



**Australian Bureau of Statistics**

**Aboriginals and Torres Strait  
Islanders: Australia, States  
and Territories**

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NEW ISSUE

**CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING, 30 JUNE 1986**  
**CENSUS 86 — ABORIGINALS AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS**

**Australia, States and Territories**

**IAN CASTLES**  
**Australian Statistician**

**AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS**

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MAIL INQUIRIES • *write to Information Services*, ABS, P.O. Box 10, Belconnen, A.C.T. 2616 or any ABS State office.

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## MAIN FEATURES

The 1986 Census of Population and Housing counted 227,645 persons who were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin. This represents a 42.4 per cent increase over the count recorded at the 1981 Census (159,897). Improved census procedures and greater inclination by people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin to identify themselves as such are thought to have contributed to this result.

The age distribution of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is heavily weighted towards the younger age ranges with 52.5 per cent aged under 20 years, and only 4.2 per cent aged over 59 years.

Approximately 66 per cent of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population was counted in urban areas with the remaining 34 per cent being counted in rural areas. This pattern was generally reflected in all States except the Northern Territory, where approximately 69 per cent of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population was counted in rural areas.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### 1. Introduction

This publication contains counts of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders from the 1986 Census of Population and Housing conducted on 30 June 1986. Table C1 presents these counts by age and sex for each State and Territory. Table C2 shows the distribution of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders by section of State for each State and Territory.

The census counts are based on place of enumeration, i.e. the counts for each area are of persons enumerated in the area on census night, 30 June 1986. Census counts on a place of enumeration basis (C) are different from census counts on a place of usual residence basis (U). Usual residence was defined as ". . . that address at which a person has lived or intends to live for a total of 6 months or more in 1986". Census counts on either basis are not adjusted for underenumeration. More details can be found in *The 1986 Census Dictionary* (2174.0). All census table numbers are prefixed as appropriate with the letter "C" or "U". However, this publication contains only tables in the "C" category.

### 2. Background

The Commonwealth Government in October 1978 adopted a 'working definition' of Aboriginality in the administration of its programs. This is: 'An Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander is a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and is accepted as such by the community with which he/she is associated'. The working definition therefore contains an element of self perception.

In the 1986 Census of Population and Housing each person was asked if he/she was of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin. The question on the 1986 Census form was:

<p>9. Is the person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?</p> <p>• For persons of mixed origin, indicate the one to which they consider themselves to belong.</p>	4 <input type="checkbox"/> No
	5 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Aboriginal
	6 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, Torres Strait Islander

In the context of the census being a self enumeration exercise, the census question on Aboriginality used in 1986 (and in 1981) was consistent with the self perception element of the government's definition.

### 3. Data quality

The use of a self perception concept for identifying Aboriginality introduces a degree of subjectivity in the responses whereby changes in self perception by respondents directly affect the number of persons identifying as Aboriginal. This factor will affect the comparability of census data over time to an unknown extent.

In addition, a number of procedural and processing changes were implemented for the 1986 Census which, while designed to improve the count of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders, will have affected comparability with counts from earlier censuses.

For these reasons the apparent increases in the 1986 Census counts of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders, (as illustrated in the following table), cannot be explained solely by demographic factors:

#### ABORIGINALS AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS

	Census 1981 (persons)	Census 1986 (persons)	Intercensal variation (%)
N.S.W.	35,367	59,011	+66.9
Vic.	6,057	12,611	+108.2
Qld	44,698	61,268	+37.1
S.A.	9,825	14,291	+45.5
W.A.	31,351	37,789	+20.5
Tas.	2,688	6,716	+149.9
N.T.	29,088	34,739	+19.4
A.C.T.	823	1,220	+48.2
Australia	159,897	227,645	+42.4

Preliminary analyses of the data suggest that the higher 1986 counts result from a combination of factors of varying influence, including:

- people of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin may have been more inclined to identify themselves as such;
- the 1986 Census awareness campaign, which included additional measures to inform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of the importance of the census;

- the implementation of special field enumeration procedures in Aboriginal communities;
- improvements made to the 1986 Census processing system to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander responses were correctly coded; and
- natural increase (births less deaths).

