

**Amanda Nowland**

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**From:** Angelene Falk  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 11 November 2015 10:08 AM  
**To:** Media; Reshma Bargon  
**Cc:** Melanie Drayton; Sarah Ghali  
**Subject:** FW: ABS to conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment for the 2016 Census of Population and Housing [DLM=Sensitive]  
**Attachments:** Letter - Timothy Pilgrim.pdf; ATT00001.htm

Good morning

As discussed, attached is a letter and media release from the ABS. Media for noting if we get enquiries.

Reshma: it doesn't look like there's anything for us to consider on this today as we don't have much information, however you could make contact with the person listed in the letter and request some further information: like their timing on the PIA, when we would have an opportunity to see it, at what point they would be intending to consult with the state and territory commissioners (we could assist with contact details), and the nature of other consultation envisaged.

Thank you

Angelene

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**From:** Timothy Pilgrim  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 11 November 2015 9:25 AM  
**To:** Angelene Falk  
**Subject:** Fwd: ABS to conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment for the 2016 Census of Population and Housing [DLM=Sensitive]

As discussed

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Leisa Ferry [S.22]  
**Date:** 11 November 2015 at 9:07:43 AM AEDT  
**To:** [S.22]  
**Subject:** Fw: ABS to conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment for the 2016 Census of Population and Housing

David W. Kalisch  
**Australian Statistician**

[S.22]

----- Forwarded by Leisa Ferry/Staff/ABS on 11/11/2015 09:06 AM -----

From: David Kalisch/Staff/ABS  
To: enquiries@oaic.gov.au,  
Cc: Cassandra Gligora [S.22], Tania Carr [S.22]  
Date: 11/11/2015 09:06 AM  
Subject: ABS to conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment for the 2016 Census of Population and Housing  
Sent by: Leisa Ferry

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Please find attached a letter for your information.

*(See attached file: Letter - Timothy Pilgrim.pdf)*

Regards

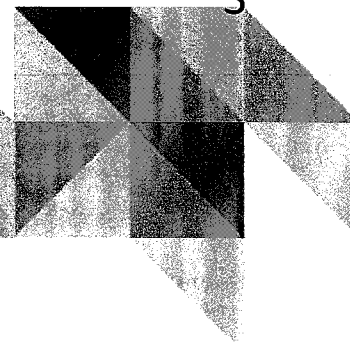
David W. Kalisch  
**Australian Statistician**

S.22



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**Australian Statistician**

Mr Timothy Pilgrim PSM  
Australian Privacy Commissioner  
Acting Australian Information Commissioner

Dear Mr Pilgrim

I am writing to advise you and your office of the ABS' intention to conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment on the proposed retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census of Population and Housing.

Community trust in the confidentiality of Census information given to the ABS is vital to the conduct of a good Census. The ABS has an excellent track record in this regard and we are committed to maintaining it. In the past we have promoted trust in the confidentiality of Census returns by promising to destroy names and addresses.

The ABS intends to explore the retention of names and addresses from the 2016 Census to provide a benefit to the ABS and wider community by:

- enabling higher quality and more efficient linkage of high value survey and administrative datasets with the Census, particularly for small or highly mobile population sub groups of policy interest;
- supporting a range of organisational efficiencies, such as the development of an address register, improving sampling, imputation and provider management; and
- supporting more flexible geospatial outputs.

For the 2016 Census, the ABS proposes to apply well established, internationally recognised separation principles to protect privacy by storing both name and address separately and securely from other household and personal data collected in the Census. Under this proposed approach, names will never be brought together with other Census data. Only anonymised versions of name will be used for approved statistical data integration projects. Addresses will only be used for approved data integration, operational and geospatial purposes.

Feedback from focus group testing has been generally supportive of this approach. Focus Group feedback also highlighted the importance of transparency in this area.

To inform both our decision and the approach, the ABS will undertake a Privacy Impact Assessment of the retention of names and addresses collected by the 2016 Census.

The ABS will also publicise its intention to conduct the PIA by publishing a Statement of Intent (Attachment A) on the ABS website, supported by a media release (Attachment B) on

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Wednesday 11 November at 11:30am. The decision will take into account the PIA as well as feedback from stakeholders and the general public.

I will try to call you in the morning before this is released. I will also be notifying State and Territory Information/Privacy Commissioners of the intention to conduct a PIA and invite them to provide feedback.

If you or your office requires further information, please contact Gemma Van Halderen, General Manager Strategic Partnerships and Projects Division, in the first instance on S.22

Yours sincerely

David W. Kalisch  
Australian Statistician

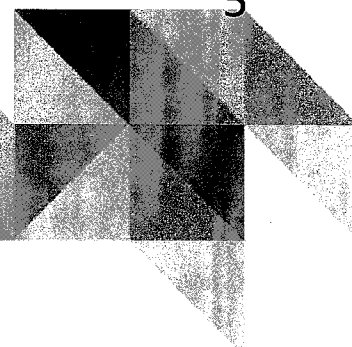
10 November 2015





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## Attachment A

### **Statement of Intent – ABS to conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment on retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census**

The ABS has a long and proud history of Census taking in Australia, and the 2016 Census will be the seventeenth national Census of Population and Housing. The Census is the largest collection the ABS conducts, and one of the most important. The protection of the privacy and confidentiality of every person and household in Australia is of the highest priority. Maintaining the trust that the community has in the ABS is also paramount.<sup>1</sup>

The 2016 Census will introduce significant changes to the way the Census is conducted, with a move to a digital-first approach. Australia's first predominantly digital Census will be faster, more efficient and easier for the public.

The 2016 Census will also provide an opportunity to improve and expand the information available to Australians through continuing the use of statistical data integration techniques to bring together 2016 Census data with previous Censuses (2006 and 2011) and other high value research datasets. Together these initiatives will continue to provide new insights and ensure the Census delivers maximum benefit to governments and the community. For information on current Census data integration initiatives please follow the [link](#).

Building on the successes of the 2006 and 2011 Censuses, the ABS intends to explore the retention of names and addresses from the 2016 Census to provide a benefit to the ABS and wider community by:

- enabling higher quality and more efficient linkage of high value survey and administrative datasets with the Census, particularly for small or highly mobile population sub groups of policy interest;
- supporting a range of organisational efficiencies, such as the development of an address register, improving sampling, imputation and provider management; and
- supporting more flexible geospatial outputs.

To give full effect to these changes, the ABS would need to cease the historical practice of the destruction of name and address information collected in the Census. The ABS proposes to instead apply well established separation principles to protect privacy by storing both name and address separately and securely from other household and personal data collected in the Census. This is an internationally recognised approach to protecting privacy and ensuring personal information is kept secure. Under this proposed approach, names will never be brought together with other Census data. Only anonymised versions of name will be used for

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<sup>1</sup> Trust in the ABS remains high, with a recent independent [survey](#) showing that 81 per cent of the general public and 100 per cent of informed users trust Australia's official statistical organisation.



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approved statistical data integration projects. Addresses will only be used for approved data integration, operational and geospatial purposes.

The ABS intends to conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment on the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census. The Privacy Impact Assessment will ensure the right privacy design can be put in place and inform the processes, risks and risk mitigation strategies that would be required to enable the secure retention of name and address information from the 2016 Census.

