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CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING, 30 JUNE 1986

CENSUS 86 — UNDERSTANDING FAMILY DATA

IAN CASTLES

Australian Statistician

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Introduction

1. Changes were introduced in the 1986 Census of Population and Housing to the census statistics on families and households. This paper explains the differences between the 1986 and 1981 Censuses and quantifies the effects of the introduction of the question on usual residents temporarily absent on family statistics.

2. Before reading any further you should obtain a copy of *The 1986 Census Dictionary* (2174.0), look at Question H4 on the census form in Appendix A, and read the following entries in the dictionary.

CARAVANS (p.22)
 DEPENDENT CHILDREN, NUMBER OF (p.45)
 DEPENDENT FAMILY CHILD TYPE (p.45)
 FAMILY (p.60)
 FAMILY COMPOSITION (p.63)
 FAMILY INCOME (p.64)
 GROUP HOUSEHOLD (p.70)
 HOUSEHOLD INCOME (p.76)
 HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS TEMPORARILY ABSENT (p.77)
 LOCATION OF SPOUSE/PARTNER (p.98)

3. You should also obtain a copy of the *Catalogue of 1986 Census Tables* (2175.0) and read the classification details for the following variables in Section 5:

AGA — number of dependent family children aged 0-4 years
 AGB — number of dependent family children aged 5-14 years
 AGC — number of dependent family children aged 15-20 years
 AGD — number of dependent family children aged 5-20 years
 AGO — age of eldest dependent family child
 AGY — age of youngest dependent family child
 DPA — number of dependent family children temporarily absent
 DPE — number of dependent family children enumerated
 DPT — total dependent family children
 FIN — family income
 FMC — family composition
 FNO — family number
 HIN — household income
 HST — household type
 MDC — married/defacto
 MST — marital status
 RLF — relationship in household
 SPL — location of spouse

4. There are three major, and some minor differences which need to be considered when making intercensal comparisons of family statistics. The major differences are:

- families in caravan parks are included in most family statistics from the 1986 Census;
- a new question, Question H4, on the 1986 Census household form sought details of usual household members who were temporarily absent on census

night. Of the persons listed as absent, only spouses and dependent family children were considered in family coding; and

- the category 'head only family' was a family type in previous censuses. Such 'families' were actually lone person households or group households, and were classified as such in the 1986 Census.

Other differences are:

- the age cut-off for dependent family children was changed to be consistent with other ABS collections. Dependent family children included the following:

1986	1981
(i) all family children aged 0-14 years	all children aged 0-15 years
(ii) other family children aged 15-20 years who responded as full-time students	other children aged 16-20 years who responded as full-time students

- visiting children were excluded from families in the 1986 Census and were classified as non-family members. In 1981 they were included in families; and
- 'defacto partner' was not specifically sought as a tick box answer to the relationship question in the 1981 Census. Defacto couples would have answered the question either by ticking 'wife' or 'husband' (of person 1), or writing 'defacto partner' (or equivalent) in the 'other' category.

In the former case, the couple would have been coded as 'family'. In the latter case, the couple would not have been so coded unless there were children of the union present. If there were children, the family category 'couple and dependent family children' would have been assigned. If no children were present, the defacto couple would not have been recognised as a couple family and would have been coded as 'head only family' (with one or more non-family members); they were coded as 'couple' families in the 1986 Census.

The following table has been included to give an indication of the number of childless couples who may have been coded as 'head only' families in the 1981 Census. It shows the *total* number of defacto couples with no dependent family children counted in the 1986 Census.

CENSUS 86 — DEFACTO COUPLES WITH NO DEPENDENT FAMILY CHILDREN

N.S.W.	38,352
VIC.	26,895
QLD	20,861
S.A.	10,358
W.A.	12,921
TAS.	2,754
N.T.	2,427
A.C.T.	2,350
AUSTRALIA	116,918

- for the 1986 Census, the category 'related adult family member' included uncles, aunts, cousins, nieces and nephews. These were not considered as 'related' in 1981; and
- there was a problem with data from Question 19 (which asked about attendance at an educational institution) in the 1986 Census. A considerable number of persons who indicated attendance at a primary or secondary school did not tick the box 'full-time student' and were not imputed as such. The effect of this is an undercount (about 7 per cent) of dependent family children aged 15-20, and consequently, an undercount of family structures with dependent children (likely to be much less than 7 per cent) with a corresponding overcount of structures with adult family members.