A detailed discussion on the aforementioned census changes and their likely effects will be presented in the 1986 Census evaluation paper: *Census 86 — Data Quality — Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Counts*, (2602.0). For a comprehensive treatment of procedural changes relating to Aboriginal enumeration from 1971 to 1981 refer to *An Evaluation of Census Counts of the Aboriginal Population, 1971, 1976 and 1981 Censuses*, (ABS Occasional Paper No. 1985/2).

It should also be noted that statistical collections such as the census are subject to a number of sources of error. While some errors (such as deliberate misreporting) defy detection and correction procedures, the number of errors in overall census results is expected to be generally insignificant. Information on data quality will be released from late 1987.

Main sources of error in the census are:

- (a) *Underenumeration*. Despite efforts to obtain full coverage of persons and dwellings (other than those associated with overseas diplomatic missions), some undercounting still occurs. A measure of the extent of underenumeration is obtained from a small survey of households undertaken very shortly after the census. While results from this source for the 1986 Census are not yet available, undercounting of persons in the 1981 Census was estimated to be 1.9 per cent for Australia as a whole.
- (b) *Partial response*. In those instances where the householder omitted to provide a response to a question, a 'not stated' code was allocated; with the exception of non-response to age, sex and marital status, and SLA of usual residence. These variables were imputed using other information on the census form, and specially constructed random tables. The non-response rate for the Aboriginal origin question in 1986 was only 1.7 per cent for Australia compared to 3.8 per cent in 1981 and 8.4 per cent in 1976.
- (c) *Respondent error*. Computer editing procedures are used to detect obvious errors made by individuals in completing the form (for example, a six year old male who was married). Such procedures cannot detect all respondent errors and some remain in final output.
- (d) *Processing error*. Errors created during the processing of the census are kept at an acceptable level by means of a quality control system, which involves sample checking at different stages of the coding and keying operations, and taking corrective action where necessary.
- (e) *Introduced random adjustments*. Adjustments are made to table cells to allow the maximum of detailed census data to be released, while protecting the confidentiality of information about individual persons. For this reason, and since possible respondent and processing errors have greatest relative impact on small cells, no reliance should be placed on cells of three or less. For further information on sources of error, refer to the appropriate entries in *The 1986 Census Dictionary* (2174.0).

#### 4. Geographic areas

The two geographic spatial units used in this publication are States and Territories, and section of State.

Section of State, within a State or Territory, represents an aggregation of non-contiguous geographic areas with particular urban or rural characteristics. The sections of State within each State and Territory are the following:

*Major Urban* — all urban centres with a population of 100,000 and over;

*Other Urban* — all urban centres with a population of 1,000 to 99,999 and known holiday resorts of less population if they contain 250 or more dwellings of which at least 100 are occupied on census night;

*Locality* — all population clusters of 200 to 999 persons; and

*Rural Balance* — the remainder of the State/Territory.

For definitions of other census geographic areas see Appendix A.

#### 5. Further information

The ABS plans to release a number of standard output products containing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander information from the 1986 Census. These include:

*Census 86 — Data Quality — Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Counts* (2602.0)

*Census 86 — The Australian Aboriginal Population* (monograph) (2502.0)

*Census 86 — Selected national cross-classified tables* (available on microfiche)

*Census 86 — Statistical Local Areas with 100 or more Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders — selected cross-classified tables* (available on microfiche)

Details of these Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tabulations are contained in the *Catalogue of 1986 Census Tables* (2175.0). Users may also request non-standard census outputs from the ABS. For more details see *Census 86 — Special Data Services* (2181.0) and *Census 86 — Census Products Price List: Edition 3* (2177.0).

*The 1986 Census Dictionary* (2174.0) contains definitions of terms and explains concepts used in the collection, processing and output phases of the census.

Further information about 1986 Census statistics is available from the nearest ABS office (see appendix B for addresses and telephone numbers).