At the completion of the Privacy Impact Assessment process, and after considering all feedback received, a decision will be made on whether to progress with the retention of name and address from 2016 Census responses. The outcome of this decision will be published on the ABS website by the end of 2015.

As our track record demonstrates, the ABS takes its role in protecting the privacy and confidentiality of all respondents very seriously. The Census and Statistics Act 1905 commits the ABS to protect the confidentiality of persons, households and organisations. The Privacy Act 1988 commits the ABS to protect privacy. The ABS recognises that protecting the privacy of individuals and the confidentiality of information supplied by them are paramount to the successful conduct of a Census. For more information on how we approach privacy and confidentiality in the Census please follow the [link](#).

The ABS invites feedback on the retention of name and address from the 2016 Census. Any feedback should be provided in writing by close of business **Wednesday, 2 December 2015** to the following address: [privacy@abs.gov.au](mailto:privacy@abs.gov.au).



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7

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## Attachment B

### MEDIA RELEASE

11 November 2015

Embargo: 11:30am (Canberra Time)

### **ABS to conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment**

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) today announced it will conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment on the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census of Population and Housing.

Historically, the ABS has destroyed all name and address information after statistical processing of the Census has been completed.

The ABS is now considering the retention of names and addresses as a key enabler for improved household surveys and high quality statistics.

The retention of names and addresses would support the integration of Census data with other high value survey and administrative data to provide a richer and dynamic statistical picture of Australia.

In considering this change, the ABS remains committed to maintaining high levels of community trust. No information will be released in a way that would enable users of Census data to identify any particular individual or household. Names and addresses will be separated from other household and personal data collected in the Census. Addresses and anonymous versions of names will only be used for approved projects.

To inform both our decision and approach, the ABS will undertake a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) and is seeking feedback on this proposal.

Further information is contained in the [ABS Statement of Intent](#). To provide feedback on the proposal, please write to [privacy@abs.gov.au](mailto:privacy@abs.gov.au) by 2 December 2015.

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**Amanda Nowland**

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**From:** Bindi Kindermann S.22  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 18 November 2015 1:03 PM  
**To:** Reshma Bargon; Sarah Ghali  
**Cc:** Michelle Cosentini; Tania Carr; Zoe Winston-gregson  
**Subject:** ABS Privacy Impact Assessment - OAIC draft 18 November 2015 [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]  
**Attachments:** PIA draft 181115.docx

Dear Reshma

Thank you for agreeing to provide assistance with reviewing the ABS PIA on the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census of Population and Housing (attached).

I look forward to your expert guidance and advice on the work we have undertaken to date. I also appreciate the opportunity to work through the detail with you next week. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any comments or questions that we could consider and address in advance.

At this stage it looks like Tuesday would be a good day to meet with you and Sarah in Sydney. Would this work for you also?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards

**Bindi Kindermann**

Program Manager, Data Integration and Microdata Futures  
Strategic Projects and Partnerships Division | Australian Bureau of Statistics  
S.22

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## **Privacy Impact Assessment:**

# **Proposal to Retain Name and Address Information from Responses to the 2016 Census of Population and Housing**

4 December 2015

## Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
1. Introduction .....	4
1.1. Project Overview.....	4
1.2. Privacy Impact Assessment Methodology .....	4
2. Project Description.....	5
2.1. Background and Rationale .....	5
2.2. Legal Authority.....	6
2.3. Governance and Institutional Arrangements .....	7
2.4. Retention and Use of Information .....	8
2.5. Information Flows .....	9
2.6. Security of Information .....	13
2.7. Disclosure of Information .....	14
2.8. Access to and Correction of Information .....	14
3. Stakeholder Consultation.....	15
3.1. Overview of Stakeholder Consultation .....	15
3.2. Outcomes of Stakeholder Consultation.....	15
4. Privacy Risk and Impact Assessment .....	16
4.1. RISK: Unauthorised access to data stored in the ABS environment by ABS staff member .....	16
4.2. RISK: Unauthorised external access to data stored in the ABS environment.....	16
4.3. RISK: Accidental release of name and/or address data in ABS outputs .....	17
4.4. RISK: Reduction in public trust in the ABS due to privacy concerns.....	17
4.5. RISK: 'Function creep' in relation to future uses of retained name and address information..	18
5. Conclusion.....	19
Recommendations .....	19
Appendix A – Media Release .....	20
Appendix B – Statement of Intent .....	21

## **Executive Summary**

Purpose of the Privacy Impact Assessment

Description of Project and Information Flows

Summary of Findings

Recommendations or Existing Strategies to Address Identified Privacy Risks

Conclusions

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Project Overview

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is conducting this Privacy Impact Assessment on the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census of Population and Housing.

Historically, the ABS has destroyed all name and address information after statistical processing of the Census has been completed. The ABS is now considering the retention of names and addresses from the Census as a key enabler for improved household surveys and high quality statistics.

In considering this change, the ABS remains committed to maintaining higher levels of community trust. No information would be released in a way that would enable users of Census data to identify any particular individual or household. The proposal is for names and addresses to be separated from other household and person data collected in the Census. It is also proposed that addresses and anonymous versions of names will only be used for approved projects.

To inform the ABS' decision and approach, the ABS is undertaking this Privacy Impact Assessment and has sought feedback on this proposal. A Media Release and Statement of Intent was released by the ABS on 11 November 2015. Feedback on the proposal was sought by 2 December 2015. Stakeholder feedback has been considered in finalising this assessment.

### 1.2. Privacy Impact Assessment Methodology

Australian Privacy Principle (APP) 1 requires APP entities to take reasonable steps to implement practices, procedures and systems that will ensure compliance with the APPs and enable them to deal with enquiries or complaints about privacy compliance. In this way, the APPs require 'privacy by design', an approach whereby privacy compliance is designed into projects dealing with personal information right from the start, rather than being bolted on afterwards.

Consistent with APP1, the ABS is undertaking a Privacy Impact Assessment to identify the impact that the proposal to retain names and addresses from responses to the Census might have on the privacy of individuals, and assess the ABS' compliance with its privacy obligations, as set out in the guidelines issued by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner on conducting a PIA.<sup>1</sup> The PIA will assess the proposed approach to managing privacy risk and make recommendations for managing, minimising or eliminating that impact.

As a part of the decision making process on whether to adopt the proposal, feedback has been sought directly from Commonwealth, State and Territory Information and/or Privacy Commissioners. Feedback has also been sought from the public via a media release and Statement of Intent published on the [ABS website](#). See Appendix A for the Media Release and Appendix B for the Statement of Intent.

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<sup>1</sup> Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (May 2014), *Guide to undertaking privacy impact assessments*.



The ABS will review the outcomes of the PIA and take into consideration all feedback received prior to making an informed decision on whether to proceed with the proposal to retain names and address from responses to the 2016 Census.

## 2. Project Description

### 2.1. Background and Rationale

Australia's seventeenth national Census of Population and Housing (Census) will be held on Tuesday, 9 August 2016. The Census provides a comprehensive picture of Australians in order to inform decision-making, policy development, and the provision of funding and services by governments and other users.

