

Technical notes



Different types of population counts

The estimated resident population (ERP) is Australia's official population measure. It is based on census counts of usual residents (discussed below), which are adjusted for undercount in the census and the number of Australian residents estimated to have been temporarily overseas at the time of the census. Further adjustments are made for births, deaths and net migration in the period from the date of the estimate (30 June) to Census Night (that is, 8 August 2006).

As they are the most accurate count of the population, ERP figures have been used wherever possible in the Population chapter of this report. However, only a limited number of characteristics of the population are available through ERP: age, sex, marital status (registered), country of birth and geographic location. To allow analysis of the broad range of characteristics available from the census, three different population counts from the census have been used in this report—place of enumeration, place of usual residence and persons temporarily absent on Census Night.

In Australia the census counts people where they are located on Census Night—their 'place of enumeration'. The place of enumeration census count is only used in this report where comparisons are made with censuses prior to 1976, as this was the only census count available from earlier censuses.

The usual resident population count is derived from information people provide on their census form about where they lived, or intend to live, for 6 months or more in 2006—their 'place of usual residence'. Information about people who are not at home on Census Night is linked back to the area in which they usually live (that is, their Collection District). However, it is impractical to link the information about these people back to their actual families, households or dwellings. In some instances, the absence of this information could have an impact on the analysis of the characteristics of families, households and dwellings.

The census count of persons temporarily absent from households is used in a limited number of places in this report. Answers to questions on the census form, provided by residents present on Census Night, indicate whether there were people temporarily absent from their household. The number and characteristics of these temporarily absent people have been used in some instances to provide more information on the total usual residents of households, as well as providing detail of family structures and living arrangements, making the analysis undertaken more accurate.

As census usual resident population counts are the most common population count used in this report, their use in tables, graphs and text is not noted. Where any of the other population counts discussed above are used, this is noted in footnotes and in the text.

Time series comparisons

In a number of overviews and articles in this report, comparisons have been made between the 2006 Census and earlier censuses. Two significant events affecting the census have occurred that should be considered when making comparisons of census data over time.

Firstly, under the constitution at Federation, 'Aboriginal natives' were not to be counted in the census and so were excluded from the final results. This restriction was removed following a referendum in 1967. The ABS has endeavoured to conduct as full a count of Indigenous peoples as possible from the 1971 Census onwards, and has included these peoples in census results since then.

Secondly, the 1976 Census results are based on a sample of half of the forms received from private dwellings, which have been weighted to represent a full count of the population. This was done because of budgetary constraints introduced by the government at the time of processing the forms. Exceptions were in the Northern Territory, where all of the forms from private dwellings were processed, as well as all forms from non-private dwellings across Australia.

In most cases, the classifications used to make comparisons over time are the same in each census year and the comparisons have been made with a high degree of certainty. In other cases, the classifications and/or processing methods have changed over time and the comparisons are less certain. Comparisons have only been made where the data have been assessed as fit for the purpose for which they are used: in some instances, changes over time have not been discussed because of the degree of uncertainty and change involved.

Of particular note, the 2006 Census introduced new classifications for occupation and industry of employment: the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO) and Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification 2006 (ANZSIC). For the 2006 Census, occupation and industry of employment data were dual coded to give users the option to use either the current classification or the previous classification (ASCO Second Edition or ANZSIC 1993, respectively). In this report, comparisons over time for these topics use the earlier classifications for the 2006 Census data.

Totals—rounding and data perturbation

Figures have been rounded in this report. Therefore, discrepancies may occur between the sums of the component items and totals.

A range of methods has been used to protect the confidentiality of respondents when data are released from the census. This produces minor variations in the data that may result in totals not being equal in all tables and quoted numbers.

Treatment of particular data items

To be as consistent as possible with ERP figures (see previous page) and to minimise the effect of variations in the numbers of overseas visitors on time series data, all overseas visitors have been excluded from data used in the report, unless otherwise specified.

Where classifications used included a 'not stated' category, data in this category have been excluded prior to the calculation of percentages—in effect, this has 'distributed' those results across the remaining categories. The only exception to this is for the Religious Affiliation classification, where 'not stated' is an accepted response. Total numbers for all classifications, including those shown alongside percentages, include the number of 'not stated' responses. Where the number of responses in a 'not stated' category may have had an impact on the information presented, this is noted in footnotes and in the text. In some instances, data have not been analysed because of large numbers of 'not stated' responses.

Where classifications used included an 'inadequately described' or similar category, data in these categories were generally treated as a standard category—that is, they have not been distributed as for the 'not stated' categories described above. In the instances where it was necessary to do this, this is indicated in footnotes and in the text.

Symbols and usages

The following symbols and usages mean:

%	per cent
..	not applicable
n.a.	not available
no.	number
\$	dollar
'000	thousand
km ²	square kilometre

Abbreviations

This report uses the following abbreviations.

Australia, states and territories of Australia

Aust.	Australia
NSW	New South Wales
Vic.	Victoria
Qld	Queensland
SA	South Australia
WA	Western Australia
Tas.	Tasmania
NT	Northern Territory
ACT	Australian Capital Territory

Other abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ABSCQ	Australian Bureau of Statistics Classification of Qualifications
AIFS	Australian Institute of Family Studies
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
ASCO	Australian Standard Classification of Occupations
ANZSCO	Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations
ANZSIC	Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification
ASCED	Australian Standard Classification of Education
AST	Australian Social Trends
DEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DIAC	Department of Immigration and Citizenship
ERP	Estimated Resident Population
GPO	General Post Office
GSS	General Social Survey
HECS	Higher Education Contribution Scheme
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LGA	Local Government Areas
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education Employment Training and Youth Affairs
MPHS	Multi-Purpose Household Survey
SARS	Special Administrative Regions
SD	Statistical District
SDAC	Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers
SIH	Survey of Income and Housing
SLA	Statistical Local Area
SOLD	Survey of Labour Demand
SSD	Statistical Subdivision
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
UK	United Kingdom