#### **6. Related ABS publications**

Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications, Australia* (1101.0) The ABS also issues, on Tuesdays and Fridays, a *Publications Advice* (1105.0) which lists publications to be released in the immediate few days. The Catalogue and Publications Advice are available from any ABS office.

#### **7. Electronic services**

**VIATEL.** Key \*656# for selected current economic, social and demographic statistics.

**AUSSTATS.** Thousands of up-to-date time series are available on this ABS on-line service through CSIRONET.

For further information phone the AUSSTATS Help Desk on (062) 52 6017.

**TELESTATS.** This service provides foreign trade statistics tailored to users' requirements.

Further information is available on (062) 52 5404.

TABLE C1 - AGE AND SEX DISTRIBUTION OF ABORIGINALS AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS; AUSTRALIA, STATES AND TERRITORIES,  
30 JUNE 1986.

	AGE											TOTAL
	0-4 YEARS	5-9 YEARS	10-14 YEARS	15-19 YEARS	20-24 YEARS	25-29 YEARS	30-34 YEARS	35-39 YEARS	40-59 YEARS	60 YEARS OR MORE		
<b>NEW SOUTH WALES</b>												
<b>ABORIGINALS</b>												
MALES	4164	3480	3886	3688	2901	2301	1823	1439	3175	774	27631	
FEMALES	3926	3392	3741	3646	2996	2437	1896	1632	3411	964	28041	
PERSONS	8090	6872	7627	7334	5897	4738	3719	3071	6586	1738	55672	
<b>TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS</b>												
MALES	178	157	186	216	197	119	120	115	273	75	1636	
FEMALES	161	146	212	194	172	137	145	133	258	145	1703	
PERSONS	339	303	398	410	369	256	265	248	531	220	3339	
<b>TOTAL</b>												
MALES	4342	3637	4072	3904	3098	2420	1943	1554	3448	849	29267	
FEMALES	4087	3538	3953	3840	3168	2574	2041	1765	3669	1109	29744	
PERSONS	8429	7175	8025	7744	6266	4994	3984	3319	7117	1958	59011	
<b>VICTORIA</b>												
<b>ABORIGINALS</b>												
MALES	812	657	688	712	588	472	366	281	525	151	5252	
FEMALES	742	651	675	702	603	527	407	343	627	211	5488	
PERSONS	1554	1308	1363	1414	1191	999	773	624	1152	362	10740	
<b>TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS</b>												
MALES	96	86	111	108	105	120	70	56	129	59	940	
FEMALES	100	87	82	107	127	84	76	64	140	64	931	
PERSONS	196	173	193	215	232	204	146	120	269	123	1871	
<b>TOTAL</b>												
MALES	908	743	799	820	693	592	436	337	654	210	6192	
FEMALES	842	738	757	809	730	611	483	407	767	275	6419	
PERSONS	1750	1481	1556	1629	1423	1203	919	744	1421	485	12611	
<b>QUEENSLAND</b>												
<b>ABORIGINALS</b>												
MALES	3330	3167	3472	3194	2487	1970	1535	1260	2704	924	24043	
FEMALES	3214	2809	3222	3196	2507	2051	1690	1341	2942	1083	24055	
PERSONS	6544	5976	6694	6390	4994	4021	3225	2601	5646	2007	48098	
<b>TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS</b>												
MALES	936	848	878	782	578	470	407	365	777	376	6417	
FEMALES	901	896	869	753	626	549	438	372	995	354	6753	
PERSONS	1837	1744	1747	1535	1204	1019	845	737	1772	730	13170	
<b>TOTAL</b>												
MALES	4266	4015	4350	3976	3065	2440	1942	1625	3481	1300	30460	
FEMALES	4115	3705	4091	3949	3133	2600	2128	1713	3937	1437	30808	
PERSONS	8381	7720	8441	7925	6198	5040	4070	3338	7418	2737	61268	



TABLE C1 - AGE AND SEX DISTRIBUTION OF ABORIGINALS AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS; AUSTRALIA, STATES AND TERRITORIES,  
30 JUNE 1986. (CONT)