The ABS has four goals for the 2016 Census. These are to:

1. count every dwelling and person in Australia on Census night;
2. maximise the value of the Census to all users;
3. protect the privacy of the public; and
4. increase the efficiency and sustainability of the Census.

Consistent with these goals, the 2016 digital-first Census will be a launching pad for a transformation of the way the ABS collects and provides access to data about Australia's population. The ABS aims to move to an integrated approach to the collection and compilation of data from existing datasets. The 2016 Census will also provide an opportunity to improve and expand the information available to Australians through continuing the use of statistical data integration techniques to bring together 2016 Census data with previous Censuses (2006 and 2011) and other survey and administrative datasets. Together these initiatives will continue to provide new insights and ensure the Census delivers maximum benefit to governments and the community.

As part of this transformation, the ABS is exploring the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census to provide a benefit to the ABS and wider community by:

- enabling higher quality and more efficient linkage of high value survey and administrative datasets with the Census, particularly for small or highly mobile population sub groups of policy interest;
- supporting a range of organisational efficiencies, such as the development of an address register, improving sampling, imputation and provider management; and
- supporting more flexible geospatial outputs.

In considering this proposal, the ABS remains committed to maintaining high levels of community trust. The ABS proposes to apply well established separation principles to protect privacy by storing both names and addresses separately and securely from other household and personal data collected in the Census. Addresses and anonymous versions of names will only be used for approved projects. No information will be released in a way that would enable users of Census data to identify any particular individual or household.

This PIA will ensure the right privacy controls can be put in place and inform the processes, risks and risk mitigation strategies that would be required to enable the secure retention of name and address information from responses to the 2016 Census.

A decision whether to proceed with the proposal to retain name and address information from responses to the 2016 Census, informed by this PIA and stakeholder feedback, will be made and published by the end of 2015.

## 2.2. Legal Authority

The *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975 (Cth)* and the *Census and Statistics Act 1905 (Cth)* set out the primary functions, duties and powers of the ABS. The ABS is also subject to the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*.

The *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* establishes the ABS as an independent statutory authority. Section 6 prescribes its functions to include the collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of statistics and related information.

The *Census and Statistics Act 1905*:

- empowers the Australian Statistician to collect statistical information on a broad range of demographic, economic, environmental and social topics;
- enables the Australian Statistician to direct a person to provide statistical information, in which case they are legally obliged to do so;
- requires the ABS to publish the results of these statistical collections; and
- places a life-long obligation on all ABS officers to maintain the secrecy of information collected under the Act, and provides harsh penalties for those who fail to do so.

The ABS undertakes the Census of Population and Housing every five years in accordance with the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*. Names and addresses are among the matters in relation to which the Statistician may collect information, as prescribed by regulation 6 and Schedule 1 of the *Census and Statistics (Census) Regulations 2005 (Cth)*.

The proposal to permanently retain name and address information from responses to the 2016 Census does not involve the collection of additional (either more or different) data than what is prescribed by the *Census and Statistics (Census) Regulations 2005*.

The *Census and Statistics Act 1905* requires the ABS to publish results in a way that is not likely to identify a particular person, household or organisation. Section 19 of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* forbids past or present officers of the ABS (which includes temporary staff) from divulging information collected under this Act, either directly or indirectly, under penalty of up to 120 penalty units (currently \$21,600) or imprisonment for two years, or both. To ensure that confidentiality and privacy provisions are observed, all officers of the ABS sign legally binding undertakings to comply with the secrecy provisions of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

The ABS also has an obligation to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988*, including the Australian Privacy Principles. The Australian Privacy Principles regulate how the ABS may collect, use, disclose and store personal information. In accordance with Australian Privacy Principle 3, the ABS may collect personal information where it is reasonably necessary for, or directly related to, its functions or activities.

Australian Privacy Principle 11 provides that the ABS may retain the personal information of an individual where that information continues to meet a business need that is aligned with the purpose for which the information was collected.

The proposal to retain names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census is consistent with the functions of the ABS prescribed in the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* and complies with all the provisions in the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* and the *Privacy Act 1988*, including the Australian Privacy Principles.

### 2.3. Governance and Institutional Arrangements

The ABS is Australia's national statistical agency, providing trusted official statistics on a wide range of economic, social, population and environmental matters of importance to Australia. A recent survey showed that trust in the ABS remains high and that 81 per cent of the general public and 100 per cent of informed users trust Australia's official statistical organisation.

The ABS and its staff uphold the Australian Public Service (APS) Values and Code of Conduct. These values, which are congruent to the ABS's role as an independent provider of statistical information for Australia, are summarised in the following table:

<b>Impartial</b>	The APS is apolitical and provides the Government with advice that is frank, honest, timely and based on the best available evidence.
<b>Committed to Service</b>	The APS is professional, objective, innovative and efficient, and works collaboratively to achieve the best results for the Australian community and the Government.
<b>Accountable</b>	The APS is open and accountable to the Australian community under the law and within the framework of Ministerial responsibility.
<b>Respectful</b>	The APS respects all people, including their rights and their heritage.
<b>Ethical</b>	The APS demonstrates leadership, is trustworthy, and acts with integrity, in all that it does.

The ABS has a long history of, and a strong culture for, protecting the privacy of individuals and the confidentiality of information supplied by them. The protection of privacy is considered paramount to the successful conduct of the Census. The ABS maintains a Privacy Policy which sets out its personal information handling practices. The ABS Privacy Policy can be found at [www.abs.gov.au/privacy](http://www.abs.gov.au/privacy). The Census Privacy Statement will be released before August 2016 and will be found at [www.abs.gov.au/census](http://www.abs.gov.au/census).

In 2012, the ABS became an accredited Integrating Authority under the Commonwealth statistical data integration interim arrangements. Statistical data integration involves combining data from different sources to provide new datasets for statistical and research purposes – which excludes purposes such as delivery of services to particular individuals, individual compliance monitoring, client management, incident investigation, or regulatory purposes.

As an accredited Integrating Authority, the ABS has been authorised as a safe and effective environment for data integration projects involving Commonwealth data. The ABS was accredited against the following criterion:

- ability to ensure secure data management;
- information that is likely to enable identification of individuals or organisations is not disclosed to external users;
- availability of appropriate skills;
- appropriate technical capability;
- lack of conflict of interest;
- culture and values that ensure protection of confidential information and support the use of data as a strategic resource;
- transparency of operation; and
- existence of an appropriate governance and institutional framework.

A copy of the accreditation claims made by ABS, which have been verified by an independent auditor, is available through the [National Statistical Service](#) website.

Consistent with its accreditation status, the ABS has well-established governance infrastructure and procedures to manage the approval, conduct and review of statistical data integration projects undertaken by the ABS. The Data Futures Steering Committee (DFSC), comprised of senior level ABS staff (SES Band 2 / SES Band 1 level) and advised by the Data Futures Advisory Committee (DFAC), oversees this process. All data integration projects undertaken by the ABS must be approved by the DFSC prior to integration commencing. Approval is based on a written application endorsed by the project owner (SES Band 1 level) which covers the proposed data and risk management strategies for the project. Projects which the DFSC deems to be 'high risk' under the [Commonwealth Data Integration Risk Assessment Guidelines](#) require approval by the Australian Statistician. Project owners must notify the DFSC of any proposed amendments to their project, and if a major amendment is needed, submit a new proposal for approval. In the interests of transparency, outlines of approved data integration projects are published on the [ABS website](#).

