1	-	-	-	Ex-service Personnel, Widows and Children. Nov 1971 and 1979 (planned)
Ownership of domestic animals	-	-	-	1	
Membership of social organization	-	-	-	1	
Membership of library	-	-	1	-	
Involvement in a natural disaster	-	-	-	1	

(a) This topic has been included in each census since 1911 and is required by the Act. However the Dwelling Topic Evaluation Committee regarded it as no longer useful.

APPENDIX III

CRITERIA FOR 1981 CENSUS TOPIC SELECTION AND

OTHER INFORMATION WHICH MAY HELP

CRITERIA FOR 1981 CENSUS TOPIC SELECTION AND
OTHER INFORMATION WHICH MAY HELP



APPENDIX III

Before you complete the green forms, you should be aware of the criteria ABS will use in examining your submission to ensure that the census is the appropriate method for collecting, processing and tabulating the information you require.

Consider:

WHAT CAN'T THE CENSUS DO?

The census cannot provide

- . perfect counts of special groups of the population eg social workers, single parents. Because of the vast size of the census there are many sources of error.

- . up to date figures. It normally takes about 12 months to process census results before actually starting to produce the tabulations required by users. Limited preliminary data is usually made available earlier.

- . data about individual persons. The Bureau has an unblemished record in maintaining confidentiality. This is essential to ensure the public has faith in the Bureau and that the statistics collected are of high quality.

WHO IS COUNTED AND WHERE?

The way in which the census is collected may affect its applicability to the information you require from it.

Most importantly all persons are counted where they spend census night, regardless of where they usually live. Special provisions are made for persons who were in the open, at work, travelling by long distance train, bus or plane or on board vessels plying between Australian ports.

The census does not count Australians who are overseas but does count people who are visiting Australia. Diplomatic representatives and their dwellings are excluded.

WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES TO THE CENSUS?

In some cases the information you are looking for may already exist. It may be collected by another organisation, there may have been surveys conducted, or some form of administrative records may provide the data required.

Sample surveys are preferable if results are required quickly and a high degree of cross-classification or geographical detail is not required.

2

DOES THE INFORMATION YOU NEED REQUIRE -

- . tabulation at the small geographic area level. Information required at the State or national level may be better obtained by other means (eg sample surveys) depending on the cross-classification required. Also if the need is restricted to information about one or two specific small areas, the census is not an appropriate vehicle for collection.
- . cross-classification with a number of the other characteristics collected at the census.
- . comparability with data from previous censuses.
- . benchmark data for the whole population to produce estimates from sample surveys.
- . basic data to allow sample surveys to be designed efficiently.
- . small groups obtained by cross-classification.

TOPICS SHOULD NOT -

- . upset people by invading their personal privacy to an unacceptable degree. The information you will get from such a topic could be subject to bias and will affect other data used and collected in conjunction with it.
- . seek information not generally known such as "where was your maternal grandmother born?"
- . present major coding problems or need excessive processing. You should look at the way answers would need to be classified.
- . require people to remember things they are unlikely to be able to, for example "Did your family take a holiday lasting at least 7 days, 5 years ago ... 1 year ago ...?"
- . seek opinions, attitudes; nor should they require more than one or two questions to obtain the required information.
- . require an overlong explanation or instruction to ensure an accurate answer. If the type of question needed on the census schedule cannot be understood with a minimum of explanation, it is not suitable for a census.

PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN TO TOPICS WHICH -

- . provide information not readily available from other sources.
- . will have a national benefit rather than a localised one.
- . concern important issues about which little is known.

3

THEREFORE, if you are seeking to have a topic included in the census it should be clear from details you supply that -

. you have a specific purpose for which the information will be used.

. 1981 is a suitable year to include the suggested topic in a census, taking into account the time lapse - could be up to 12 months delay - between collecting, processing and final release.

. the topic submitted by an organisation reflects the overall need of the organisation rather than an isolated need within the organisation.



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