	AGE											TOTAL
	0-4 YEARS	5-9 YEARS	10-14 YEARS	15-19 YEARS	20-24 YEARS	25-29 YEARS	30-34 YEARS	35-39 YEARS	40-59 YEARS	60 YEARS OR MORE		
<b>SOUTH AUSTRALIA</b>												
<b>ABORIGINALS</b>												
MALES	950	806	846	818	761	572	451	329	719	226	6478	
FEMALES	985	804	851	853	767	648	460	372	790	290	6820	
PERSONS	1935	1610	1697	1671	1528	1220	911	701	1509	516	13298	
<b>TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS</b>												
MALES	45	56	42	49	52	56	45	37	71	24	477	
FEMALES	54	42	60	47	45	54	47	36	76	55	516	
PERSONS	99	98	102	96	97	110	92	73	147	79	993	
<b>TOTAL</b>												
MALES	995	862	888	867	813	628	496	366	790	250	6955	
FEMALES	1039	846	911	900	812	702	507	408	866	345	7336	
PERSONS	2034	1708	1799	1767	1625	1330	1003	774	1656	595	14291	
<b>WESTERN AUSTRALIA</b>												
<b>ABORIGINALS</b>												
MALES	2653	2367	2491	2266	2002	1529	1170	929	2117	949	18473	
FEMALES	2608	2272	2290	2370	2016	1591	1235	957	2299	999	18637	
PERSONS	5261	4639	4781	4636	4018	3120	2405	1886	4416	1948	37110	
<b>TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS</b>												
MALES	44	33	36	42	49	39	42	33	68	7	393	
FEMALES	43	30	49	34	31	25	24	14	33	3	286	
PERSONS	87	63	85	76	80	64	66	47	101	10	679	
<b>TOTAL</b>												
MALES	2697	2400	2527	2308	2051	1568	1212	962	2185	956	18866	
FEMALES	2651	2302	2339	2404	2047	1616	1259	971	2332	1002	18923	
PERSONS	5348	4702	4866	4712	4098	3184	2471	1933	4517	1958	37789	
<b>TASMANIA A/</b>												
<b>ABORIGINALS</b>												
MALES	417	432	430	375	277	250	219	155	325	76	2956	
FEMALES	420	379	413	362	270	263	216	174	284	92	2873	
PERSONS	837	811	843	737	547	513	435	329	609	168	5829	
<b>TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS</b>												
MALES	47	47	70	83	28	36	27	25	61	11	435	
FEMALES	34	55	70	76	45	34	29	41	48	20	452	
PERSONS	81	102	140	159	73	70	56	66	109	31	887	
<b>TOTAL</b>												
MALES	464	479	500	458	305	286	246	180	386	87	3391	
FEMALES	454	434	483	438	315	297	245	215	332	112	3325	
PERSONS	918	913	983	896	620	583	491	395	718	199	6716	

TABLE C1 - AGE AND SEX DISTRIBUTION OF ABORIGINALS AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS; AUSTRALIA, STATES AND TERRITORIES,  
30 JUNE 1986. (CONT)

