

Appendix

The 2006 Census should
be designed to measure
Australia's overseas
population as well as
domestic....

....a submission

2003: July 9, Wed'y

To: ABS--Population Census Development

Fm:

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1] New Topic

2] OVERSEAS POPULATION

3] Description

About 5% of the population has been overseas for a year or more. These are Australian citizens and they should not be excluded from the count just because they are not at home on the night. The best way to enumerate them will be to ask their parents:-

Children presently Overseas			
	CHILD 1		CHILD 2
Sex	M	F	- ditto -
Away since	198__	199__	200__
(If married):			
Nationality of spouse		
When expected back	2006 /	2007 /	DNK
Country of location	UK /	USA /	HongKong / _____
	(Other)		

Reason for absence:

Tourism / Work / Study / Retirement / _____
(Other)

Is this person normally a member of this household? Y / N

This question tacitly assumes that there is no parent living at another address. Your experts would have to work out the best way to overcome this technical problem, which might obtain in about one-third of cases. (Note that not being a normal member of the household will not hack it: the child may be an emigrant.) This will also catch the 400,000 likely to be visiting or touring overseas on the night; they can be sorted out using the "Away since" question.

4] Question 44 will need to be completely re-written in light of this recommendation--and, of course, expanded. Compensation?

Leave out the Income questions! They invite lying and simply replicate Income Tax and Centrelink data.

5] Numerous issues arise out of the Australian diaspora; it may not be an exodus but it is growing very rapidly. Expatriates are just as much part of the Australian population as the rest of us. There is no more reason to ignore them than to ignore the population of Tasmania!

The Bureau no longer publishes the Emigration Report: with this data it will be able to re-commence it, with good information. In particular, data relating to repatriation likelihood will help to project/estimate future domestic population figures.

5b] Census output should include standard tables by CD. In particular the following might be correlated:-

Sex by Time away
Nationality of spouse by present location
Reason for absence by When expected back
Repatriation likelihood: Infer from when expected back.

In general we need to gain a better understanding of reasons for emigrating and how the national economy might benefit from the longterm absence (where?) of so many of our citizens. We also need a basis to try to work out policy to encourage repatriation if the size of the diaspora becomes an economic problem.

6] Issues of classification and categories are too technical for this submitter.

7] Generally, the attitude should be to locate and describe the population of Australians wherever located, so that the one-in-20 living overseas are not ignored.

8] If CD analysis is too expensive then Area basis would do.

9] Airport movement cards require too much detailed analysis to be very helpful.

10] This firm is insignificant, and the principal semi-retired: the consequences of failing to accept the recommendations would be minimal for us but possibly significant for social and tax policy. There is an important likely fallout--it is socially unhelpful for expatriates to feel that they, literally, don't count. Public policy (specifically EQUALITY) would suggest that no citizen should feel left out, in this global world, simply by virtue of his/her location on Census night. (Your apparent lack of interest in Citizenship status *per se* is irrelevant to this point.)

11] If this submission is not accepted we suggest that, in concert with DFAT, you do specific studies of Australians in UK, USA, HongKong, China other, New Zealand, Japan and Indonesia, etc.

The ABS is part of the federal government: it should not be perceived as forgetting citizens just because they have emigrated. As a Government agency it is likely to have a big impact on how ready our expatriates are to contribute to Australia, either monetarily or by repatriating in due course. Especially if it uses the Census to count and learn about them!

2003: July 6, Sunday

Designing the next Census

This submission deals with two issues both of which aim to improve the utility of the Census beyond that of a mere head count and snapshot of related data.

1. Overseas Population

About 5% of the population is presently overseas and has been for a year or more. (Another slice is away on trips such as vacation or business visits; I think they are dealt with OK at present.)

That is if we define "the population" as Australian citizens--and why shouldn't we? We need to know more about them and the Census ought to make a start on that process. E.g.:-

Children presently overseas

Sex

Away since when

(If married) Nationality of spouse

When expected back

Country of present location

Reason for absence

Normally a member of this household?

I believe that you would find there are a million of these absentees, and that there is no more reason to ignore them than to ignore the population of Tasmania!

2. Longitudinal Studies

The current requirement to collect data only for statistical purposes means you lose the ability to develop longitudinal information. But perhaps a significant element of the people would not object to taking part in longitudinal studies.

Why not ask their permission to retain their questionnaire for this purpose? You could then establish an initial sample of say 100,000 and subsequently add 20,000 or so every time.

I don't need to tell a demographer that such data could provide very useful information for descriptive and policy planning purposes.

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Thank you for your attention.

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