

**REVIEW OF ENUMERATION OF
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN THE
1996 CENSUS**

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Census of Population and Housing is the backbone of the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) data collection strategy for Indigenous statistics. The census provides the basis for State/Territory estimates of the Indigenous population. It also provides a range of socio-economic and socio-cultural statistics for people, families and households at five yearly intervals and at all levels of geography.

This working paper aims to evaluate the effectiveness of implementing the 1996 Indigenous Enumeration Strategy (IES). The focus is on how the 1996 strategy worked from both the National and State perspectives. The 1996 IES consisted of a number of elements, some of which were applicable only in some circumstances. For example, the special procedures involving interview forms that were designed for use in nominated discrete communities were not used at all in NSW/ACT, Vic and Tas, where they were not required. The overall strategy and unique situations encountered in all States and Territories are presented in Section 4 on State Perspectives.

The elements of the 1996 Census IES strategy which will be covered in this paper are:

- (i) Major changes and other issues;
- (ii) Awareness and Public Relations Activities; and
- (iii) State Perspectives.

In the 1996 Census of Population and Housing, 352,970 people identified themselves as Indigenous. This represented an increase of 87,511 or 33 per cent since the 1991 Census. This increased count was larger than can be explained by the combined effects of demographic factors, census editing procedures or improvements in enumeration. A recent paper (Ross, K 1999. *Occasional Paper: Population Issues, Indigenous Australians*, ABS Catalogue No. 4708.0, ABS, Canberra) produced by the ABS' National Centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Statistics (NCATSIS) found that a considerable degree of variation in the increased Indigenous counts, existed between the States and Territories. The greatest proportional increases were in the urbanised south-eastern States with Tasmania and the ACT recording the highest increases. While this was thought to be outside the accountable factors, the increasing propensity to identify as an Indigenous person may have contributed to this outcome. The increase in the count in the Northern Territory was the lowest recorded. Additionally, in other states with remote areas with predominantly 'traditional' Indigenous populations, the counts were as expected and could be accounted for by demographic factors and the improved enumeration procedures.

Collection issues associated with enumerating Indigenous peoples include high levels of mobility (individuals and families moving between dwellings and community locations); the general distrust shown by Indigenous peoples of government administrative organisations, their methods and representatives; low levels of literacy in standard English; and the oral based communication heritage of Indigenous peoples which does not include the use of paper based forms. Additionally, self reporting as an Indigenous person is becoming more complex to collect in the census. Since a question about Indigenous status was first asked in 1966, it has become clear that a significant number of

people may either not record their Indigenous status or change their responses between censuses (Ross, K 1999. *Occasional Paper: Population Issues, Indigenous Australians*, ABS Catalogue No. 4708.0, ABS, Canberra).

The IES adopted for the 1996 Census evolved from similar strategies used in previous censuses. Its purpose was to achieve an accurate count (and therefore high quality statistics) of Indigenous peoples. The strategy aimed to provide the Census Operations with sufficient flexibility to account for the unique cultural aspects of Indigenous society which may affect Indigenous enumeration. Within this framework, different approaches were needed to enumerate nominated discrete communities of Indigenous peoples and other Indigenous households eg, in urban areas:

- (i) Nominated discrete communities are those that were identified, by the ABS, as requiring specialised enumeration procedures because of geographical isolation and/or cultural or language differences. Such communities are located in remote areas but some exist as clearly defined Indigenous populations in or near towns or cities. In nominated discrete communities enumeration was carried out by Indigenous Interviewers using specially designed census forms. (See Appendix 1, *1996 Census Indigenous Enumeration Strategy* for further information on nominated discrete communities)
- (ii) The majority of Indigenous peoples (about 80 per cent) were located outside nominated discrete communities and the IES emphasised revised procedures for accurate enumeration of these people. Households of Indigenous people in urban areas were enumerated using standard methods and staff except where a need for special assistance was recognised. (see Appendix 1 for further information)

The changes between the 1991 Census and the 1996 Census Indigenous strategies included:

- (i) Full-time management of Indigenous enumeration procedures in each State and Territory was allocated to, a State Indigenous Manager in each State and Territory (except Tas and ACT). State Indigenous Managers were recruited approximately six months prior to the census to coordinate and implement activities to ensure the accurate enumeration of Indigenous peoples;
- (ii) State Indigenous Managers managed the IES staff specifically responsible for Indigenous awareness activities and for Indigenous enumeration in nominated discrete communities;
- (iii) Awareness activities to address cultural barriers and publicise the potential benefits of the census for the Indigenous community. Consultation at the regional and local levels was undertaken and State specific publicity was conducted where possible;
- (iv) A less direct approach to enumerating Indigenous peoples, more consistent with the communication style used in Indigenous societies in discrete communities was adopted. Use of specially designed forms by Indigenous Interviewers to conduct the census in nominated discrete communities was continued as part of this approach;

- (v) A greater employment of Indigenous people to assist Census Collectors in urban areas. Effort was made to identify all locations outside nominated discrete communities where some assistance was likely to be needed by Indigenous households. Assistance included the completion, by interview, of the census forms where it was considered necessary; and
- (vi) An Indigenous consultant was employed to assist in the design of the special Indigenous Household and Personal forms.

See Appendix 1 *1996 Census Indigenous Enumeration Strategy (IES) - Final* for detailed information on the collection strategy for enumerating Indigenous peoples.

2. MAJOR CHANGES AND OTHER ISSUES

2.1 Reorganisation of Staffing Structure

The State Indigenous Manager was a newly created position for the 1996 Census as part of the Indigenous Enumeration Strategy (IES). After the 1991 Census there was seen to be a need for a person in each State and Territory to be responsible for coordinating activities, disseminating information about the census to Indigenous peoples and utilising Indigenous networks. The major roles of the State Indigenous Manager involved overseeing the entire enumeration of Indigenous peoples in the States/Territory with nominated discrete communities (Qld, WA, SA, NT) liaison with Indigenous community groups and identification of nominated discrete communities for enumeration of Indigenous peoples by personal interviewing.

The State Indigenous Manager's broad responsibilities included: the identification of clusters of Indigenous peoples within the State/Territory; identification and contact with government and non-government groups which were influential in the Indigenous community and were able to assist in raising acceptance of the census; conducting census awareness activities within Indigenous communities; managing the IES staff; and liaising with Field Managers and other standard enumeration staff.

In censuses prior to 1996, these roles and responsibilities had been handled by the Census Management Unit and the Census Field Officers. The 1991 IES relied on the close communication and coordination between these key areas. It was generally found that communication was poor or non-existent between the Census Field Officers and Divisional Managers. It was also found that more resources were needed to supervise and assist the Census Field Officers in the performance of their duties. Part of the reasoning behind the introduction of the State Indigenous Managers, in 1996, was to address some of these issues. For the 1996 Census, all remote (or discrete Indigenous community) enumeration became the responsibility of the newly established State Indigenous Manager and the Divisional Managers (renamed to Field Managers) were given the responsibility of all standard collection.

Census Field Officers were again employed in 1996, this time working directly to the State Indigenous Managers whilst maintaining liaison with Field Managers and other standard staff such as Group Leaders. Census Field Officers' roles changed little between censuses apart from becoming involved in the increased awareness and promotional activities of the 1996 strategy.

Minor changes from the 1991 IES were the renaming of the Assistant Collectors to Indigenous Assistants (for enumeration of Indigenous peoples where required in urban areas), or to Indigenous Interviewers (for nominated discrete communities requiring the interview method of collection). Their roles remained unchanged.

The reorganisation of the census field staff structure, and particularly the introduction of the State Indigenous Managers proved to be a successful refinement over previous censuses. It has been reported, for instance, that the increased census awareness and liaison activities undertaken by the State Indigenous Manager is believed to have led to an increase in the willingness of Indigenous peoples to identify themselves on the census

forms. Additionally, the coordination of the IES by the State Indigenous Manager is thought to have led to an improved coverage of the populations of Indigenous peoples. Some procedural problems were encountered during the census and these are dealt with in other sections of this paper.

2.2 Integration of Indigenous Enumeration Strategy with Standard Enumeration

In some areas, a departure from the IES strategy was brought about by a lack of cohesion and common understanding in IES staff dealings with standard staff. Similarly, a number of standard Field Managers had problems with other aspects of the IES itself or in relations with IES staff. Despite the fact that the two streams coordinated their activities in the majority of places, there was evidence that the delivered level of integration required often did not occur. Major factors contributing to the difficulties of coordination included insufficient training and documentation about the IES for retaining staff, a lack of knowledge of Indigenous culture by standard staff and a confusion over roles of IES staff in certain circumstances. In remote areas, where the roles of IES and standard staff overlapped, there was a doubling up of travel, awareness and enumeration activities for the same regions. The risk created with this type of misunderstanding is that there might have been cases where both Indigenous and non Indigenous people have been missed in the census count.

2.3 Staffing Related Issues

2.3.1 Recruitment

A certain amount of difficulty was experienced in attracting applicants with the appropriate skills for some of the State Indigenous Manager positions but the outcome was satisfactory in most cases. The skills and attributes required for the State Indigenous Manager positions include high levels of administrative knowledge, successful liaison with Indigenous peoples/communities, and a very good understanding of Indigenous cultures.

