

**Senate Standing Committee on Economics**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Treasury Portfolio**

Budget Estimates, 2 June – 4 June 2009

**Question: bet 128**

**Topic: Survey Participants**

**Hansard Page: Written**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. Can the Bureau please outline what standard procedures apply to the identification of eligible survey participants?
2. Where prospective survey participants are to be visited by an ABS interviewer, and are notified by letter that this will be this case, does the Bureau think it would be helpful to explicitly provide an opportunity for those not eligible to participate to notify the ABS prior to being visited?

**Answer:**

1. Can the Bureau please outline what standard procedures apply to the identification of eligible survey participants?

The standard procedure for Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) household surveys is to select the households first and then determine eligibility of householders for inclusion in the survey at the time of interviewing. Eligible survey participants can generally only be determined after ABS interviewers have obtained the relevant scoping information from respondents. This is because there is no prior information available to the ABS on the socio-demographic characteristics of the people living in the households to allow it to restrict the selection to households relevant to the survey.

For ABS business surveys, the procedure is to use such information as industry classification, geographical location, business employment size, and turnover available from the ABS business register, which is based on the Australian Business Number, to select only the businesses that are relevant for the survey.

2. Where prospective survey participants are to be visited by an ABS interviewer, and are notified by letter that this will be this case, does the Bureau think it would be helpful to explicitly provide an opportunity for those not eligible to participate to notify the ABS prior to being visited?

Unlike business surveys, the criteria for inclusion in household surveys, depending on the subject of enquiry, can be complex. To ensure the quality of ABS statistics, it is preferable to have the eligibility of inclusion in surveys

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assessed by ABS interviewers, rather than to have it determined by the respondents themselves.

However, should respondents feel that they are not eligible for inclusion in an ABS survey; they can discuss it with an ABS officer, using the contact number provided in the ABS letter advising their selection in the ABS survey.