

Senate Economics Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates

2016 - 2017

Division/Agency: Australian Bureau of Statistics

Question No: 56

Topic: Measures to prevent undercounting of homeless people in the Northern Territory

Reference: Written

Senator: Rhiannon, Lee

Question:

The hard copy census in the territories is only conducted over one night, yet the Northern Territory spans more than 1 000 000 square km and has the highest number of remote communities in Australia has a historically high number of rough sleepers: what measures did the ABS put in place for the 2016 census to prevent undercounting of homeless people in the Northern Territory, given that without access to a home many homeless would not have had access to the online census?

Answer:

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) implemented a significant, integrated strategy to enumerate all dwellings and persons in Northern Australia in the 2016 Census of Population and Housing. This strategy involved working with local stakeholders and community members to ensure that procedures were locally appropriate and effectively implemented.

The enumeration of persons in Northern Australia extended over several months and involved self-completion online and on paper, as well as interviewer-supported completion. Special strategies were put in place for remote travellers, homeless, remote communities, mining camps and culturally and linguistically diverse groups. There was no expectation that people without access to homes would be able to complete an online census.