State Indigenous Managers were employed for all States and Territories except Tasmania, which employed a Census Field Officer for the tasks, and ACT which was covered by the NSW State Indigenous Manager. The difficulty of attracting suitable people for these jobs is reflected in the fact that two of the positions were filled by people on transfer from Canberra. Although State Indigenous Managers are identified positions, the 1996 experience found that the job can be satisfactorily undertaken by non Indigenous people provided they have the requisite skills and knowledge as prescribed in the duty statements for the positions.

Comparable difficulties were experienced in recruiting Census Field Officers which are crucial to Indigenous enumeration. As with the 1991 Census, the 1996 Census Field Officers spent considerable amounts of time in the field (up to seven weeks). There were 21 Census Field Officers employed for 1996 with some recruitment problems being experienced due to the difficulty of attracting suitable candidates for short term positions at the salary level offered.

Some Census Field Officers who were appointed on the basis of their knowledge of cultural issues and their familiarity with appropriate communication channels and methods, lacked the skills to perform their administrative tasks to the required level. Additionally, some Census Field Officers were unable to fulfil important parts of their enumeration functions, despite being selected for their affinity with Indigenous culture. In a few instances, Census Field Officers were comfortable dealing with one section of a community but found difficulty in liaising with other important elements (for instance, administrators). Liaison, selecting community staff and training of staff are all activities which posed difficulties for some Census Field Officers without the necessary skills.

Evidence from completed census forms in the Data Processing Centre was that the quality of work undertaken by some Community Coordinators and Indigenous Interviewers (more so the Indigenous Interviewers) was poor. Both recruitment and training deficiencies appear to be causes of incomplete and inaccurately completed census forms. In many communities, finding people who are suitable to fill these positions can be a problem. Generally, the most appropriate staff for Community Coordinator positions were found to be people such as school teachers, Community Coordinators and other office staff. The difficulty experienced with these members of communities was that they were usually already fully committed to their existing jobs and other unpaid community work. This meant they had little spare time to be involved in the census. Recruiting sufficient numbers of appropriate Indigenous Interviewers was even more difficult.

2.3.2 Training

Quality of training is a key determinant of the effectiveness of training and the 1996 IES experience indicates that this was variable. State Indigenous Manager training generally seems to have been appropriate. However, the extent to which State Indigenous Managers were trained in census matters and Census Management Unit activities would have varied considerably, especially between the two ABS permanent officers and the temporary staff.

Training practices used by Census Field Officers varied considerably. Proper training of both Community Coordinators and Indigenous Interviewers is essential and inadequate training is likely to have been one of the main causes of incorrectly and poorly completed census forms for Indigenous communities. Indications are that the main problems with the Community Coordinator and Indigenous Interviewer training were twofold for Census Field Officers: finding sufficient time to allocate to the activity and scheduling training close enough to census time for the recipients to be in a position to use it. Where Community Coordinators, and more particularly Indigenous Interviewers, were recruited on early visits, they were often missing or unavailable when actually required for training or enumeration. Census Field Officers often found the most effective approach was to leave this task until a visit very close to, or actually at, census time when they could combine recruitment, training and sometimes the commencement of enumeration in the one process.

2.3.3 *Timetable Issues*

Community Coordinators and Indigenous Interviewers were recruited by Census Field Officers for census activities in nominated discrete communities. Problems arose in communities where recruitment may have occurred too early and the selected people were no longer available for census activities. In some cases, Census Field Officers and State Indigenous Managers were required to complete or undertake enumeration and in one instance, non Indigenous Interviewers were recruited at the last minute.

2.4 *Manuals*

The principle field manuals (*Census Field Officer Manual, Guide for Training Community Collectors and Indigenous Interviewers, Information for Community Collectors and Working for the Census*) were rewritten for the 1996 Census. The first three documents were considered to have been adequate for the job for which they were designed but will require some modifications for future censuses.

Working for the Census was the Indigenous Interviewers' manual for enumeration in nominated discrete communities. The 1996 version was well received and proved to be a useful tool for the IES staff. Because of its colourful graphics and simple style, it had wide appeal in communities, serving as a public relations tool as well as the interviewers' guide.

The *State Indigenous Manager Manual* was created for the new State Indigenous Manager positions in 1996. The manual was satisfactory for the purpose but indications are that, as with several of the other field manuals, it did not cover the general duties of the position sufficiently.

Other than the State Indigenous Manager manual, which was provided as an electronic collection database document, the IES manuals were late in preparation due to conflicting priorities during census development. The Census Field Officer manual, in particular, was delivered too late to be properly used during Census Field Officer training and the *1991 Census Field Officer Manual* was used for training in some instances.

2.5 *Extended Enumeration Period/Movement of Indigenous Peoples*

One of the first things recognised about nominated discrete community enumeration is that it does not actually occur on the one day, Census Day. The importance of frequent circular mobility in the daily, periodic and seasonal round of activities associated with Indigenous social and economic life in remote Australia (Martin and Taylor, 1995) needs to be taken into account when undertaking enumeration of Indigenous populations. Some cultural, climatic, sporting or social events lead to large numbers of Indigenous peoples travelling to other communities, or to urban areas within their own, or other States. These events can result in communities virtually closing down for weeks at a time. Where they occurred, a flexible approach to enumeration has been adopted, subject to the requirement to ensure that people were counted once and once only. In these instances, actual census enumeration has always taken place over a period of weeks although an effort is made to maintain the "as enumerated" concept ie., counting people

where they were on Census Night. Unfortunately, the inaccuracy introduced because of "recall" will grow the longer enumeration is delayed past Census Day.

In the 1996 Census, there was a considerable amount of enumeration which took place many weeks after Census Day. Re-visits after Census Day were necessary in a number of cases to complete enumeration. A variety of circumstances contributed to this, including IES staff illness, funerals and other cultural business, and disturbances within communities which prevented earlier action. There were also instances of delayed enumeration activity because of breakdown of normal IES procedures either through a lack of community cooperation or, more often, a failure on the part of IES staff to carry out their assignment. For the most part the re-visits undertaken by State Indigenous Managers and Census Field Officers, resulted in good quality counts, based on information available at the time of re-visit.

In a small number of cases where enumeration failed to occur at census time, it was impossible to implement census procedures afterwards. In those cases it was necessary to compile counts based on the best available data, generally some kind of community record. Additionally, there were several communities where a departure from the IES procedures occurred and imputed records were created. In these cases, most of the details on person and dwelling records were blank. Consequently, *Community Profiles* for some of these areas will have been affected by the imputation process and the data for 1996 is incomplete.

2.6 Census Forms Used for Indigenous Enumeration

For nominated discrete communities, three census forms were used. The Community List which was a coverage check of dwellings and households; the Special Indigenous Household Form (SIHF) which was a listing of household members and visitors; and the Special Indigenous Personal Form (SIPF), equivalent to the standard Personal form but reworded for an interviewer and to suit the cultural situation of Indigenous communities.

The use of the SIHFs and SIPFs in nominated discrete areas was increased in 1996. The interview based forms used in previous censuses were redeveloped for the 1996 IES using a valuable initiative which had not been used in the past; a consultant was employed for the design of the interview based forms. The consultant was an Indigenous person who had worked in a collection role in both the 1991 Census and the 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey (NATSIS) and who subsequently took on the State Indigenous Manager role for the Northern Territory in the 1996 Census.

Another form which was specially produced for Indigenous enumeration was the Community List. This list was designed to ensure all places where people would be sleeping on Census Night were included. Little comment was made regarding the form except that the IES staff found them useful and the practice of using them should continue.

The Special Indigenous Household and Personal forms and Community List were generally considered to be successful but some problems were experienced. Some interviewers found three separate forms confusing and tended to complete the special household form only, others preferred the personal form to the household form. In

some cases the standard/mainstream household form was used for interviewing. Generally, this occurred where there was a shortage of the special forms or the work was undertaken by a State Indigenous Manager or an experienced Census Field Officer. Part of the difficulty experienced by Indigenous Interviewers could be attributed to their levels of literacy with standard English.

2.7 Use of Community Information Sources to Assist in Enumeration

Instructions to Census Field Officers and Community Coordinators were to try to obtain lists of members of the community from whatever records were available - health records, housing records etc. These lists were called Expanded Community Lists and their primary use was to confirm the census count with an independent count from other sources. It was hoped Expanded Community Lists of names and addresses could be obtained and people who should have been counted in communities would be recorded. This count was then to be compared with the census count.

Unfortunately, although the concept appears sound, it did not work well in practice. Approaches to State Health departments for permission to access health records were often not successful and in some instances, Indigenous communities would not allow access to their records. There was a concern in some communities about the confidentiality of such data and in one State, the ABS had to destroy the Expanded Community Lists once verification checks had been completed. Permission for access to these lists was often difficult to obtain as health records contain sensitive data. As a result of all these factors, Expanded Community Lists were not widely applied in the 1996 Census.