6. Most of these changes mean better family statistics for the 1986 Census, particularly in the area of lone parent families, but also, unfortunately, they create problems with intercensal comparisons. This point was realised in the design of the 1986 Census family classifications; it is, however, possible to derive from the 1986 Census, family statistics which are comparable to those from previous censuses. When doing this, the resulting statistics do not of course include the benefits of inclusion of caravan parks and Question H4 for the 1986 Census.

Caravans etc. in caravan parks

7. Most 1986 Census family tables include families enumerated in caravan parks, which number about 46,000 families Australia-wide (or about 1.1 per cent of all families). The tables which *do not* are those which include dwelling variables which are not considered relevant to caravans, i.e. RUN (reason unoccupied), NOC (nature of occupancy), LLD (landlord), FUF (furnished/unfurnished), ALM (amount of mortgage), RNT (amount of rent) and BED (number of bedrooms).

8. When looking for tables in the catalogue, be careful to understand the 'table population' of any table of interest. The table population code list will reveal precisely whether caravans etc. in parks are included or excluded (except where the population is 'families' or 'households' or similar, in which case caravans etc. in parks are always included); or 'private dwellings' or similar, where caravans etc. in parks are excluded.

9. In the small area data (e.g. the 7 and 21 page summaries), table headings and footnotes will reveal whether the caravans are included or excluded.

10. Some tables list caravans etc. in parks as a separate category to assist in intercensal comparisons. These tables are C27, C28, C57, C63, C64 and C65 in the 21 page summary; tables C18, C42, C45 and C46 from the 7 page summary; and other tables which you can discover by examining the catalogue.

The effects of Question H4

11. If you have read the selected dictionary entries you should realise that Question H4 has caused significant differences between the 1981 and 1986 Censuses for statistics on families and households. To quantify these differences is complex. The method is explained below, then the 1986 counts for the various categories of family composition are provided on two bases: with Question H4 considered, and without.

Method of adjustment and results

12. The classification of household type is:

Family
Group (GH)
Lone person (LPH)

13. The classification of family composition for family households is:

Parent and dependent family children (P & D)
Couple (C)
Couple and dependent family children (C & D)
Related adults (RA)
Parent, dependent family children and other adult family members (P & D & A)
Couple and other adult family members (C & A)
Couple, dependent family children and other adult family members. (C & D & A)

14. Compiling household/family counts without considering Question H4 involves making adjustments to the actual 1986 Census counts.

15. The adjustments involve, where necessary, subtracting and/or adding to the 1986 Census counts by household/family type, counts of 13 special groups of households/families which are defined in paragraph 16 below. Details of the adjustments are given in the following table:

1986 Census counts using Question H4	SUBTRACT	ADD
P & D	k,l	d
C	a,b	c
C & D	c,d,e,f	
RA		g,h,m
P & D & A	m	j
C & A	g	i
C & D & A	h,i,j	
LPH		a,e,k
GH		b,f,l

16. Definitions of the special groups involved in the adjustment are given below:

- (a) This group involves families which were classified as 'couple', where the spouse was listed in Question H4 (i.e. temporarily absent) and no

non-family members were enumerated (present) (i.e. only one person was actually present in the household). Without Question H4 these 'families' would have been classified to the category 'lone person household'.