#### **2.4. Retention and Use of Information**

The Census collects information relating to each person and household in Australia. While the Census collects information relating to each person and household in the country, it is not concerned with information about individuals as such. The Census is taken to provide information about the community as a whole and about groups within the community. The public expects that the information they provide will be kept confidential.

Protection of personal privacy is paramount at the ABS. Based on a strong track record, people can be confident that the ABS will keep their personal information secure – both that provided in paper Census forms and in the online eCensus. The ABS has never released such information to any outside organisation, agency or project consistent with the legal requirements described in Section 2.2.

The ABS is required under Australian Privacy Principle 1 to be transparent about how it manages personal information that it collects, including by establishing a privacy policy covering how it holds, uses and discloses that information.

The ABS proposes to retain names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census for statistical and operational purposes within the existing protective legislative and procedural frameworks, with no disclosure of identifiable personal information.

The proposal is to retain names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census as long as there is a purpose for doing so (consistent with APP 11). After processing of the Census data, raw names and addresses would be separated from other personal and household information on the Census data set. Raw names would not be brought back together with other information collected from respondents to the Census. Anonymised versions of names would then be generated for data integration purposes and addresses geocoded.

This PIA will inform a decision on whether to update the ABS Census Privacy Statement on the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census.

## 2.5. Information Flows

Following the completion of Census processing, the ABS proposes to permanently separate raw name and address information from other personal and household information on the Census dataset, and to store names and addresses separately and securely.

The 'separation principle' would be enforced to separate name and address variables from analysis or content information during both data storage and use in statistical data integration or for operational purposes. The 'separation principle' is a well-established approach applied internationally to protecting privacy and ensuring that no one working with the data can view both identifying information (such as name and address) together with the analysis or content data (such as tenure type or educational attainment). As an accredited Integrating Authority, the ABS has been audited and accredited for its application of the separation principle for the purposes of statistical data integration activities.

Under the separation principle, authorised ABS officers would only have access to the information required to support their role. The proposed functional separation roles are outlined in Box 1.

### **Box 1. Functional Separation Roles**

Functional separation involves placing project members into separate roles during the lifecycle of a data integration project. Access to data will vary depending on the role that each project member performs. Doing this enables the protection of individuals and organisations in the datasets being used for linking, as it prevents any one project member from having access to both linking and analytical information from both datasets at the one point in time.

There are four roles, as follows, of which the first two are most relevant to the proposal:

**Librarian:** A staff member in this role performs processes such as the acquisition of data to be used for linking purposes, standardisation of the data and creation of the files for input into linking. Separation is maintained by staff only performing one role at a time per project. Librarians may also be responsible for creating anonymised linkage keys for names for additional or new datasets such as survey and administrative data. These anonymised keys will be stored separately to the file containing raw names.

**Linker:** A staff member in this role performs the linkage of the two datasets. Their access is limited to fields they require for linking and clerical review (when applicable), which can include identifying information such as anonymised name and address.

**Assembler:** A staff member in this role takes the linked outputs (from the linker) and combines them with the analysis variables provided by the data custodian. At this point a new identifier, 'Analysis identifier', is created for research and analysis to be undertaken.

**Analyst:** A researcher in this role performs analysis on the linked dataset. Their access is limited to data needed for analytical purposes, which typically does not include identifying information.

Staff in the above roles will be provided with access to data on a need-to-know basis by a designated Role Manager, with access restricted to either the linking or the analysis information based on their data requirements.

The process flows for the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census are outlined below.

### Name Information

Once processing is complete, raw names will be separated from the remainder of the Census dataset, and retained in a separate file as long as there is a purpose for doing so (consistent with APP 11). Raw names would not be brought back together with other information collected from respondents to the Census. Anonymised versions of names will then be generated from the raw names and stored separately from both the file of raw names and the Census dataset. The raw name and anonymised name files would be the responsibility of separate sections in the ABS.

Access to and use of the raw name file would be restricted and subject to approval from the Program Manager, Data Integration (SES Band 1) in order to create new anonymised versions of names to ensure linkage keys for statistical data integration keep pace with evolving standards and methodology.

The anonymised name file would be used as a resource for data linkage research and practice, forming part of the foundational infrastructure underpinning statistical data integration activities involving Census data.

Neither raw names nor anonymised names would ever be part of a Census analytical file.

A similar approach is being utilised effectively by the Office of National Statistics UK. If adopted, procedures would be implemented based on best practice of this approach, as utilised in other National Statistical offices and adapted for the ABS.