	AGE										TOTAL
	0-4 YEARS	5-9 YEARS	10-14 YEARS	15-19 YEARS	20-24 YEARS	25-29 YEARS	30-34 YEARS	35-39 YEARS	40-59 YEARS	60 YEARS OR MORE	
<b>NORTHERN TERRITORY</b>											
<b>ABORIGINALS</b>											
MALES	2409	2295	2247	2053	1719	1381	1048	823	1987	669	16631
FEMALES	2355	2174	2121	2188	1889	1603	1205	959	2184	888	17566
PERSONS	4764	4469	4368	4241	3608	2984	2253	1782	4171	1557	34197
<b>TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS</b>											
MALES	28	27	42	31	27	26	29	22	48	5	285
FEMALES	34	37	34	28	30	22	17	17	32	6	257
PERSONS	62	64	76	59	57	48	46	39	80	11	542
<b>TOTAL</b>											
MALES	2437	2322	2289	2084	1746	1407	1077	845	2035	674	16916
FEMALES	2389	2211	2155	2216	1919	1625	1222	976	2216	894	17823
PERSONS	4826	4533	4444	4300	3665	3032	2299	1821	4251	1568	34739
<b>AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY</b>											
<b>ABORIGINALS</b>											
MALES	82	66	87	54	70	62	58	40	51	9	579
FEMALES	73	86	69	71	64	47	55	39	64	13	581
PERSONS	155	152	156	125	134	109	113	79	115	22	1160
<b>TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS</b>											
MALES	2	2	5	4	6	2	-	3	5	-	29
FEMALES	6	-	2	4	9	3	2	2	3	-	31
PERSONS	8	2	7	8	15	5	2	5	8	-	60
<b>TOTAL</b>											
MALES	84	68	92	58	76	64	58	43	56	9	608
FEMALES	79	86	71	75	73	50	57	41	67	13	612
PERSONS	163	154	163	133	149	114	115	84	123	22	1220
<b>AUSTRALIA</b>											
<b>ABORIGINALS</b>											
MALES	14817	13270	14147	13160	10805	8537	6670	5256	11603	3778	102043
FEMALES	14323	12567	13382	13388	11112	9167	7164	5817	12601	4540	104061
PERSONS	29140	25837	27529	26548	21917	17704	13834	11073	24204	8318	206104
<b>TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS</b>											
MALES	1376	1256	1370	1315	1042	868	740	656	1432	557	10612
FEMALES	1333	1293	1378	1243	1085	908	778	679	1585	647	10929
PERSONS	2709	2549	2748	2558	2127	1776	1518	1335	3017	1204	21541
<b>TOTAL</b>											
MALES	16193	14526	15517	14475	11847	9405	7410	5912	13035	4335	112655
FEMALES	15656	13860	14760	14631	12197	10075	7942	6496	14186	5187	114990
PERSONS	31849	28386	30277	29106	24044	19480	15352	12408	27221	9522	227645

A/ THE RELATIVELY HIGH COUNT OF TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS IN TASMANIA MAY BE DUE TO THE INCORRECT REPORTING BY PEOPLE OF BASS STRAIT ISLANDER DESCENT.

TABLE C2 - COUNTS OF ABORIGINALS AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS BY SECTION OF STATE; AUSTRALIA, STATES AND TERRITORIES, 30 JUNE 1986

	ABORIGINALS			TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS			TOTAL		
	MALES	FEMALES	PERSONS	MALES	FEMALES	PERSONS	MALES	FEMALES	PERSONS
<b>NEW SOUTH WALES</b>									
A/ MAJOR URBAN	9567	10040	19607	882	927	1809	10449	10967	21416
B/ OTHER URBAN	13010	13334	26344	499	509	1008	13509	13843	27352
C/ RURAL LOCALITIES	1491	1466	2957	58	60	118	1549	1526	3075
D/ OTHER RURAL	3563	3201	6764	197	207	404	3760	3408	7168
TOTAL	27631	28041	55672	1636	1703	3339	29267	29744	59011
<b>VICTORIA</b>									
MAJOR URBAN	2366	2571	4937	513	536	1049	2879	3107	5986
OTHER URBAN	2298	2397	4695	273	256	529	2571	2653	5224
RURAL LOCALITIES	111	85	196	21	12	33	132	97	229
OTHER RURAL	477	435	912	133	127	260	610	562	1172
TOTAL	5252	5488	10740	940	931	1871	6192	6419	12611
<b>QUEENSLAND</b>									
MAJOR URBAN	4711	4983	9694	657	740	1397	5368	5723	11091
OTHER URBAN	10431	10788	21219	3638	3931	7569	14069	14719	28788
RURAL LOCALITIES	5026	4912	9938	518	557	1075	5544	5469	11013
OTHER RURAL	3875	3372	7247	1604	1525	3129	5479	4897	10376
TOTAL	24043	24055	48098	6417	6753	13170	30460	30808	61268
<b>SOUTH AUSTRALIA</b>									
MAJOR URBAN	2429	2670	5099	289	308	597	2718	2978	5696
OTHER URBAN	2094	2300	4394	86	100	186	2180	2400	4580
RURAL LOCALITIES	590	586	1176	20	27	47	610	613	1223
OTHER RURAL	1365	1264	2629	82	81	163	1447	1345	2792
TOTAL	6478	6820	13298	477	516	993	6955	7336	14291
<b>WESTERN AUSTRALIA</b>									
MAJOR URBAN	4104	4615	8719	124	106	230	4228	4721	8949
OTHER URBAN	7550	7865	15415	203	157	360	7753	8022	15775
RURAL LOCALITIES	2374	2282	4656	12	4	16	2386	2286	4672
OTHER RURAL	4445	3875	8320	54	19	73	4499	3894	8393
TOTAL	18473	18637	37110	393	286	679	18866	18923	37789
<b>TASMANIA</b>									
E/ MAJOR URBAN	587	596	1183	87	81	168	674	677	1351
OTHER URBAN	1514	1513	3027	210	223	433	1724	1736	3460
RURAL LOCALITIES	266	227	493	36	39	75	302	266	568
OTHER RURAL	589	537	1126	102	109	211	691	646	1337
TOTAL	2956	2873	5829	435	452	887	3391	3325	6716