The Expanded Community Lists were to be packed with completed forms and sent back with other materials to the Data Processing Centre to be examined before being destroyed. Some lists were forwarded on to the Data Processing Centre but were not processed. Few Expanded Community Lists were sent to the Data Processing Centre and those were of limited use in providing independent verification of counts because they had been used in the enumeration process. In some cases, Expanded Community Lists were examined but were found to contain less people than were enumerated. Despite this, the community claimed that the count was too low. This appears to reflect the community's use of a 'service population' rather than a 'point in time' count.

Overall, the Expanded Community Lists were not effective as a validation tool. This was a result of either the quality of information they were based on, their use in the enumeration itself, or an unwillingness on the part of individual communities to allow the ABS access to them after census field operations were complete.

2.8 Employment of Indigenous Staff

The major initiative in staffing, apart from the newly created State Indigenous Manager position, was to place a much greater emphasis on the employment of Indigenous Assistants in non discrete areas. The increased emphasis on the employment of Indigenous enumeration staff in the 1996 Census was considered to be a success despite some uncertainty regarding how they were to be employed. While details vary between Field Management Areas, the deployment of Indigenous Assistants was beneficial to

enumeration in many communities. Indigenous Assistants were appointed in many parts of the country with varying degrees of success according to the perceived need for them in any particular area. In some instances Indigenous Assistants were underused due to confusion over their role or because standard staff were reluctant to employ Indigenous Assistants. Conversely, in other areas, some Census Collectors called in Indigenous Assistants whenever they came across an Indigenous person. In most places where Indigenous Assistants had been successfully recruited and trained, standard staff found the Indigenous Assistant presence helpful. While the level of assistance needed varied widely, an Indigenous Assistant presence of some kind was essential in any Field Management Area with significant numbers of Indigenous peoples.

Census Field Officers were once again the key to the operational implementation of the IES. The most common weaknesses of Census Field Officers were with regard to administrative procedures (including financial) and reporting. A need for increased numbers of Census Field Officers was identified in the 1996 Census. Indications were that it may prove more beneficial to have more Census Field Officers for a shorter period of time.

Most Community Coordinators were effective in their crucial role for nominated discrete community enumeration. While there were numerous occasions where people recruited to conduct interviews failed to complete their duties, this appears to be more of a recruitment/training deficiency and not an indictment of the interview approach itself.

3. CENSUS AWARENESS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

1996 Census awareness activities were carried out widely amongst Indigenous organisations and communities. The main aim was to inform communities of the purpose and significance of the census and to remove any misunderstandings about enumeration procedures. A lack of awareness of the census among Indigenous peoples and its importance to them had been established in previous censuses. To ensure the effectiveness of these activities, including encouragement of Indigenous people to participate in the census, communications were channelled through local Indigenous organisations. Thorough consultation with government and local organisations, such as ATSIC, Land Councils, Indigenous health and legal agencies, and community councils, was implemented as a key communications strategy for the 1996 Census.

It was the responsibility of the State Indigenous Managers to see that this consultation process occurred in order to identify local enumeration problems. Appropriate and effective ways of disseminating information and conducting census awareness activities were then formulated to deal with these problems. It was found that approaching organisations in person rather than just sending letters was considered to be more effective in gaining cooperation and assistance from Indigenous people. There was also a need to target census awareness activities to address problems identified from previous enumerations such as the undercount of young adult males, babies and visitors.

State Indigenous Managers and Census Field Officers spent a great deal of time and travel in awareness activities and overall, the 1996 Census awareness activities appear to have been successful on a wide scale. State Indigenous Managers reported a high level of success in liaison with organisations at all levels and feedback from other IES staff was positive about the approach to census awareness for Indigenous peoples. There were instances, however, where initial hostility towards the Census was encountered. A continuing need exists for the ABS to distinguish itself, and the census in particular, from other government representatives who are generally viewed with suspicion.

While an assortment of locally assembled public relations tools was often used quite successfully, a key element of the strategy was centrally produced public relations material including videos, posters, and an information brochure. These were produced after consultation with authorities on Indigenous cultures. The tools were received with enthusiasm, and widely distributed within Indigenous communities. Local level awareness activities such as Census Field Officer and State Indigenous Manager participation in radio and local newspaper interviews proved to be very effective methods of raising awareness.

The two ABS produced videos were received with mixed reactions depending on the appropriateness of one over the other. The first of the two videos which was about the process of enumerating Indigenous peoples, was generally considered more useful than the second which didn't deal directly with the issues and concerns, relevant to viewers, with respect to the census.

A few difficulties arose for awareness raising staff when some of the public relations materials were not ready on time. Both the videos were received by IES staff after the initial public relations activities had begun and were possibly less effective than they might have been if their production had been on time. It is crucial that this material is

ready when needed to support activity in the field. Despite this shortcoming, the materials produced were well received and contributed to a successful census awareness program. (See Appendix 1 for more information on the Census Awareness Program)

4. STATE PERSPECTIVES

The Indigenous Enumeration Strategy (IES) was developed with the recognition that Indigenous peoples live in a variety of geographical locations and situations which have been broadly categorised as either nominated discrete communities or non discrete communities/areas. Nominated discrete communities are those communities which are identified as requiring special enumeration techniques and forms to take into account cultural, language and/or geographical differences. Approximately 20 per cent of Indigenous peoples live in these communities which are mostly located in the remote areas of NT, Qld, WA and SA.

The majority of Indigenous peoples are located outside nominated discrete communities in urban and rural areas of all States and Territories. Households of Indigenous people in these areas were enumerated using standard forms and staff except where a need for special assistance was recognised. In the States without nominated discrete communities (NSW, Vic, Tas and ACT) the emphasis of the IES was on promotional and awareness activities to encourage participation of all Indigenous peoples in the census.

4.1 States/Territory Using Standard Enumeration Only (NSW, Vic, Tas, ACT)

There were no nominated discrete communities in NSW, Vic, Tas or ACT and Indigenous peoples of these States and Territory were enumerated using standard methods. Enumeration of Indigenous peoples in urban and non discrete areas of NSW, Vic, Tas and ACT, was carried out under Field Manager control. Collection was mainly by self enumeration using the standard Household and Personal forms supported by the activities of the State Indigenous Manager and Census Field Officers in public awareness raising activities and liaison with Indigenous organisations. However, the 1996 Census also included greater provision of Indigenous staff to assist wherever help appeared to be needed by Indigenous households.

The urbanised areas of south-eastern Australia experienced the highest proportional increases in Indigenous counts between the 1991 and 1996 Censuses (ACT - 82 per cent increase, Tas. - 56 per cent, NSW - 45 per cent, Vic - 28 per cent) (ABS, 1999). In these States/Territory, the increases have been attributed to a mixture of demographic (births, deaths, migration etc) and social factors (willingness to identify as Indigenous) and improved awareness and collection procedures.

4.1.1 New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory

The NSW State Indigenous Manager accepted responsibility for both NSW and the ACT. The State Indigenous Manager reported that overall, the IES was a success and recommended that the strategy be continued in future censuses.

For the 2001 Census, the State Indigenous Manager recommended a review of the approach of not using special enumeration procedures. While interviewing would not be necessary in many cases, there are locations where enumeration could possibly benefit

from the involvement of community liaison officers to assist with awareness and/or facilitate actual enumeration.

Indigenous Assistants were employed in NSW and ACT for two purposes. Firstly, in some areas they were useful in public awareness raising for the census but not required for actual enumeration purposes. In these cases, the householders returned their completed forms to the standard Census Collector. This approach worked quite well and may be used more extensively in 2001. No Indigenous Assistants were required for enumeration activities in the ACT and those employed were basically used for awareness activities within Indigenous groups. Second, Indigenous Assistants were also employed to explain the census and the importance of accurate enumeration of Indigenous peoples to residents who were apprehensive of the census.

One problem encountered during the NSW operation was the breakdown of communication between several levels of staff mainly due to misunderstandings about some IES staff roles. These difficulties tended to occur at the Field Manager/Census Field Officer/Group Leader levels where the necessity of having assistance for Indigenous enumeration was underestimated or not fully understood, the result being that Indigenous Assistants were not recruited where needed or not always utilised as much as they might have been. Some instances of confusion or disputed demarcation between standard and IES staff have possibly led to gaps in the implementation of the IES. Without the culturally specific awareness activities and assistance from Indigenous staff embodied in the IES, there could have been areas where Indigenous enumeration or identification was unsatisfactory. State wide results, however, show extremely strong growth between the 1991 and 1996 Censuses and the extent of either of these phenomena cannot have been great.

In the South Coast and Monaro/Queanbeyan areas, the IES staff received criticism directed at other government departments which had not, in the past, followed through with promises of employment of Indigenous people. The situation was eased through the intervention of the Census Field Officer and by the employment of Indigenous Collectors and Indigenous Assistants in the area. The State Indigenous Manager reported that Community Coordinators positioned in a small number of local areas could have delivered these services, enabling the Census Field Officer to operate more efficiently.

Feedback from the Newcastle/ Maitland area was that although there were considerable numbers of Indigenous people in the community, there was no need for any Indigenous Assistants and enumeration was conducted using standard staff and forms. In the areas in Sydney of Blacktown, Parramatta and Fairfield, Indigenous Assistants were employed but little assistance was actually required. The Field Managers in these areas indicated that the Indigenous Assistants and IES team had done their job well and this had led to a well executed enumeration. In Randwick the Census Field Officer enumerated the mission area and surrounding collection district of La Perouse because suitable Indigenous Assistants could not be found. Requests for assistance in Glebe, Balmain and Riverwood were also dealt with by visits from the Census Field Officer.