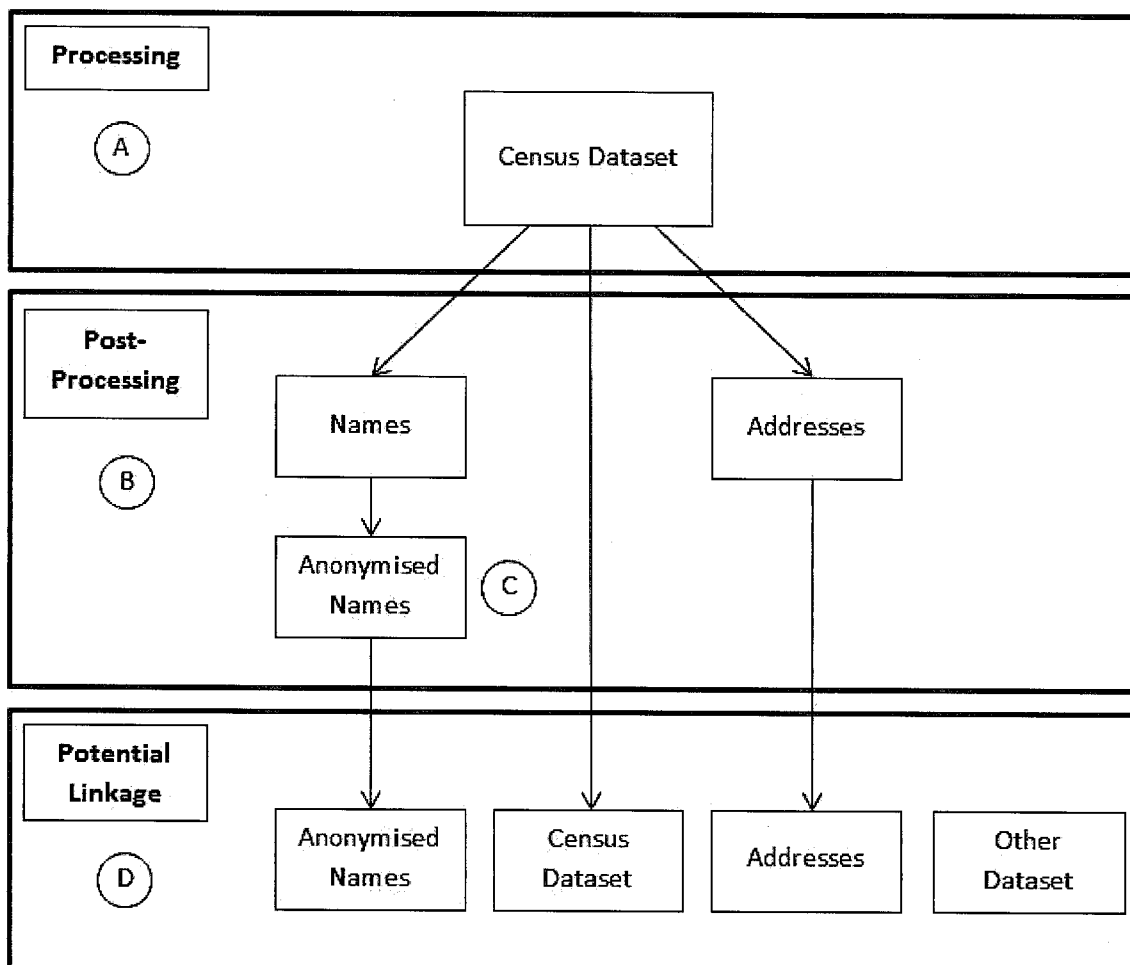
#### **Address Information**

Once processing is complete, addresses and their associated geocodes will be retained separate to the Census dataset as long as there is a purpose for doing so (consistent with APP 11). Mesh Blocks will continue to be retained on the internal Census dataset(s) so that they are 'geospatially enabled'. This file will only be for internal use.

Once separated from the Census dataset, addresses would not be brought back together with other personal and household information in the Census dataset. The address file would be the responsibility of the Director, Geospatial Solutions (Executive Level 2).

Address information from the 2016 Census will be used to support the improvement of geospatial statistics, the ABS Address Register, and other operational efficiencies.

Figure 1. Map of Information Flows



- A. ABS 2016 Census staff will collect and process data from the 2016 Census of Population and Housing.
- B. Once processing is complete, raw names and addresses will be permanently separated from the remainder of the Census dataset, and stored securely in separate files.
  - a. While raw and geocoded addresses will be removed from the Census file, mesh blocks will be retained on the internal Census dataset so that they are 'geospatially enabled'.
- C. Anonymised versions of names will be generated from the raw names; these will be stored separately from both the file of raw names and the Census dataset. ABS staff in the librarian role will perform these functions.
- D. For approved data integration projects involving 2016 Census data, staff in the librarian role will recombine demographic and anonymised name information on an as-needed basis to allow the Census dataset to be used for statistical data linkage. ABS staff in the linker role will perform the linking.



## 2.6. Security of Information

The ABS has an embedded culture of security and compliance, and has established robust and effective processes to protect the privacy of information collected from individuals and businesses.

The ABS complies with the mandatory requirements established by the Australian Commonwealth *Protective Security Policy Framework* (PSPF). The PSPF provides the appropriate controls for the Australian Government to protect its people, information and assets, at home and overseas.

### Governance Security

To enhance physical, IT and systems security, the ABS has established governance arrangements including reporting to the portfolio Minister (the Treasurer) on compliance with the PSPF, implementing risk management policies and strategies, and monitoring security plans. ABS security arrangements have been independently audited by the Australian Signals Directorate.

The ABS has a rolling audit program spanning from the 2010-11 to 2017-18 financial years. These audits include an audit of physical security (which focusses on different areas such as building access, document handling and contractors), and the information security /access audit (which focusses on different systems such as secure deposit box, email, computer assisted interviewing, and laptops). The latter audit is undertaken annually.

### Personnel and Physical Security

To ensure staff are of appropriate character, it is ABS policy that all appointments to the ABS, or engagement under an employment contract that do not require escorted access to ABS premises, are conditional upon the person obtaining a pre-employment suitability assessment, or written confirmation from another Commonwealth agency that the person holds a current National Security, Protected or Highly Protected or above clearance.

In terms of physical security, access to all areas of the ABS, excluding public areas, is at all times restricted to approved persons and is controlled by an electronic access control system, sign-in registers, reception personnel and security guards.

### Information Security

The ABS information technology environment has comprehensive security measures in place, including firewalls against external intrusion, the use of regularly changed passwords, access controls and audit trails.

The ABS will employ the following information security practices to safeguard retained name and address information and to minimise confidentiality, privacy and security risks, including:

1. High level encryption of data, including tight security around the storage and creation of the encryption keys;
2. An audited linking environment, involving staff activity being logged, monitored and, if inappropriate activity is found, investigated. Any misuse will result in immediate termination of access for the staff member, with further sanctions imposed if necessary;

3. Restricted access to the separated name and address files. Within the linking environment, access is further restricted based on staff roles, for instance only librarians can access certain areas.
4. ABS staff and in-posted officers sign legally binding Undertakings of Fidelity and Secrecy to ensure they are aware of their obligation to protect confidential information, and the consequences of disclosure (which include criminal penalties);
5. Provision of education and support to staff to ensure adherence to responsibilities.

## 2.7. Disclosure of Information

In accordance with the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, name and address information from the 2016 Census, as well as outputs from any secondary integrated datasets using Census data, will not be disclosed, published or disseminated in a manner which is likely to enable the identification of a particular person, household or organisation.

All personal information collected in the 2016 Census will be kept confidential. The *Census and Statistics Act 1905* guarantees this protection and legally binds all ABS staff (including temporary employees) to never release personal information to any individual or organisation outside the ABS.

Section 19 of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* makes it an offence for any past or present ABS officer to divulge, either directly or indirectly, any confidential information collected under this Act. The Act provides for heavy criminal penalties (fines of up to \$13,200 or imprisonment for 2 years or both) for anybody convicted of breaching this obligation - even if they are no longer employed by the ABS.

## 2.8. Access to and Correction of Information

In accordance with Australian Privacy Principles 12 and 13, respondents have the right to request access to their personal information held by the ABS and to request its correction. This is clearly stated in the [ABS Privacy Policy](#), which is publically available on the ABS website. If such a request is made, the ABS will respond within 30 days. No charge is made to individuals for requesting access to or correction of their information, or for access being granted.

A decision by the ABS to grant access to, or to correct, an individual's personal information will take into account whether the ABS is required or authorised to refuse the request under relevant legislation including the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* or any other Commonwealth legislation which provides for access by persons to documents, in particular the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

The ABS Privacy Policy provides information and contact details for individuals who are concerned that the ABS may have breached its responsibilities or their privacy rights. The ABS acknowledges complaints within five business days of receipt, and will investigate and respond within 30 days for non-complex matters.

### 3. Stakeholder Consultation

#### 3.1. Overview of Stakeholder Consultation

The ABS directly notified key internal and external stakeholders of its proposal to retain names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census, and invited feedback to inform this PIA and the final decision on whether to adopt the proposal.

The ABS publicised its intent to conduct a PIA by publishing a Statement of Intent (SOI) on the ABS website in November 2015, as well as a Media Release directing attention to the SOI. Both publications included an invitation to comment and provided contact details to facilitate this.

In order to understand modern community expectations, the ABS has conducted a series of focus groups across the country, arranged through a market research company, in order to understand public attitudes and acceptability of the retention of name and address information from the Census. The general feedback of focus groups were supportive of this kind of change, expressing appreciation of the value of high quality data integration and comfort in the protections that the ABS would put in place to preserve privacy and confidentiality. However, a key element underpinning this feedback was the need for the ABS to be transparent about how it handles peoples personal information.