TABLE C2 - COUNTS OF ABORIGINALS AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS BY SECTION OF STATE, AUSTRALIA, STATES AND TERRITORIES, 30 JUNE 1986 (CONT)

	ABORIGINALS		TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS		TOTAL	
	MALES	FEMALES	MALES	FEMALES	MALES	FEMALES
	PERSONS	PERSONS	PERSONS	PERSONS	PERSONS	PERSONS
<b>NORTHERN TERRITORY</b>						
MAJOR URBAN	4838	5397	10235	-	242	223
OTHER URBAN	6466	6787	13253	9	12	21
RURAL LOCALITIES	5327	5382	10709	25	31	56
OTHER RURAL	16631	17566	34197	257	285	542
TOTAL						
					5080	5620
					6478	6796
					5358	5407
					16916	17823
						34739
<b>AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY</b>						
MAJOR URBAN	489	499	988	29	31	60
OTHER URBAN	-	-	-	-	-	-
RURAL LOCALITIES	-	-	-	-	-	-
OTHER RURAL	90	82	172	-	-	90
TOTAL	579	581	1160	29	31	60
					518	530
					-	-
					-	-
					90	82
					608	612
						1220
<b>AUSTRALIA</b>						
MAJOR URBAN	24253	25974	50227	2581	2729	5310
OTHER URBAN	41735	43594	85329	5151	5399	10550
RURAL LOCALITIES	16324	16345	32669	677	708	1385
OTHER RURAL	19731	18148	37879	2203	2093	4296
TOTAL	102043	104061	206104	10612	10929	21541
					26834	28703
					46886	48993
					17001	17053
					21934	20241
					112655	114990
						55537
						95879
						34054
						42175
						227645

A/ MAJOR URBAN AREAS ARE URBAN CENTRES WITH A POPULATION OF 100,000 PERSONS AND OVER.

B/ OTHER URBAN AREAS ARE URBAN CENTRES WITH A POPULATION OF 1,000 TO 99,999 PERSONS.

C/ RURAL LOCALITIES ARE POPULATION CLUSTERS OF 200 TO 999 PERSONS.

D/ OTHER RURAL IS THE BALANCE OF A STATE INCLUDING MIGRATORY.

E/ THE RELATIVELY HIGH COUNT OF TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS IN TASMANIA MAY BE DUE TO THE INCORRECT REPORTING BY PEOPLE OF BASS STRAIT ISLANDER DESCENT.