4.1.2 Victoria

The strategy adopted under the IES in 1996 was to divide the State into nine equal regions. A number of Assistant Census Field Officers were appointed to ensure that the awareness messages and offers of assistance were taken to various communities around the State. The State Indigenous Manager employed had a close working knowledge of the Indigenous communities of Victoria and was able to employ the most appropriate Indigenous people to assist him. No Indigenous Assistants were appointed in the Victorian enumeration process.

The Assistant Census Field Officers worked closely with the Group Leaders and Census Collectors where Indigenous households in non discrete areas needed, or had requested, assistance. The use of Census Collectors to identify Indigenous households was a successful component of the Victorian IES. Close liaison between Census Collectors and Assistant Census Field Officers was crucial for this aspect of enumeration, particularly where identification of Indigenous peoples was difficult.

Census manuals were not used in the training of Assistant Census Field Officers. All training was undertaken verbally in anticipation of the close working relationship between standard and IES staff. This strategy allowed for a separate approach to be taken for each local community with the State Indigenous Manager providing support and advice where required.

Integration of the IES with standard enumeration went smoothly due to the emphasis in training of Census Collectors that they should advise their Group Leader or Field Manager if they had any concerns with any Indigenous households they encountered. The Group Leader or Field Manager was then required to contact the State Indigenous Manager or local Indigenous organisation for further assistance. The experience of Victoria suggests a role for positions similar to Community Coordinators in areas other than nominated discrete communities.

4.1.3 Tasmania

The enumeration strategy of Indigenous peoples in Tasmania was considered to have produced good quality counts. A State Indigenous Manager was not considered necessary for Tasmania and the decision was made to appoint a Census Field Officer who would have full responsibility for the coordination of awareness activities in the State. The Census Field Officer appointed had a close working knowledge of Indigenous organisations, and wide acceptance within Indigenous communities. No other IES staff were employed.

There is only one area in Tasmania with a large discrete Indigenous community (Cape Barren Island). In this instance, the Census Collector from Flinders Island delivered and collected standard forms by plane. Both Flinders and Cape Barren Islands had been previously visited by the Census Field Officer before enumeration began to promote the census and to encourage participation.

As the Census Field Officer undertook only the community liaison and awareness activities for the IES, he was not required to conduct recruitment or discrete community enumeration activities. Due to the late appointment of the Census Field Officer and the necessity of abbreviating his duties, training for the position consisted of a brief and concentrated session.

4.2 States/Territory with Nominated Discrete Communities (Qld, WA, SA, NT)

Generally, the IES was reported to have worked well for these States. The increased count in the NT was the lowest recorded (16 per cent). Additionally, in other States with predominantly 'traditional' Indigenous populations, the counts were as expected (Qld - 36 per cent, WA - 22 per cent, SA - 26 per cent). These increases could largely be accounted for by demographic factors (ABS, 1999).

4.2.1 Queensland

The Queensland Census Management Unit appointed a non Indigenous, permanent ABS officer to the State Indigenous Manager position after recruitment activities were unsuccessful in attracting an Indigenous person with the necessary skills for the position. The focus of the State Indigenous Manager position was primarily managerial. The Qld State Indigenous Manager also undertook early liaison work of remote area nominated discrete communities to enable later recruitment of the Census Field Officers. This arrangement operated effectively in Qld for both the State Indigenous Manager and Census Management Unit and could be considered for future censuses.

Census Field Officers in Qld were required to have an excellent knowledge of their area and be able to identify Indigenous population clusters. Five Census Field Officers were recruited for Qld and their duties tended to be more operational than originally expected. It was found that the Census Field Officers should have started their jobs four weeks earlier to allow sufficient time to encourage Indigenous peoples to apply for the standard census positions.

Indigenous Assistants were not utilised to any large extent in Qld urban areas although some standard Census Collectors tended to call in an Indigenous Assistant whenever an Indigenous person was encountered. This attitude was possibly a result of training, as some Field Managers also showed the same level of misunderstanding of roles within the IES.

Indigenous Interviewers were recruited by the Census Field Officers during public relations activities. In one community, several Indigenous Interviewers were recruited and trained but were unable to carry out their duties. The Census Field Officer and Community Coordinators were required to trouble shoot to ensure the best coverage occurred. A suggestion arose from IES staff that most of the enumeration problems could have been avoided if Census Field Officers had their own mobile enumeration team, or if an enumeration team from outside the communities was employed to go into the communities, enumerate the people and move on to the next community a few days later. However, this approach of employing people from outside the communities is considered culturally inappropriate and is not recommended for the 2001 Census.

Some nominated discrete communities were enumerated using standard methods although interviewing was conducted where necessary. This mix of IES and standard procedures was adopted because Census Field Officers found that in some nominated discrete communities the enumeration was easier when the special Indigenous household form was used in conjunction with the standard personal form and the interview procedure.

Expanded Community Lists were found to be extremely difficult to compile. Unsuccessful attempts were made to obtain support from Qld Health for IES staff to gain access to community health clinic records. The Census Field Officers were ultimately able to obtain Expanded Community Lists in many cases from other administrative records such as housing records or CDEP lists. In some cases, community maps were used to locate families and were then used to divide the community into workloads. In general, the use of Expanded Community Lists in future censuses was encouraged by the Qld office although more attention could be given to other community sources as well as health service records.

The enumeration period for nominated discrete communities in Qld was extended (as with WA, NT and SA) past Census Day by one or two weeks and in some cases even longer into September. Delays in Qld nominated discrete communities were brought about by funerals, road conditions, Census Field Officer ill health, availability of community delegates and travel to major Indigenous sporting events etc,. The Qld experience indicated that the Indigenous enumeration program needs to be flexible enough to accommodate changes as well as being able to reflect strategic goals and operational objectives.

4.2.2 Western Australia

It was thought that the numbers of Census Field Officers was not sufficient to cover the large distances between nominated discrete communities and towns in WA. Recruitment and training of IES staff began in some areas up to six weeks before the census because of existing workloads. This proved to be less than ideal due to the problems encountered with trained Indigenous staff, Interviewers in particular, not being available by the time the census arrived or not being able to remember their training.

The Perth metropolitan and surrounding areas did not have a Census Field Officer dedicated to them. A Census Field Officer from an adjacent area undertook some initial public relations and awareness activities in the region. Even though no discrete communities were identified, the region would have benefited from a continued Census Field Officer presence. Twelve Indigenous Assistants were recruited in WA, but seldom used in non discrete communities and urban areas.

After extensive consultation with community officials in each of the Ngaanyatjarra communities (part of the Goldfields region), it was decided that non Indigenous staff were to be recruited to act as back-up support and Indigenous staff would be recruited as interviewers. The benefit of this particular strategy was that with the high drop out rate of Indigenous staff, a locally trained replacement was ready to commence duties without the Census Field Officer needing to revisit the community to train further staff.

The Census Field Officer of the Goldfields region undertook the enumeration of nomadic, Indigenous peoples living in makeshift accommodation on the fringes of Kalgoorlie and Laverton. It was decided that these groups would best be enumerated under the discrete community procedures of the IES, rather than standard. Indigenous Interviewers who were familiar with the groups were recruited to undertake the interviews.

In nominated discrete communities Indigenous Interviewers and Community Coordinators were generally successfully employed. Timing of recruitment and training tended to cause most difficulties for Census Field Officers with one indicating that they were unable to recruit Indigenous Interviewers in the first two visits due to football carnivals and "sorry business" being held in various communities. One Census Field Officer found it more useful to appoint up to two Indigenous Interviewers, instead of Community Coordinators, to enumerate three to four communities with the help of the Census Field Officer.

The mobility of usual residents of communities tended to cause delays in the enumeration process, as was the case in all States/Territories. Cultural, funeral or sporting events occurring at the same time as the census will take precedence for Indigenous peoples, and census planning must take such activities into account. The festival held in Yuendumu in the NT had a particular impact on enumeration activities. Visitors from WA for the carnival were not counted at Yuendumu and WA was required to count the people who attended Yuendumu in their home communities.

The Census Field Officer in the Goldfields region was able to combine Community Coordinator/Indigenous Interviewer training with the creation of Community Lists during the training workshop. This allowed for the lists to be updated prior to the census and assisted the trainees with census terminology and the planning of their workloads. The Community Coordinator was on hand at training to answer any questions with their local knowledge which eliminated the necessity of the Census Field Officer having to contact the State Indigenous Manager to answer queries.

The usefulness of, and ability to acquire, Expanded Community Lists in WA varied. The WA health service body did not provide the requested support for obtaining such information from community health records. Census Field Officers encountered suspicion in communities about the purpose and use of the information on Expanded Community Lists. Expanded Community Lists were obtained in some communities on the provision that they were destroyed once enumeration was finished. On the whole, the usefulness of Expanded Community Lists was acknowledged but future use of them would require longer term liaison with the appropriate organisations at a higher level than State Indigenous Manager.