#### 3.2. Outcomes of Stakeholder Consultation

(draft, subject to stakeholder feedback)

Contact with the Commonwealth Privacy Commissioner by the Australian Statistician resulted in further information being requested by this office to inform their review of this proposal. *A response was received from this office in support of the proposal.*

Contact with the State and Territory Privacy Commissioners or relevant representatives for each State and Territory on this matter via a letter and copy of the SOI and Media Release resulted in *no further enquiries on this topic. Feedback was received from ...*

*This feedback was generally supportive of the proposal, ensuring the ABS consider... as a part of the PIA.*

*Public feedback consisted of...*

*Media coverage consisted of ... articles of which the nature was informative and favourable. Articles appeared in IT News (12/11/2015) and APS News (13/11/2015).*

## 4. Privacy Risk and Impact Assessment

*Identify the key risks of the project, and its impact upon individuals' privacy. For each risk, describe the likelihood and consequence of it eventuating, and management strategies.*

### 4.1. RISK: Unauthorised access to data stored in the ABS environment by ABS staff member

**Likelihood:** Low.

**Consequence of breach:** ABS staff may inadvertently or maliciously identify an individual.

**Management of risk:** Functional separation principle and security arrangements will be implemented, as detailed in Sections 2.5 and 2.6.

**Management of data breach:** Depending on the circumstances, the ABS will:

- Notify affected individuals of the breach;
- Involve ABS security, senior line management and possibly the police.

### 4.2. RISK: Unauthorised external access to data stored in the ABS environment

**Likelihood:** Very low.

**Consequence of breach:** The consequences of breach of privacy depend on whether raw, anonymised, or linked data is accessed.

- Data contained in anonymised or linked datasets is unlikely to enable direct identification of an individual or household, although indirect identification is possible.
- If raw names or addresses are accessed individuals or households are likely to be directly identifiable. This may lead to consequences for those affected ranging in type and severity according to what use is made of that data, including:
  - Damage to reputation or relationships;
  - Identity theft;
  - Threat to emotional or physical wellbeing; or
  - The potential of financial loss.

**Management of risk:**

- Functional separation principle implemented – see Section 2.6 Security for details;
- Access to raw and anonymised data is restricted and role based and the data is contained in separate files located in different areas of the ABS;
- Data is stored separately in a secure environment in accordance with the mandatory requirements of the Australian Government Protective Security Policy Framework (PSPF) and consistent with the Information and Communications Technology Security Manual (ISM).

**Management of data breach:** Depending on the circumstances, the ABS will:

- Endeavour to recover the data;
- Notify affected individuals of the breach;
- Involve ABS security and the Australian Federal Police.

#### **4.3. RISK: Accidental release of name and/or address data in ABS outputs**

**Likelihood:** Low.

**Consequence of breach:** Name and/or address information is released, resulting in a reduction in trust in the ABS.

**Management of risk:**

ABS policy is that data will not be released in a manner which is likely to enable the identification of a person. This is a requirement under the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*; under the Act, ABS staff are subject to criminal penalties if found guilty of breaching its secrecy provisions.

The 'separation principle' would be enforced to separate names and addresses from analysis or content information during data storage, linking and analysis. Names and addresses will never be put back with Census data.

**Management of data breach:** Depending on the circumstances, the ABS will:

- Endeavour to recover the data;
- Notify affected individuals of the breach;
- Involve ABS security, senior line management and possibly the police.

#### **4.4. RISK: Reduction in public trust in the ABS due to privacy concerns**

**Likelihood:** Low

**Consequence:** Potential consequences include a reduction of participation levels in ABS collections, and/or a public backlash.

**Management of risk:** To mitigate this risk, the ABS:

- Has informed Commonwealth, State and Territory Information and Privacy Commissioners of the proposal and has committed to addressing any feedback;
- Sought feedback from the public through publication of a Media Release and a Statement of Intent;
- Will comply with established legislative and procedural frameworks which safeguard privacy and data security;
- Be transparent about objectives, processes and outcomes.

**Management if risk eventuates:** Depending on the circumstances, the ABS will:

- Respond to concern from the media, stakeholders and the public;

- Conduct further consultations;
- Reconsider the privacy design for the proposal.

#### **4.5. RISK: 'Function creep' in relation to future uses of retained name and address information.**

**Likelihood:** Low

**Consequence:** In the future, name and address information from responses to the 2016 Census may be used for purposes beyond what is currently contemplated by the ABS.

**Management of risk:** Usage of name and address information from responses to the 2016 Census will be subject to established approval, evaluation and review procedures including:

- Internal approval processes, as described in Section 2.3, for data integration projects which assesses the benefits and risks of each project and their compliance with ABS policies;
- Periodic reviews of policies including the policy on retention of personal information (the responsibility of the Data Futures Steering Committee (SES Band 2s and SES Band 1s) and the privacy policy, to ensure these policies are achieving their objectives, are implemented in practice, and remain aligned with public commitments made by the ABS.

**Management if risk eventuates:** Depending on the circumstances, the ABS will:

- Consult affected stakeholders;
- Review relevant internal policies;
- Notify affected individuals.

## 5. Conclusion

(draft, subject to stakeholder feedback)

In relation to the proposed retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census, a number of potential risks to personal privacy and public perception have been identified. This assessment concludes that the ABS has implemented robust processes to manage data and protect privacy, and that these arrangements effectively mitigate these risks. Any residual risks are such that the ABS is capable of managing.

This Privacy Impact Assessment has not identified any outstanding issues relating to compliance with legislative frameworks or with the Australian Privacy Principles. The ABS has an exemplary track record of maintaining the confidentiality and security of data entrusted to it: the ABS has an embedded culture of security that enables staff compliance, and acts within highly protective legislative and procedural frameworks.

### Recommendations

In accordance with the above conclusions, it is recommended that the ABS:

1. Update the Census Privacy Statement prior to conducting the Census on 6 August 2016 to ensure transparency by informing the Australian public that names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census will be retained by the ABS for statistical and operational purposes as long as there is a purpose for doing so (consistent with APP 11).
2. Implement business processes which are necessary to manage the separation and retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census, including to separate the internal ownership and responsibility for managing the raw name file from the area managing the file of anonymised names.
3. Conduct an internal audit of the implementation of the above recommendations as part of the internal audit program scheduled for the 2017-2018 financial year.
4. Assign responsibility to the Data Futures Steering Committee for monitoring whether there is an ongoing need for the retention of information consistent with APP 11.

## Appendix A – Media Release

### MEDIA RELEASE

11 November 2015

Embargo: 11:30am (Canberra Time)

#### **ABS to conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment**

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) today announced it will conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment on the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census of Population and Housing.

The ABS is considering the retention of names and addresses as a key enabler for improved household surveys and high quality statistics.

The retention of names and addresses would support the integration of Census data with other survey and administrative data to provide a richer and dynamic statistical picture of Australia.

Historically, the ABS has destroyed all name and address information after statistical processing of the Census has been completed.

