

**Senate Economics Legislation Committee**  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

**Treasury Portfolio**

Supplementary Budget Estimates

2016 - 2017

**Division/Agency:** Australian Bureau of Statistics  
**Question No:** 55  
**Topic:** Homelessness Statistics Reference Group  
**Reference:** Written  
**Senator:** Rhiannon, Lee

**Question:**

Given that funding for Indigenous homelessness programs and bodies have been systematically defunded over the past few years, it is a concern that numbers of the Indigenous homelessness may have risen since the last census. A recommendation that was put in place from the 2011 census was the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group to address and advise on the 'hidden' nature of homelessness<sup>1</sup>.

a. May I have a list of the work the Reference Group has done since 2011 to address the hidden nature of homelessness?

<sup>1</sup> The ABS Discussion Paper, Methodological Review of Counting the Homeless 2006, noted the 'hidden' homelessness is the context of homeless people reporting a usual address on Census night while visiting other private homes."

**Answer:**

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) engaged with the Homelessness Statistics Reference Group, Indigenous communities and service providers across NT, NSW and Qld in 2013 to prepare [Discussion Paper: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Perspectives on Homelessness](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4735.0) (cat. no . 4735.0 - <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4735.0>).

This discussion paper invited submissions from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and interested parties to review the collection and estimation practices which may arise due to differences in understanding of the concepts of 'home' and 'homelessness' between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. The findings from this consultation provided key implications for future collection of homelessness, as per released in the [Information Paper: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Perspectives on Homelessness](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4736.02014) (cat. no. 4736.0 - <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/4736.02014>).

Since Census 2011, previous experiences of homelessness information has been collected in the General Social Survey 2014, and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey 2014-15 (NATSISS). The consultation noted above, informed the development of a culturally appropriate set of questions and fieldwork practices for the NATSISS 2014-15 and the 2016 Census but also noted the need for conceptual similarity to enable Indigenous and non-Indigenous comparisons.