4.2.3 South Australia

The IES strategy was considered to have been successful in most parts of SA. Recruitment and training of staff for the IES was undertaken with few difficulties. The State Indigenous Manager was recruited with the support of ATSIC (Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander Commission). The Field Manager and Census Field Officer recruitment campaigns attracted sufficient numbers of good quality applicants.

Actual expectations and work completed by Community Coordinators were varied. In some nominated discrete communities, the Community Coordinator was the community spokesperson while the Indigenous Interviewers undertook coordination and enumeration duties. In general, most of the rural and remote communities were enumerated without problems. In one or two instances Indigenous Interviewers assisted standard Collectors and some Group Leaders recruited Indigenous Interviewers with good results (this would normally be undertaken by the Census Field Officer).

Expanded Community Lists were difficult to obtain in SA Indigenous communities. Although a letter requesting access to lists was sent to Indigenous organisations and communities, doubts over confidentiality of the information caused concerns for the communities. IES staff went to lengths to reassure those concerned that only information that was needed was accessed for Expanded Community Lists but refusals remained high. In communities where access was given, IES staff were required to sign documents stating that once the Expanded Community List was used, it would be destroyed and not forwarded to the data processing centre.

Some procedural issues arose in several communities. Resistance from some communities in the Pitjantjatjara Lands was encountered and enumeration was difficult to carry out. For a number of these communities in the area, imputed records were compiled at the Data Processing Centre using community administrative records. Indications are that the lists used to do this are among the most comprehensive in the country and overall it appears that the count of people from the region was arrived at using the best information available. Other problems arose when a community nominated as requiring special enumeration techniques chose to be enumerated using standard forms. On return of the completed forms it was found that the community (and the census) would have benefited from using the special forms and interview technique. Conversely, areas of concern arose where some non discrete communities nominated themselves to be enumerated using the special Indigenous forms. This was particularly problematic in one metropolitan area when Indigenous householders completed both special and standard forms.

Poor understanding and communication between IES staff and standard staff caused some problems. In one area the Field Manager recruited Collectors where the IES team had not yet visited. Once the IES team arrived in communities to be enumerated under the IES, they proceeded to recruit Indigenous staff to assist in enumeration. The communities were eventually satisfactorily enumerated but the result was ill-will within some of the communities towards the census.

4.2.4 Northern Territory

The State Indigenous Manager in the NT was an Indigenous person who was initially employed by the ABS as a consultant to work on the design of the special Indigenous Interviewer based forms. Once the review of forms was completed the consultant was offered, and accepted, the State Indigenous Manager position in the Census Management Unit. The State Indigenous Manager brought an in-depth knowledge of

Indigenous cultures, an established set of contacts and an understanding of the census to the position.

The NT was unique with regard to one particular aspect of the field staff structure. The normal structure of standard enumeration of Field Manager, Group Leader and Collector did not apply in 1996 in the remote areas because these areas are so sparsely populated. Under this alternative structure for 1996 Census, two Census Field Officers undertook more varied roles due to the expanded nature of their workloads which included nominated discrete communities, national parks, non discrete townships, non private dwellings and the recruitment and training of Special Collectors and IES staff. The strategy appears to have worked successfully but the workload for the Census Field Officers was increased through these extra, non IES, tasks and confusion over Field Manager and Census Field Officer roles.

Recruitment and retention of suitable staff was the most significant problem faced by the NT operation and Field Manager recruitment was no exception with one Field Manager Area being filled by two successive ABS officers. This position was also required to share the responsibility for the Field Manager Area with the State Indigenous Manager but the arrangement did not prove successful as the roles and perceived responsibilities tended to overlap.

Recruitment of IES staff (Community Coordinators, Indigenous Interviewers and Indigenous Assistants) was difficult in NT due to a lack of interest in the advertised positions. Unemployment is relatively low in NT and the levels of pay offered for census work were considered low by NT standards. Additionally, Indigenous peoples with the appropriate skills and levels of English for census tasks are often already employed by other government/local agencies and are unable to commit themselves to taking on more tasks.

Generally, the enumeration of nominated discrete communities was considered to have been carried out successfully. Where necessary alternative methods of obtaining the census data were used. One Census Field Officer reported that enumeration was conducted partly by interview and partly from the community records. Other alternatives adopted included a procedure put in place in Darwin and Alice Springs. This consisted of a mobile team of Indigenous Interviewers who had been trained and were on stand by during Census Night to assist with the enumeration of Indigenous households.

The State Indigenous Manager and one of the Census Field Officers needed to complete enumeration in a number of communities where only special Indigenous household forms or Community Lists had been completed. A 'flying squad' was formed which made brief visits to nominated discrete communities to complete enumeration. Community Coordinators and Indigenous Interviewers in these communities appeared to be unaware that they were required to interview people and complete personal forms for them. Similarly, failure to describe the IES adequately in training appears to have led some Field Managers and Group Leaders to operate under the incorrect expectation that all Indigenous peoples would be enumerated through the IES.

Expanded Community Lists were rarely used in NT. The NT Health Department was reticent about providing access to the information. Once permission was finally granted,

the opportunity to procure the lists had passed as the Census Field Officers had already made their initial visits to communities. Additionally, individual communities offered little co-operation in compiling Expanded Community Lists for communities in the NT. However, although some communities refused to provide Expanded Community Lists on privacy grounds, the residents were usually helpful when it came time to undertake the census.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The enumeration of Indigenous peoples in the 1996 Census is considered to be one of the most successful undertaken by the ABS to date. A contributing factor to the success of the Indigenous enumeration strategy (IES) was the general support for, and cooperation with, the ABS and the census from Indigenous peoples, organisations and communities.

One of the major features of the 1996 IES was the introduction of the State Indigenous Managers who were instrumental in increased liaison with Indigenous organisations and communities. The employment of State Indigenous Managers for future censuses would ensure that this contact and liaison is maintained. Given the success of this strategy, a more intensive focus on coordination and liaison with Indigenous organisations between censuses could prove beneficial to both the ABS and the Indigenous peoples of Australia.

A further success of the IES was the public relations and awareness raising strategy. Within the basic guidelines provided by the PR unit in Central Office, each Regional Office was able to undertake awareness and public relations activities relevant to the particular situation within their State/Territory. It would appear that the same strategy could be adopted for the 2001 Census with the same level of success.

The IES worked well in most areas, however, as with any undertaking of this magnitude, there are parts of the strategy which would benefit from a revision and strengthening of procedures. The most obvious area that requires further work is that of integration of the IES with standard enumeration procedures particularly for rural and urban areas where confusion over roles and responsibilities occurred. A reconsideration of the approach to coordination and integration of IES with standard activities was undertaken for the 2001 Census to ensure that the dual nature of the current enumeration practices is eliminated (1999b ABS).

Hand in hand with this confusion and inadequate understanding of the IES was the issue of training of field staff. Most training sessions for IES staff were successful in providing the information required by them to undertake their duties, but the IES would benefit from a tightening up of training content and methods to ensure that all field staff fully understand and accept the IES.

Collection issues associated with Indigenous enumeration and changing self identification of Indigenous peoples will continue to challenge the ABS and will continue to be addressed in each census to provide the best possible count of Indigenous persons.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is acknowledged here, that some of the occurrences described in this report are the direct result of local conditions or events, for example, sorry business or extreme weather conditions. These occurrences can't be controlled or planned for and as such, are out of scope of the recommendations presented here. Accordingly, the following recommendations are those which the ABS can realistically endeavour to adopt for the 2001 Census.

This evaluation report has aimed to provide 1996 Census data users and others interested in Indigenous statistics, with an understanding of the way in which the 1996 Census Indigenous Enumeration Strategy was implemented. As such it has focussed in some detail on the features of 1996 enumeration which are likely to have had the most noticeable impact on data quality, especially at the regional level. Dealing in 2001 Census preparations with shortcomings at this level of detail will generally fall to the lot of managers and their staff implementing the 2001 strategy. However, the evaluation leads to some very clear general recommendations for the 2001 Indigenous Enumeration Strategy. These are:

- Actual development of procedures for enumerating Indigenous peoples to be fully integrated with the development of the procedures for all other enumeration.
- Appropriate training in Indigenous cultural issues and special Indigenous enumeration procedures to be incorporated in all relevant training sessions.
- Manuals, training guides and other documents to incorporate relevant material covering Indigenous cultural issues and special Indigenous enumeration procedures.
- Continuation of interviewing with special forms adapted for use in traditional communities and conducted by suitable members of each community wherever possible.
- Extension of interviewing with the special forms to all communities (whether urban, rural or remote) where appropriate to overcome cultural and/or literacy barriers to effective enumeration.
- Early liaison and commitment to enlisting cooperation or relevant government agencies and individual community organisations in providing appropriate community records for use in census coverage checks.
- Each Regional Office to undertake communication and education campaigns with relevant Indigenous community organisations to facilitate arrangements for census promotions and enumeration.
- Continuation of the broad public relations strategy adopted in 1996 with strengthening in the use of local media and resources to make census communications effective in local situations.

