

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

**PROPOSAL NO. 7 OF 2020
BY THE AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS**

ELECTRICITY METER DATA COLLECTION

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) proposes to collect information for the purpose of improving the 2021 Census of Population and Housing count during data processing.

The information will be collected:

- for reference periods in relation to the 2016 Census night and the 2021 Census night;
- from electricity distributors and retailers;
- as a census of approximately 12 million private dwellings;
- through administrative data records provided electronically by a secure digital transfer mechanism;
- across states and territories of Australia.

Information will be collected on a range of characteristics including:

- National Metering Identifier, meter address and connection status indicator;
- total electricity usage between read dates for accumulation meters; and
- interval electricity usage for smart meters.

The information collected in relation to the 2021 Census night will be used by the ABS at area level (not individual dwelling level) to estimate the number of households unoccupied on Census night and, by consequence, ensure the Census count is accurate. The information in relation to the 2016 Census night is used by the ABS for research purposes to inform the approach to dwelling occupancy determination for the 2021 and future Censuses.

The ABS expects to make statistical and related information from the collection available in the first release of the 2021 Census of Population and Housing data products, from June 2022.

The principal users of the information the ABS produces will be:

- Government for informing policy and funding/allocations;
- Public sector for informing service delivery and infrastructure decisions;
- Private sector for understanding markets and informing investment decisions; and
- Demographers and social researchers for answering questions of public interest.

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

- has considered what existing information is available;
- has consulted with the Centre for New Energy Technologies (C4NET);
- has undertaken pilot testing to ensure the required data are readily available and provider load is minimised;

- has conducted an independent Privacy Impact Assessment looking at the privacy impacts from the way that the ABS uses information collected by other government agencies, businesses or other organisations in running the 2021 Census of Population and Housing.

Marcel van Kints
General Manager & Chief Data Officer
Data Strategy, Integration and Services Division

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