In considering this change, the ABS remains committed to maintaining high levels of community trust. No information will be released in a way that would enable users of Census data to identify any particular individual or household. Names and addresses will be separated from other household and personal data collected in the Census. Addresses and anonymous versions of names will only be used for approved projects.

To inform both our decision and approach, the ABS will undertake a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) and is seeking feedback on this proposal.

Further information is contained in the [ABS Statement of Intent](#). To provide feedback on the proposal, please write to [privacy@abs.gov.au](mailto:privacy@abs.gov.au) by 2 December 2015.



## Appendix B – Statement of Intent

### Statement of Intent ABS to conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment on retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census

The ABS has a long and proud history of Census taking in Australia, and the 2016 Census will be the seventeenth national Census of Population and Housing. The Census is the largest collection the ABS conducts, and one of the most important. The protection of the privacy and confidentiality of every person and household in Australia is of the highest priority. Maintaining the trust that the community has in the ABS is also paramount.<sup>2</sup>

The 2016 Census will introduce significant changes to the way the Census is conducted, with a move to a digital-first approach. Australia's first predominantly digital Census will be faster, more efficient and easier for the public.

The 2016 Census will also provide an opportunity to improve and expand the information available to Australians through continuing the use of statistical data integration techniques to bring together 2016 Census data with previous Censuses (2006 and 2011) and other high value research datasets. Together these initiatives will continue to provide new insights and ensure the Census delivers maximum benefit to governments and the community. For information on current Census data integration initiatives please follow the [link](#).

Building on the successes of the 2006 and 2011 Censuses, the ABS intends to explore the retention of names and addresses from the 2016 Census to provide a benefit to the ABS and wider community by:

- enabling higher quality and more efficient linkage of high value survey and administrative datasets with the Census, particularly for small or highly mobile population sub groups of policy interest;
- supporting a range of organisational efficiencies, such as the development of an address register, improving sampling, imputation and provider management; and
- supporting more flexible geospatial outputs.

To give full effect to these changes, the ABS would need to cease the historical practice of the destruction of name and address information collected in the Census. The ABS proposes to instead apply well established separation principles to protect privacy by storing both name and address separately and securely from other household and personal data collected in the Census. This is an internationally recognised approach to protecting privacy and ensuring personal information is kept secure. Under this proposed approach, names will never be brought together with other Census data. Only anonymised versions of name will be used for approved statistical data integration projects. Addresses will only be used for approved data integration, operational and geospatial purposes.

<sup>2</sup> Trust in the ABS remains high, with a recent independent [survey](#) showing that 81 per cent of the general public and 100 per cent of informed users trust Australia's official statistical organisation.

The ABS intends to conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment on the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census. The Privacy Impact Assessment will ensure the right privacy design can be put in place and inform the processes, risks and risk mitigation strategies that would be required to enable the secure retention of name and address information from the 2016 Census.

At the completion of the Privacy Impact Assessment process, and after considering all feedback received, a decision will be made on whether to progress with the retention of name and address from 2016 Census responses. The outcome of this decision will be published on the ABS website by the end of 2015.

As our track record demonstrates, the ABS takes its role in protecting the privacy and confidentiality of all respondents very seriously. The Census and Statistics Act 1905 commits the ABS to protect the confidentiality of persons, households and organisations. The Privacy Act 1988 commits the ABS to protect privacy. The ABS recognises that protecting the privacy of individuals and the confidentiality of information supplied by them are paramount to the successful conduct of a Census. For more information on how we approach privacy and confidentiality in the Census please follow the [link](#).

The ABS invites feedback on the retention of name and address from the 2016 Census. Any feedback should be provided in writing by close of business **Wednesday, 2 December 2015** to the following address: [privacy@abs.gov.au](mailto:privacy@abs.gov.au).

**From:** Reshma Bargon  
**To:** Brenton Attard  
**Cc:** Melanie Drayton; Sarah Ghali  
**Subject:** ABS Privacy Impact Assessment for the 2016 Census of Population and Housing [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
**Date:** Wednesday, 18 November 2015 12:17:45 PM

---

Hi Brenton,

As discussed, we were hoping to arrange a meeting between Gemma Van Halderen (SES, *General Manager Strategic Partnerships and Projects Division* at the ABS) and Timothy and Melanie on 3 December 2015. Gemma will be in Sydney on this day.

The meeting will be to discuss a Privacy Impact Assessment for the 2016 Census of Population and Housing.

The contact I have been speaking to at the ABS is Tania Carr

Telephone: S.22 [REDACTED]

Email S.22 [REDACTED]

I have let her know that you will be in touch this week to set up the meeting

Thank you!

Reshma

**From:** Gemma Van Halderen S.22 [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, 13 November 2015 8:51 AM  
**To:** Reshma Bargon  
**Cc:** Melanie Drayton; Sarah Ghali; Bindi Kindermann  
**Subject:** Re: ABS Privacy Impact Assessment for the 2016 Census of Population and Housing

Reshma

Thank you again for your call on Tuesday.

I have asked my team to ensure they are in contact with you. We would greatly appreciate your assistance with the PIA.

Kind regards, Gemma.

**Gemma Van Halderen**

*General Manager*

Strategic Partnerships and Projects Division | Australian Bureau of Statistics

S.22 [REDACTED]

S.22 [REDACTED]

(W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

**From:** "Reshma Bargon" S.22 [REDACTED]  
**To:** S.22 [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** "Sarah Ghali" S.22 [REDACTED] "Melanie Drayton" S.22 [REDACTED]

Date: 11/11/2015 01:22 PM  
Subject: ABS Privacy Impact Assessment for the 2016 Census of Population and Housing [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

---

Dear Gemma,

Thank you for speaking with me today about the proposed ABS Privacy Impact Assessment for the 2016 Census of Population and Housing (PIA).

As discussed, here are my contact details, if the ABS was in a position to provide this office with a copy of the draft PIA.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further assistance,

Kind Regards

**Reshma Bargon** | Adviser | Privacy Practice, Advice and Technology

**Regulation and Strategy Branch**  
**Office of the Australian Information Commissioner**  
GPO Box 5218 SYDNEY NSW 2001 | [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)

S.22 [Redacted]

Please note that I work part time. I work Monday to Wednesday. If your enquiry is urgent, please contact Sarah Ghali on S.22 [Redacted]

\*\*\*\*\*  
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\*\*\*\*\*

**From:** [Tania Carr](#)  
**To:** [Reshma Bargon](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Contact details for Tania Carr - ABS  
**Date:** Wednesday, 18 November 2015 1:59:46 PM  
**Attachments:** [graycol.gif](#)

---

Hi Reshma,  
 I have been checking Bindi's availability and Tuesday is looking like the best day for her as she is already in transit and can move flights to come directly into Sydney on Tuesday morning. Would Tuesday somewhere between 10am and 2pm be possible?

Thanks  
 Tania

**Tania Carr**

*Director, Data Partnerships and Access*

Public Sector Data Branch | Strategic Partnerships and Projects Division | Australian Bureau of Statistics

S.22

S.22 [V:\) www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

The Australian Bureau of Statistics acknowledges the traditional custodians of country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and elders, both past and present.