APPENDIX 1: 1996 Census Indigenous Enumeration Strategy (IES)

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper outlines the proposed Indigenous Enumeration Strategy (IES) for the 1996 Census of Population and Housing. It describes the collection strategy for enumerating Indigenous people as well as Census awareness activities. The proposed strategy is based on the experience of previous Census strategies modified in the light of evaluation of the 1991 enumeration and the 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey (NATSIS).

The 1994 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey achieved a 90% response rate which was significantly in excess of expectations. The employment of Indigenous Interviewers was cited as a major reason for this achievement. It was argued that only Indigenous Interviewers had a chance to overcome distrust of government surveys.

While it is clearly not practicable to enumerate every Indigenous household by interview in a Census, the NATSIS experience reinforces the case for interviewing wherever cultural or linguistic difficulties are serious. This philosophy has been progressively implemented in Censuses since 1971: it was observed that comparison of counts from NATSIS and the 1991 Census, on a CD by CD basis were highly compatible after allowing for known seasonal factors. The IES, as set out in this paper, aims to incorporate interviewing by Indigenous staff to the maximum extent feasible within the logistic framework of the Census.

Throughout this paper reference will be made to 'discrete communities' to describe those Indigenous communities that require additional enumeration procedures because of cultural or language differences. Most discrete communities are to be found in more remote areas but a small number occur in urbanised locations. While enumeration processes in discrete Indigenous communities have improved considerably since the 1971 Census when for the first time Special Collectors were recruited to work in newly created Collection Districts (CDs) in remote areas, it is recognised that there are instances where implementation of these processes can be further improved. With this in mind the paper aims to clarify the roles and responsibilities of different collection staff, particularly those positions created specifically for Indigenous enumeration.

However, the majority of Indigenous people will not be located in discrete communities, and it is essential not to underrate the importance of accurately enumerating these persons. The 1996 IES puts a lot of emphasis on strengthening the procedures for enumerating Indigenous persons in urban areas. In particular, this paper aims to make absolutely clear how Indigenous enumeration procedures in urban areas must be integrated with standard processes to ensure success.

2 AIMS

The IES has been developed to provide the overall enumeration strategy with sufficient flexibility to account for the unique cultural aspects of Indigenous society, which may affect Indigenous enumeration. This is done to achieve the most accurate count of Indigenous persons in both discrete communities and elsewhere.

2.1 Issues

Difficulties that have been associated with enumerating Indigenous people in the past have included the following:

- . identification problems associated with self perception as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, as this can change over time;
- . movement of Indigenous people between communities and households in a given area. In remote areas, in particular, there can be high levels of mobility between outstations, seasonal

- camps and central parts of communities, and between communities, such as for cultural business and sporting events;
 - general distrust of government administrative organisations and their representatives that in part has an historical basis. This distrust has contributed to the unwillingness by some to be counted in the Census, such as young adult males (although undercounting of this group is a world wide phenomenon, not restricted to Indigenous people);
 - high levels of illiteracy in Standard English, particularly in remote areas; and
 - socio-cultural factors, such as major differences in information seeking. Indigenous people have a strong heritage of oral-based forms of communication therefore the use of forms, assuming reading and writing skills, and of direct questioning techniques have not been a part of their culture. As a result the style and presentation of questions on the standard Household and Personal Forms may not be understood in the context of Indigenous cultures;
- In addition, the following have been identified as reasons for under-enumeration in past Censuses of Indigenous people in urban areas:

- many Indigenous people will not respond to the 'self-enumeration' method where a form is often left at their house;
- the standard Household Form used in urban areas only allows for 6 persons on the form. Many Indigenous households are larger than this and the occupants may not realise that additional forms could be made available and therefore limit the number of people reported to the capacity of the form initially provided ;
- for a variety of reasons, people may not wish 'authorities' to know the number of people residing in the household;
- large numbers of visitors may make it difficult to know who was staying at the house on Census Night if the form is filled in later (eg when the collector calls to collect the form);
- the concept of "visitor" is not clear in the context of Indigenous culture with its emphasis on extended family relationships and broader community responsibilities; and
- Indigenous people may find it difficult dealing with non-Indigenous Census Collectors.

2.2 Acknowledgment

Considerable assistance in the development of the strategy described in this paper has been provided by Mr Robert Mills, an Indigenous person who had worked in a collection role in both the 1991 Census and NATSIS. Thanks are also due to the Indigenous persons in communities and cities in Northern Australia who participated in a skirmish held in March 1995. This draft strategy has benefited significantly from the discussions undertaken during the skirmish.

2.3 Outline of proposed strategy

Broadly speaking the IES consists of a collection strategy to allow for cultural factors that are potential barriers to effective enumeration of Indigenous people and Census awareness activities that are aimed at encouraging Indigenous people to participate in the Census. Within this framework different approaches are needed to enumerate:

- discrete communities of Indigenous people; and
- other Indigenous households .

The main features of the proposed 1996 IES are:

1. It is considered that full-time management of Indigenous enumeration in each State and Territory is specifically required. It is therefore proposed to recruit a State Indigenous Manager (SIM) in each State/Territory approximately 6 months before the Census to co-ordinate and implement activities to ensure the accurate enumeration of Indigenous people.
2. SIMs will oversee a hierarchy of staff responsible specifically for Indigenous enumeration activities similar to that which operated in the 1991 Census.
3. Awareness activities to address cultural barriers and publicise the potential benefits of the Census for the Indigenous community. As far as possible awareness activities will target specific enumeration issues or groups such as young males in 15 -30 year age group, babies

- or visitors. Consultation at the regional/local level will be implemented and State specific publicity will be undertaken.
4. Continued use of specially designed forms by Indigenous Interviewers to conduct the Census in discrete communities. An important aspect of this strategy is a less direct approach to counting people, more consistent with the communication style used in Indigenous society.
 5. Greater employment of Indigenous people to assist Census collectors in urban areas. Assistance offered to Indigenous households in urban areas to include completion by interview where considered necessary.
 6. A high level of co-ordination between the senior collection staff responsible for Indigenous enumeration and senior mainstream collection staff.

3 ENUMERATION

3.1 Overall Enumeration Procedures

In the 1991 Census, interview enumeration procedures were used mainly in nominated discrete communities, while standard self enumeration procedures were used mainly in urban areas. Anecdotal evidence supplied by, among others, NATSIS interviewers at debriefing conferences suggests that reliance on mainstream enumeration procedures alone in urban areas may result in an undercount of Indigenous people.

It is therefore proposed that the Census appoint Indigenous people to assist members of the Indigenous community to complete the Census forms in as many circumstances as possible. This includes the appointment of Indigenous Interviewers to enumerate discrete communities and Indigenous Assistants to assist collectors in urban areas. The recruitment of Indigenous Interviewers and other IES staff will be co-ordinated by the SIM. In urban areas close consultation between the SIM and Field Managers (FMs) will be required with regard to the recruitment of Indigenous Assistants.

The main features of enumerating the Indigenous population are:

- . a hierarchy of staff (IES staff) dedicated specifically to enumeration of the Indigenous population (the various levels of staff in this hierarchy and their roles are described in 5. *ROLES OF IES STAFF*);
- . use of the interview approach in nominated discrete communities (using Indigenous Interviewers and specially designed forms) together with cross-checking against Community Lists where this is possible;
- . identifying target urban areas in which to employ Indigenous staff (Indigenous Assistants);
- . integrating IES processes into the mainstream collection procedures ensuring that there is a clear definition of each position's scope of responsibility; and
- . appropriate targeting of census awareness activities.

3.2 Enumeration in Nominated Discrete Communities

One of the first tasks of SIMs with the help of their CFOs will be to identify those discrete communities where literacy and language problems make the self enumeration procedure impractical. In these nominated communities Census Field Officers (CFOs) will recruit local people as Community Coordinators and Indigenous Interviewers. Community Coordinators will help in the enumeration of discrete communities by liaising with the communities, assisting in planning workloads and, where necessary, assisting CFOs with the recruiting and training of interviewers.

Community Lists will be completed for each nominated discrete community to ensure coverage of everyone in the community during the period of enumeration. The lists will

identify every place of residence in the community. Census information will then be collected by the interview method, using the Special Indigenous Household and Personal forms. These forms have been designed to be more culturally appropriate to Indigenous people as well as simpler for interviewers to use, although they cover the same topics as the mainstream forms. Where suitable community administrative records can be provided and necessary permissions are obtained they will be used to develop a checklist Known as an Expanded Community List to assist Community Coordinators in making sure everyone in the community is counted where they should be and once only.

3.3 Enumeration of Indigenous Households Not in Discrete Communities

Enumeration of Indigenous people not in discrete communities will be carried out with the standard Household and Personal Forms and will normally be by self enumeration.

Where clusters of Indigenous households (see 3.4 below) have been identified in urban areas prior to collection, or are encountered in the course of collection, Indigenous Assistants (IAs) will be employed to assist with the delivery and collection of forms. In some cases this may involve an IA taking over the role of the Collector, in others the IAs role may consist of explaining the Census and/or gaining the cooperation of the household. Where it is required, IAs will assist householders to complete the self enumeration form (if necessary by conducting interviews).

Some Indigenous households will be encountered not in clusters. Wherever a Collector encounters difficulty in enumerating such a household they will be able to get the assistance of an IA through their Group Leader under arrangements made by the FM with IES staff.