- (b) This group also involves families classified as 'couple' where the spouse was temporarily absent, but where one or more non-family members were present (i.e. a total of two or more persons were present in the household). Without Question H4 these 'families' would have been classified to the category 'group household'.
- (c) This group comprises families with 'couple and dependent family children' where the spouse was present (i.e. not listed in Question H4), no dependent children were present but one or more were temporarily absent; and non-family members may have been present. Without Question H4 these families would have been classified to the category 'couple'.
- (d) This group comprises families with 'couple and dependent family children', but the spouse was temporarily absent and one or more dependent children were present (one or more may also have been temporarily absent); and non-family members may have been present. Without Question H4 these families would have been classified to the category 'parent and dependent family children'.
- (e) This group comprises families with 'couple and dependent family children' in which the spouse and one or more dependent children were temporarily absent, and no dependent children or non-family members were present (i.e. only one person was present in the household). Without Question H4 these 'families' would have been classified to the category 'lone person household'.
- (f) This group consists of families with 'couple and dependent family children' in which the spouse and one or more dependent children were temporarily absent, no dependent children were present and one or more non-family members were present (i.e. two or more persons were present in the household). Without Question H4 these 'families' would have been classified to the category 'group household'.
- (g) This group involves families classified as 'couple and other adult family members' where the spouse was temporarily absent and non-family members may have been present. Without Question H4 these families would have been classified to the category 'related adults'.
- (h) This group involves families classified as 'couple, dependent family children and other adult family members' where the spouse and one or more

dependent children were temporarily absent, no dependent children were present and non-family members may have been present. Without Question H4 these families would have been classified to the category 'related adults'.

- (i) This group consists of families with 'couple, dependent family children and other adult family members' where the spouse was present, no dependent children were present but one or more were temporarily absent; and non-family members may have been present. Without Question H4 this family would have been classified to the category 'couple and other adult family members'.
- (j) This group involves families classified as 'couple, dependent family children and other adult family members' the spouse was temporarily absent, one or more dependent children were enumerated (some may also have been temporarily absent) and non-family members may have been present. Without Question H4 these families would have been classified to the category 'parent, dependent family children and other adult family members'.
- (k) This group comprises families classified as 'parent and dependent family children' where one or more dependent children were temporarily absent but none were present; and no non-family members were present (i.e. only one person was present in the household). Without Question H4 these 'families' would have been classified to the category 'lone person household'.
- (l) This group comprises families classified as 'parent and dependent family children' where one or more dependent children were temporarily absent but none were present; but at least one non-family member must have been present (i.e. at least two persons were present in the household). Without Question H4 these 'families' would have been classified to the category 'group household'.
- (m) This group consists of families classified as 'parent, dependent family children and other adult family members' where one or more dependent children were temporarily absent but none were present; and non-family members may have been present. Without Question H4 these families would have been classified to the category 'related adults'.

17. The following tables give family counts on the bases below for each State/Territory and Australia. Note that the figures include families enumerated in caravans etc. in caravan parks:

- (a) 1986 Census as coded
- (b) 1986 Census adjusted for Question H4
- (c) percentage difference between (a) and (b)

