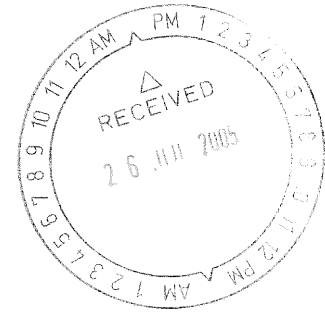


Senate Economics Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Budget Estimates, 31 May to 2 June 2005



Question: Bud 75

Topic: ABS – Average Response Times to Complete a Census Form

Hansard Page: E11

Senator Sherry asked:

Senator SHERRY—Do you have a breakdown based on your previous census collection and also your focus group research about average response times?

Mr Trewin—I am not sure that we have one. We could create a table like that quite easily from the work we have done. We may not be able to pick one out when I go back and photocopy it to you, but we could create it reasonably easily.

Senator SHERRY—If you could. There would be a considerable range of response times and I suspect difficulties based on education levels.

Answer:

The time taken to complete the census form varies according to the size of the household, the number of questions each person has to answer and the complexity of their answers.

Estimates of the time required to complete the census form were obtained in the lead up to the 2001 Census, during the Census Major Test held in September 1999. The results are shown in the table below.

Number of Persons in Dwelling								Average Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Average time taken in minutes	17.7	20.6	23.9	21.4	26.5	27.0	27.3	21.8

Estimates have also been obtained in the lead up to the 2006 Census, during the Census Major Test held in August 2004. The results are shown in the table below.

Senate Economics Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Treasury Portfolio

Budget Estimates, 31 May to 2 June 2005

Number of Persons in Dwelling							Average Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Average time taken in minutes	17.7	22.3	26.2	27.7	29.6	27.6	22.9

The Major Test forms did not contain the full range of questions that will be asked in the 2006 Census as the content was only finalised earlier this year.

Further testing of the time taken to complete the form is planned for the Census Dress Rehearsal, which will be held in August 2005. This is the first time the full set of questions for 2006 will be combined in a field test.