3.4 Identification of Target Urban Areas

The following guidelines are to be used when determining which Collection Districts are likely to require appointment of an Indigenous Assistant to support a Census Collector.

- . Any urban CD where 25 per cent or more of the households are Indigenous;
- . Any urban CD where there are 40 or more Indigenous households;
- . Any urban area where there are known clusters of Indigenous households although less than 20 per cent;

The information required to make this determination can be gained from:

- . Obtaining advance information on population pockets which may create enumeration problems - using the Collection District Record Database (CDRD) which flags Indigenous communities/clusters of Indigenous population; or
- . Any areas of Indigenous population identified as a result of consultation with Indigenous communities.

3.5 Integrating IES Activities into Mainstream Collection Processes

The IES and the staff who implement the strategy are simply one component of the national Census, although an especially significant component designed to see that the social and cultural impediments mentioned above do not result in an unsatisfactory enumeration. Operationally, all of the activities that comprise the IES will be closely coordinated with the mainstream collection activities taking place around them.

A concern with using IAs in urban areas in the past was related to the lack of co-ordination of this process with the Collector for the area. For this reason it is important to provide guidelines which

outline the roles and responsibilities of each of the positions involved in the mainstream and IES processes and how they link. Evaluation of procedures will consequently be simplified.

IAs will be recruited to work in urban areas as needed (see 3.3 above) and be given responsibility for assisting Collectors with delivery and collection of standard Household and Personal Forms for specific Indigenous households in the nominated areas. Wherever possible these nominated areas will be identified to the relevant Field Manager through use of the Census Mapping system prior to Collector training.

While SIMs and CFOs will provide assistance in recruiting them, IAs will be appointed by FMs. It will be the responsibility of FMs to arrange for IAs to be trained and made available to assist mainstream staff in those CDs where the need has been identified.

Close co-ordination between the SIM and FMs (to identify areas where IAs will be needed) is an essential component of the strategy. Co-ordination will also be required between CFOs and GLs (to ensure understanding of the process and to implement arrangements for IAs to be used); and, between the Collector and the IA (to ensure they avoid dual approaches to the same household or missing out any household).

Mainstream collection documentation will include appropriate references to the IES. In addition, workload control documentation used by Group Leaders will include checks for IES related forms. As explained below all staff will receive appropriate training to ensure the necessary coordination is understood.

3.5 Training

An essential element of implementing the IES will be the training of both mainstream and IES staff in the significance of Indigenous enumeration in the overall collection task.

Training for all IES staff should give them a clear understanding of how their tasks mesh with that of the mainstream collection staff. For SIMs and CFOs this should include a thorough grounding in mainstream collection activities. For staff involved in enumerating discrete communities training will be tailored to the need for Community Coordinators and Indigenous Interviewers to fully understand what has to be done and what their role is in getting the job done. Delivery of training in remote areas will necessarily be very localised and each presentation will be determined by local circumstances, as it is important that the training be not only culturally appropriate but also suited to the literacy levels of the participants.

In urban areas IAs will attend, and participate in, Collector training conducted by Group Leaders with any IES specific training being provided by the SIM.

Mainstream staff must also appreciate the importance of the IES and of the crucial need to coordinate their activities with those of IES staff. Training in the aims and procedures of the IES will be given increased prominence in the basic training for FMs and GLs and more emphasis will be given in Collector training to the need for Collectors to be conscious of the potential for cultural barriers to frustrate mainstream collection practices. In this way Collectors will be encouraged to identify potential enumeration problems and, involving their Group Leader, to call upon IAs wherever their presence may help.

4. CENSUS AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

Details of the specific awareness activities directed towards Indigenous people will be established with the Director, Census Communications as part of the overall Census Communications strategy. However the following general statements relate to points clearly evident from previous Census experience and the conduct of NATSIS.

Census awareness activities need to be promoted widely among Indigenous organisations and communities. It is important to inform communities of the purpose of the Census and to remove any misunderstandings about enumeration procedures. There still exists a lack of awareness of the Census among Indigenous people and of its importance to them. To ensure the effectiveness of these activities, including messages to encourage Indigenous people to participate in the Census, communications need to be channelled through local Indigenous organisations. Thorough consultation with government and local organisations, such as ATSIC, Land Councils, Indigenous health and legal agencies, and community councils, needs to be implemented as a key communications strategy for the 1996 Census.

While it is known that Census counts are an important input to allocation of funds to programs affecting Indigenous people, and to communities of Indigenous people great care must be taken in expressing such information through a communications campaign to avoid:

- . giving the exaggerated impression that a direct and absolute link exists between Census counts and level of funds; or
- . appearing to encourage communities to boost their populations.

It will be the responsibility of the SIM for each State/Territory to see that this consultation process with Indigenous and other organisations occurs to identify local enumeration problems. Appropriate and effective ways of disseminating information and conducting Census awareness activities can then be formulated to deal with these problems. Also, approaching organisations in person rather than just sending letters is seen to be more effective in gaining the co-operation and assistance of Indigenous people even though this will be more time-consuming. This is why SIMs should be appointed at the same time as the FMs so that the consultation process can begin early and be coordinated with other activities.

Local Census awareness activity can be undertaken at relatively little cost and NATSIS experience showed that the most effective public relations had been at the local level, such as radio stations and the local press. This can take the form of talks on local radio stations, articles in local newspapers, and items on regional television programs. By involving local organisations in the Census awareness phase of the Census program the potential exists for ensuring at least their part-ownership of the objective, which is a more accurate enumeration of Indigenous people.

There is also a need to target Census awareness activities to address problems from previous enumerations such as the undercount of young adult males, babies and visitors, and apparent confusion over the definition of Torres Strait Islander origin. In community discussions and media contact, issues such as the 'missing' males should be raised as well as the impact of the failure to count them.

Census awareness measures will need to stress:

- . the importance of the data collected on Indigenous people, how Census statistics are used in planning services and the benefits resulting from accurate enumeration;
- . the support received from Indigenous organisations for the Census;
- . who to include on the Census form (all household members including young adult males, babies and children and -most importantly - visitors who stayed there on Census Night); and
- . the confidentiality of the information collected on the Census form and the fact that no information identifying individuals or individual households is given to any other organisations

The following measures have been proposed:

- . Posters and information brochures will be developed in close consultation with authorities on Indigenous affairs. The materials will be available for distribution to Indigenous communities and households through the Indigenous units of government authorities and community

organisations. Information could also be provided to Indigenous children attending primary schools.

- . Articles and advertisements will be placed in publications and electronic media programs produced for Indigenous people.
- . Talk-back radio and other electronic media will be used where possible to assist in getting messages to Indigenous people.
- . Personal contact with local and regional Indigenous organisations to ensure co-operation and assistance in participating in the Census, focusing on the benefits resulting from accurate enumeration eg. impacts on local funding and community services.

5 ROLES OF IES STAFF

The following are IES positions staffed specifically for the IES:

State Indigenous Manager (SIM)
Census Field Officer (CFO)
Assistant Census Field Officer (ACFO)
Community Co-ordinator (CC)
Indigenous Interviewer (II)
Indigenous Assistant (IA)

5.1 State Indigenous Manager (SIM)

The SIM is a newly created position within the Census Management Unit (CMU). After the 1991 Census there was seen to be a need for a person in each State/Territory to be responsible for co-ordinating activities and disseminating information about the Census to Indigenous people, using mechanisms relevant to Indigenous people, beginning early in 1996.

In keeping with the nature of the duties, the SIM positions will be identified as requiring a person able to communicate with Indigenous people, and sensitive to Indigenous culture.

In view of the relatively small scale of enumeration, liaison and coordination activities involved in Tasmania, it is proposed that the CFO fill the dual role of CFO/SIM. To enable this to be done the CFO will be recruited two months earlier in Tasmania. For similar reasons, the SIM based in Sydney will provide services required in the ACT.

As well as a broad role representing the Census Management Unit over the entire enumeration of Indigenous persons in their State/Territory, the SIM will have two specific key roles:

- . liaison with Indigenous community groups; and
- . identification of discrete communities and urban areas requiring either personal interview or assistance from Indigenous staff.

It is intended that the SIM commence work approximately 6 months prior to the Census to:

- . undertake significant co-ordination activity with FMs to ensure they agree with and understand the arrangements for Indigenous enumeration in their area;
- . establish contacts with Indigenous communities in advance of the Census to ensure the information dissemination program is carried out in the most appropriate and cost effective way;
- . liaise with senior staff in State/Federal and Local government organisations relevant to Indigenous people to gain support for the Census and assist in locating appropriate Indigenous people to work on the Census;
- . identify discrete communities requiring the employment of interviewers and the special forms;
- . identify clusters of Indigenous households within urban areas (where appropriate in consultation with Indigenous organisations);

- . formalise detailed plans with each Field Manager (FM) to determine where the IES will be implemented in urban areas;
- . undertake the recruitment and training of CFOs;
- . assist FMs in recruiting IAs; and
- . under guidance of CMU, be responsible for financial management of Indigenous activities in their State/Territory.