## APPENDIX A

### CENSUS GEOGRAPHIC AREAS – DEFINITIONS

#### A. AUSTRALIAN STANDARD GEOGRAPHICAL CLASSIFICATION (ASGC)

The *Australian Standard Geographical Classification* (1216.0) is a new geographic classification used for the dissemination of 1986 Census data. It incorporates a number of hierarchic structures of geographic areas (also referred to as 'spatial units') and defines the individual structures and the area types of which each structure is composed. Each geographic area in the classification is identified by a unique numeric code.

The ASGC has been adopted as the standard geographic classification for ABS output. This will ensure greater comparability of statistics within the ABS and a standardisation of terminology.

Abbreviated definitions of the ASGC geographic areas which are used in 1986 Census output follow below. More detailed definitions can be found in *The 1986 Census Dictionary* (2174.0) or *Census 86 - Australian Standard Geographical Classification: Geographic Code List* (2188.0).

##### Collection districts (CDs)

These are the smallest type of geographic area in the ASGC and are the building blocks of which all other ASGC geographic areas are composed. They have been designed for use in population censuses and, in aggregate, cover the whole of Australia without gaps or overlaps.

##### Statistical local areas (SLAs)

SLAs are a new spatial unit for the 1986 Census. The 1981 Census equivalent was the census local government area. SLAs are for the most part legal local government area (LGA) based. In special cases, where a legal LGA is much larger and more populous than the general run of legal LGAs (as is the City of Brisbane), or where there are no legal local government authorities (as in the Australian Capital Territory), the SLAs are officially defined suburbs or localities. SLAs cover, in aggregate, the whole of Australia without gaps or overlaps.

##### Statistical subdivisions

These consist of one or more SLAs and cover, in aggregate, the whole of Australia without gaps or overlaps. They are used as an intermediate level, general purpose regional type geographic area.

##### Statistical divisions

Statistical divisions consist of one or more statistical subdivisions which, in turn, consist of one or more SLAs and cover, in aggregate, the whole of Australia without gaps or overlaps. They are used as a large, general purpose regional type geographic area. Statistical divisions are designed to be relatively homogeneous regions, characterised by identifiable social and economic links between the inhabitants and the economic units within the region, under the unifying influence of one or more major towns or cities.

##### States and Territories

These consist of two or more statistical divisions and cover the whole of Australia (as defined for statistical purposes) without gaps or overlaps. They encompass the geographic areas of the six Australian States and two mainland Territories.

##### Statistical districts

These consist of one or more statistical subdivisions and represent large urban areas of Australia outside State capital city statistical divisions. Because of their nature they can and, in some cases, do straddle statistical division and State/Territory boundaries. An example is the 'Gold Coast-Tweed' Statistical District which encompasses an urban area which lies partly in the State of Queensland and partly in the State of New South Wales.

##### Legal local government areas (LGAs)

These are the geographical areas of incorporated local government councils, such as towns and shires, and consist of one or more SLAs. In aggregate, these cover only part of Australia. (The major areas of Australia not governed by incorporated local government councils include the northern parts of South Australia, most of the Northern Territory and all of the Australian Capital Territory.) Legal LGAs can and, sometimes, do straddle statistical subdivision, statistical district and statistical division boundaries. An example is 'Tweed Shire' in New South Wales. The predominantly urban part of this shire is treated as an SLA as well as a statistical subdivision in its own right and constitutes the New South Wales part of the 'Gold Coast-Tweed' Statistical District. The predominantly rural remainder of this shire constitutes a separate SLA outside the 'Gold Coast-Tweed' Statistical District, and lies within a different statistical subdivision.

### **Statistical regions**

These consist of one or more SLAs and cover, in aggregate, the whole of Australia without gaps or overlaps. They were designed primarily as geographic areas containing sufficient population to be suitable for the presentation of both population census and labour force statistics, within the frameworks for standard statistical outputs from these collections. The smallest region in terms of population is the Northern Territory, which was expected to have a population of around 148,000 at the time of the 1986 Census.