FAMILY/HOUSEHOLD COUNTS : STATES, TERRITORIES AND AUSTRALIA

<i>Family/household</i>	<i>1986 as coded</i>	<i>1986 ignoring QH4</i>	<i>% change resulting from introduction of QH4</i>
AUSTRALIA			
Parent and dependent family children	247,182	274,854	-10.1
Couple	1,271,872	1,246,412	+2.0
Couple and dependent family children	1,476,266	1,421,160	+3.9
Related adults	258,768	275,321	-6.0
Parent, dependent family children and adult family members	76,989	84,956	-9.4
Couple and adult family members	449,208	442,453	+1.5
Couple, dependent family children and adult family members	377,726	359,961	+4.9
Lone person household	1,000,562	1,048,771	-4.6
Group household	220,914	225,599	-2.1
Total	5,379,487	5,379,487	
NEW SOUTH WALES			
Parent and dependent family children	85,695	94,987	-9.8
Couple	437,571	428,635	+2.1
Couple and dependent family children	497,717	480,924	+3.5
Related adults	97,202	102,553	-5.2
Parent, dependent family children and adult family members	27,804	30,470	-8.7
Couple and adult family members	161,113	158,615	+1.6
Couple, dependent family children and adult family members	131,085	125,566	+4.4
Lone person household	361,309	376,333	-4.0
Group household	78,759	80,172	-1.8
Total	1,878,255	1,878,255	
VICTORIA			
Parent and dependent family children	55,195	61,190	-9.8
Couple	315,739	309,783	+1.9
Couple and dependent family children	387,861	377,009	+2.9
Related adults	66,777	70,364	-5.1
Parent, dependent family children and adult family members	18,277	20,065	-8.9
Couple and adult family members	119,361	117,659	+1.4
Couple, dependent family children and adult family members	103,158	99,485	+3.7
Lone person household	262,720	272,667	-3.6
Group household	53,020	53,886	-1.6
Total	1,382,108	1,382,108	
QUEENSLAND			
Parent and dependent family children	42,215	47,977	-12.0
Couple	218,985	214,192	+2.2
Couple and dependent family children	242,952	232,748	+4.4
Related adults	41,673	44,582	-6.5
Parent, dependent family children and adult family members	13,525	15,130	-10.6
Couple and adult family members	68,360	67,103	+1.9
Couple, dependent family children and adult family members	61,367	58,110	+5.6
Lone person household	152,840	161,197	-5.2
Group household	38,266	39,144	-2.2
Total	880,183	880,183	
SOUTH AUSTRALIA			
Parent and dependent family children	22,528	25,095	-10.2
Couple	122,743	119,952	+2.3
Couple and dependent family children	125,652	121,367	+3.5
Related adults	21,633	23,024	-6.0
Parent, dependent family children and adult family members	5,703	6,448	-11.6
Couple and adult family members	42,704	41,912	+1.9
Couple, dependent family children and adult family members	29,844	28,500	+4.7
Lone person household	93,486	97,689	-4.3
Group household	17,709	18,015	-1.7
Total	482,002	482,002	

FAMILY/HOUSEHOLD COUNTS : STATES, TERRITORIES AND AUSTRALIA—continued

<i>Family/household</i>	<i>1986 as coded</i>	<i>1986 ignoring QH4</i>	<i>% change resulting from introduction of QH4</i>
WESTERN AUSTRALIA			
Parent and dependent family children	25,976	27,796	-6.5
Couple	114,190	112,797	+1.2
Couple and dependent family children	136,818	127,647	+7.2
Related adults	20,162	22,644	-11.0
Parent, dependent family children and adult family members	7,378	7,980	-7.5
Couple and adult family members	37,944	37,793	+0.4
Couple, dependent family children and adult family members	33,021	30,088	+9.7
Lone person household	82,950	90,787	-8.6
Group household	20,568	21,475	-4.2
Total	479,007	479,007	
TASMANIA			
Parent and dependent family children	7,682	8,602	-10.7
Couple	36,126	35,436	+1.9
Couple and dependent family children	42,485	40,850	+4.0
Related adults	6,987	7,449	-6.2
Parent, dependent family children and adult family members	2,134	2,369	-9.9
Couple and adult family members	12,638	12,423	+1.7
Couple, dependent family children and adult family members	10,101	9,619	+5.0
Lone person household	28,285	29,589	-4.4
Group household	4,922	5,023	-2.0
Total	151,360	151,360	
NORTHERN TERRITORY			
Parent and dependent family children	3,092	3,590	-13.9
Couple	9,939	9,622	+3.3
Couple and dependent family children	14,420	13,551	+6.4
Related adults	1,438	1,566	-8.2
Parent, dependent family children and adult family members	1,064	1,184	-10.1
Couple and adult family members	2,088	2,060	+1.4
Couple, dependent family children and adult family members	3,784	3,564	+6.2
Lone person household	7,062	7,646	-7.6
Group household	2,909	3,013	-3.5
Total	45,796	45,796	
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY			
Parent and dependent family children	4,799	5,617	-14.6
Couple	16,579	15,995	+3.7
Couple and dependent family children	28,361	27,064	+4.8
Related adults	2,896	3,139	-7.7
Parent, dependent family children and adult family members	1,104	1,310	-15.7
Couple and adult family members	5,000	4,888	+2.3
Couple, dependent family children and adult family members	5,366	5,029	+6.7
Lone person household	11,910	12,863	-7.4
Group household	4,761	4,871	-2.3
Total	80,776	80,776	

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

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