5.2 Census Field Officer (CFO)

The roles and responsibilities of the CFO will include:

- . taking responsibility for awareness and community liaison activities for an area in conjunction with the SIM;
- . organising and coordinating the enumeration of nominated discrete Indigenous communities in their area;
- . responsibility for recruiting and training CCs and IIs; and
- . maintaining regular contact with the SIM, FMs and Group Leaders (GLs) in their areas to ensure that local arrangements are understood and implemented effectively.

Throughout their region of operation, each CFO will be expected to:

- . organise and promote Census awareness activities;
- . as directed by the SIM, identify and prepare lists of discrete Indigenous communities and associated outstations;
- . establish contact with community councils;
- . determine the best way to enumerate communities;
- . arrange for the enumeration of discrete communities;
- . recruit and train CCs and Indigenous Interviewers for discrete communities;
- . ensure timely return of Census forms and associated administrative records from discrete communities;
- . assist as required with the recruiting and training of IAs for urban areas;
- . as required, assist mainstream collection staff in solving Indigenous enumeration problems;
- . provide regular reports to the SIM: and
- . produce a summary report upon completion

As well as being able to relate to Indigenous people, it is important that CFOs have the necessary administrative skills to manage the statistical operations they are responsible for, including the provision of progress and summary reports.

5.3 Assistant CFOs (ACFOs)

In each region the SIM and CFO will determine whether ACFOs are required, taking into consideration the particular demands of the areas to be enumerated. The CFO may appoint an ACFO to facilitate contact in one area and then later on appoint another ACFO who would be more appropriate for another area. It is intended that the ACFO cover a larger geographic area than CCs, who are recruited from and work within a single community.

The roles and responsibilities of the ACFO will include:

- . facilitating contact with communities.;
- . accompanying CFOs on potentially hazardous journeys into remote areas;
- . assist in Census public awareness activities;
- . assist in training; and
- . general duties including, providing clerical support work / quality checks / assistance with driving, etc.

5.4 Community Co-ordinator (CC)

It is intended to recruit Community Co-ordinators in nominated discrete communities.

Specific duties of the CC will vary from community to community.

The requirement for a CC will vary depending on both the number and quality of IIs employed. Where there will be 2 or more IIs required for a community, and the CFO will not be available to supervise, a CC will need to be appointed.

The roles and responsibilities of the CC will include:

- . providing a contact/liaison between CFO and other collection staff in communities during enumeration;
- . identifying, and arranging access to, relevant community administrative lists to assist in the accurate enumeration of all persons present in the community;
- . assisting the CFO in planning and allocation of II workloads;
- . undertaking interviewing as required;
- . assisting in the recruitment and the training of the IIs (If the CFO is not at the community and there is a need to recruit a new or replacement II, then the CC must train that person); and
- . guide and coordinate the IIs in the conduct of their duties and resolve local enumeration problems.

5.5 Indigenous Interviewer (II).

As in the 1991 Census, it is intended to use IIs in nominated discrete communities to interview Indigenous householders using the Special Indigenous Household and Personal forms.

The II will be recruited and trained by the CFO (or by a CC if the CFO is unavailable) and will be supervised by the CC. The quality of this training is crucial to the quality of the count in these communities and the training task is one of the most important functions to be carried out by CFOs and CCs.

5.6 Indigenous Assistant (IA).

The IA will be used in urban areas and the specific duties are likely to vary among Collection Districts and from situation to situation.

The SIM in conjunction with the FM will recruit the IA and the SIM will define the clusters in which IAs are to be engaged, but ultimately the IA will be responsible to the Field Manager. Significant efforts should be made to ensure that the work of the IA is complementary to the overall collection strategy. For example, Household Forms completed with the assistance of an IA will in most instances be returned directly to the relevant Group Leader (but may be returned to the Collector if that is more practical). All parties involved including Collector and Group Leader need to be completely aware of any arrangements made. Communication between the SIM, CFOs, Field Managers and Group Leaders is absolutely crucial and will need to be of a high standard.

An IA will be made available to provide specific assistance for enumerating Indigenous households where a Collector has identified a need for assistance and in or across CDs where clusters of Indigenous households have been identified prior to the Census.

The roles and responsibilities of the IA will include assisting with the identification of clusters of Indigenous population where the services of an IA or, in unusual cases, the 'interview' method will prove beneficial and assisting Collectors by visiting selected Indigenous households where such help may be required.

At the selected Indigenous households IAs will be expected to:

- . explain the Census to householders;
- . seek the co-operation of householders and aim to ensure Census details for all persons in the household are included on Census forms, and
- . where necessary obtain the details by interview (in most situations the Census form will be completed by members of the household).

If a Collector encounters a problem with a specific Indigenous household, not in a predetermined cluster, which cannot be overcome, the Collector should report to their Group Leader. The GL or FM will arrange for an IA to assist the Collector. The IA will liaise directly with mainstream collection staff (normally the GL) to return the completed Census Forms.

6 SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Past experience has demonstrated that Indigenous enumeration can be adversely affected by cultural, climatic, sporting or social events. In the event of such occasions, which take large numbers of Indigenous people away from their usual places of residence, a flexible and realistic attitude to enumeration should be adopted.

Departments and organisations such as ATSIC and the various Land Councils should be consulted to ensure that they are aware of the Census enumeration period. This will assist in highlighting any meetings, cultural events or any other major movement of Indigenous people that may be occurring around the time of enumeration. This will allow specific tactics to be carefully developed rather than requiring issues to be dealt with 'on the spot'.

Implementation of the IES also needs to be sufficiently flexible to allow for unusual climatic conditions (which, although unlikely on Census day, may make discrete communities inaccessible) or for events, such as funeral ceremonies, which cannot be planned for.

7 EVALUATION

All aspects of the IES and its implementation will be evaluated after completion. Full reports on the conduct of awareness activities and the enumeration in their areas will be provided by CFOs. This information together with reports from the SIMs will be reviewed at the Collection Evaluation Conference in December 1996 and the outcome of these discussions will be incorporated in conference recommendations for future Censuses. A Census Collection Evaluation Report, including these recommendations, will be published following the conference.

The quality of Census results for the Indigenous population will also be evaluated and reported on as part of 1996 Census Evaluation.

8 GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

ACFO Assistant Census Field Officers. ACFOs will be appointed where necessary to support Census Field Officers

CC Community Coordinators. These will be appointed in all nominated discrete communities large enough to require more than one Interviewer

- CD** Collection District. A geographical area normally enumerated by a Census Collector
- CFO** Census Field Officer. CFOs will be appointed to the CMU in each State or Territory to carry out Census awareness activities related to Indigenous enumeration and to manage enumeration activities in nominated discrete communities
- CMU** Census Management Unit. This is the central management team for the Census in each State or Territory
- FGA** An area usually containing 8 - 15 CDs managed by a GL
- FM** Field Manager. Responsible to the CMU for the management of the entire enumeration of a Field Management Area (FMA) except for nominated discrete Indigenous communities enumerated under the control of CFOs
- FMA** An area roughly equivalent to a Federal Electoral Division which is administered by an FM.
- GL** Group Leader. Each GL is responsible to an FM for the activities of a team of Census Collectors in a Field Group Area (FGA)
- IA** Indigenous Assistant. IAs are Indigenous persons appointed to help Census Collectors in urban areas where assistance is required to enumerate Indigenous households
- IES** Indigenous Enumeration Strategy, a plan for the effective enumeration of Indigenous people, as outlined in this document
- II** Indigenous Interviewer. IIs are appointed to conduct enumeration in nominated discrete communities by interview with special interview forms
- NATSIS** National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey undertaken by the ABS in 1994 as part of the Government's response to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody
- SIM** State Indigenous Manager. Appointed as part of the CMU to take charge of Indigenous enumeration in a State or Territory

Development and Evaluation
 March 1996

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- 93/1 A study of the Performance of Sequencing Instructions in the 1991 Census
- 93/2 Comparison of Self-coded and Write-in Responses: July 1992 Test
- 93/3 1991 Census Data Quality: A Study of Posted-in Forms
- 93/4 1991 PES (Post Enumeration Survey): Comparison of Census and PES Responses
- 93/5 1991 Census Public Communications: A Marketing Approach
- 93/6 1991 Census Data Quality: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Counts
- 94/1 1991 Census Data Quality: Labour Force Status
- 94/2 1991 Census Data Quality: Education
- 94/3 Disability Census Test: November 1993
- 94/4 Testing of Ethnic Origin Questions for the 1996 Census
- 95/1 1991 Census Data Quality: Housing
- 96/1 1991 Census Data Quality: Income
- 96/2 1996 Census Form Design Testing Program
- 96/3 1996 Census of Population and Housing: Digital Geography Technical Information Paper
- 97/1 1996 Census: Homeless Enumeration Strategy
- 99/1 1996 Census: Industry Data Comparison
- 99/2 1996 Census: Labour Force Status
- 99/3 1996 Census Data Quality: Housing
- 99/4 1996 Census: Review of Enumeration of Indigenous Peoples in the 1996 Census

If you would like a copy of any of these papers, or have any other queries, please contact Grazyna Majchrzak-Hamilton on (02) 6252 6014 or Email: g.maj-hamilton@ABS.GOV.AU