### **Major statistical regions**

These consist of one or more statistical regions and cover, in aggregate, the whole of Australia without gaps or overlaps. They do not cross State or Territory boundaries and serve the same purpose as statistical regions, though at a broader geographic (i.e. Capital City statistical division versus Balance of State) level. (However, even this dissection could not, due to population size limitations, be implemented in the case of Tasmania, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory, each of which equates with a major statistical region.)

### **Urban centres and (rural) localities**

These consist of one or more adjoining whole CDs with urban characteristics and represent, in the case of rural localities, population clusters of between 200 and 999 people and, in the case of urban centres, population clusters of 1,000 or more people (including known holiday resorts of smaller size). Because of their nature they can and, sometimes, do straddle SLA, legal LGA, statistical subdivision and other ASGC geographic area boundaries.

### **Sections of State**

Within a State or Territory, each section of State represents an aggregation of non-contiguous geographic areas with particular urban or rural characteristics. The sections of State within each State and Territory are the following:

*Major Urban* — all urban centres with a population of 100,000 and over;

*Other Urban* — all urban centres with a population of 1,000 to 99,999, and known holiday resorts of less population if they contain 250 or more dwellings, of which at least 100 are occupied on census night;

*Locality* — all population clusters of 200 to 999 persons; and

*Rural Balance* — the remainder of the State/Territory.

The above section of State categories can be used in conjunction with other CD-based ASGC geographic areas to show section of State components within, say, statistical subdivisions or statistical divisions.

In addition to the above section of State categories, persons who were enumerated on off-shore oil rigs, drilling platforms and the like, aboard ship in Australian waters, or on an overnight journey by train or bus were included in an additional category, Off-shore Areas and Migratory. There is one such category for each State and the Northern Territory.

## **B. NON-ASGC AREAS**

Census data are also available for Commonwealth and State electoral divisions and postcode areas.

**APPENDIX B****INQUIRIES****NEW SOUTH WALES**

Information Services  
 St Andrew's House  
 Sydney, N.S.W. 2000  
 (Box 796, G.P.O. Sydney 2001)  
 Phone (02) 268 4611  
 Telex AA20819  
 Minerva Box ABS187

**VICTORIA**

Information Services  
 Rialto North Tower  
 522 Collins Street  
 Melbourne, VIC. 3000  
 (Box 2796Y, G.P.O. Melbourne 3001)  
 Phone (03) 615 7840  
 Telex AA30086  
 Minerva Box ABS257

**QUEENSLAND**

Information Services  
 313 Adelaide Street  
 Brisbane, QLD 4000  
 (Box 1160, G.P.O. Brisbane 4001)  
 Phone (07) 222 6351  
 Telex AA40271  
 Minerva Box ABS359

**WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

Information Services  
 Merlin Centre  
 30 Terrace Road  
 Perth, W.A. 6000  
 (Box K881, G.P.O. Perth 6001)  
 Phone (09) 323 5140  
 Telex AA92041  
 Minerva Box ABS588

**SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

Information Services  
 Capita Centre  
 10-20 Pulteney Street  
 Adelaide, S.A. 5000  
 (Box 2272, G.P.O. Adelaide 5001)  
 Phone (08) 228 9439  
 Telex AA82106  
 Minerva Box ABS454

**TASMANIA**

Information Services  
 Australian Government Centre  
 175 Collins Street  
 Hobart, TAS. 7000  
 (Box 66A, G.P.O. Hobart 7001)  
 Phone (002) 20 9409  
 Telex AA58098  
 Minerva Box ABS657

**NORTHERN TERRITORY**

The Statistician-Northern Territory  
 6th Floor, MLC Building  
 81 Smith Street  
 Darwin, N.T. 5790  
 (Box 3796, P.O. Darwin 5794)  
 Phone (089) 81 5222  
 Telex AA85075  
 Minerva Box ABS708

**AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

Information Services  
 Australian Bureau of Statistics  
 Belconnen, A.C.T. 2617  
 Unit 5, Cameron Offices  
 (Box 10, P.O.  
 Belconnen, A.C.T. 2616)  
 Phone (062) 52 6627  
 Telex AA62020  
 Minerva Box ABS875