"Reshma Bargon" ---18/11/2015 01:02:58 PM---Thank you Tania. I look forward to receiving the draft PIA. Regarding the meeting between Gemma Van

From: "Reshma Bargon" [S.22](#)  
 To: "Tania Carr" [S.22](#)  
 Cc: "Brenton Attard" [S.22](#) "Sarah Ghali" [S.22](#)  
 Date: 18/11/2015 01:02 PM  
 Subject: Contact details for Tania Carr - ABS [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

---

Thank you Tania. I look forward to receiving the draft PIA. Regarding the meeting between Gemma Van Halderen and Timothy Pilgrim on 3 December, Brenton Attard of this office will be in touch before the end of the week to set up a time.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions,

Reshma

**Reshma Bargon** | Adviser | Privacy Practice, Advice and Technology

**Regulation and Strategy Branch**  
**Office of the Australian Information Commissioner**  
 GPO Box 5218 SYDNEY NSW 2001 | [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)  
 S.22

Please note that I work part time. I work Monday to Wednesday. If your enquiry is urgent, please contact Sarah Ghali on S.22

**From:** Tania Carr S.22  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 18 November 2015 12:27 PM  
**To:** Reshma Bargon  
**Subject:** Contact details for Tania Carr - ABS

Hi Reshma,  
lovely to speak with you this morning. Thanks very much for your time, I look forward to coordinating the details with you to set up a meeting and progress our PIA with yourself and Sarah.

Regards  
Tania

**Tania Carr**

*Director, Data Partnerships and Access*

Public Sector Data Branch | Strategic Partnerships and Projects Division | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

S.22

S.22 (V) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

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**From:** [Nicole Graham](#)  
**To:** [Brenton Attard](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Meeting with Gemma Van Halderen and Timothy Pilgrim  
**Date:** Tuesday, 24 November 2015 4:17:11 PM  
**Attachments:** [graycol.gif](#)  
[15417540.jpg](#)

---

Hi Brenton,

I'm sorry it's taken me so long to get back to you, I have only just confirmed Gemma's other meetings today.

Would Timothy be available at 9am on 3 December?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

**Nicole Graham**

*Executive Assistant to Gemma Van Halderen*

Strategic Partnerships and Projects Division | Australian Bureau of Statistics

S.22

(W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

"Brenton Attard" ---19/11/2015 03:39:00 PM---Hi Nicole Nice speaking to you earlier.

**From:** "Brenton Attard" [S.22](#)  
**To:** [S.22](#)  
**Date:** 19/11/2015 03:39 PM  
**Subject:** Meeting with Gemma Van Halderen and Timothy Pilgrim [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

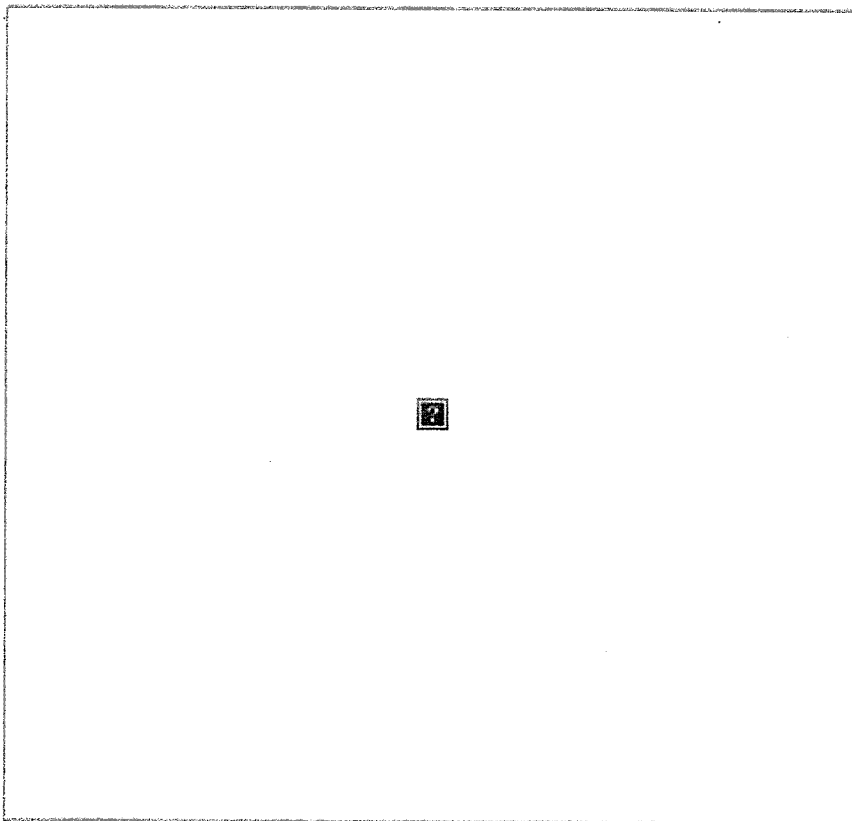
---

Hi Nicole

Nice speaking to you earlier.

As mentioned, Timothy Pilgrim, Acting Australian Information Commissioner, would be pleased to meet with Gemma on 3 December. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the Privacy Impact Assessment for the 2016 Census of Population and Housing.

Our office is located at Level 3 / 175 Pitt St, Sydney. Below is a the map of our office in relation to 44 Market Street:



At this stage I will set aside 3 December for the meeting. If you could please let me know once the time for Gemma's other meeting has been confirmed.

My contact details are below.

Many thanks,

Brenton

**Brenton Attard** | Office Manager |  
**Office of the Australian Information Commissioner** |  
GPO Box 5218 SYDNEY NSW 2001 | [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au) |

S.22  
[REDACTED]

**From:** Reshma Bargon  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 18 November 2015 1:03 PM  
**To:** Tania Carr  
**Cc:** Brenton Attard; Sarah Ghali  
**Subject:** Contact details for Tania Carr - ABS [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Thank you Tania. I look forward to receiving the draft PIA. Regarding the meeting between Gemma Van Halderen and Timothy Pilgrim on 3 December, Brenton Attard of this office will be in touch before the end of the week to set up a time.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions,

Reshma

**Reshma Bargon** | Adviser | Privacy Practice, Advice and Technology



Regulation and Strategy Branch  
Office of the Australian Information Commissioner  
GPO Box 5218 SYDNEY NSW 2001 | [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)  
S.22

Please note that I work part time. I work Monday to Wednesday. If your enquiry is urgent, please contact Sarah Ghali on S.22

**From:** Tania Carr S.22  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 18 November 2015 12:27 PM  
**To:** Reshma Bargon  
**Subject:** Contact details for Tania Carr - ABS

Hi Reshma,  
lovely to speak with you this morning. Thanks very much for your time, I look forward to coordinating the details with you to set up a meeting and progress our PIA with yourself and Sarah.

Regards  
Tania

Tania Carr

*Director, Data Partnerships and Access*

Public Sector Data Branch | Strategic Partnerships and Projects Division | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

S.22

S.22 (v) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

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\*\*\*\*\*

**From:** S.22 [REDACTED] on behalf of Gemma Van Halderen S.22 [REDACTED]  
**To:** Timothy Pilgram  
**Subject:** Invitation: Gemma Van Halderen meeting with Timothy Pilgram, Privacy Commissioner (3 Dec 09:00 AM ZE10 in Level 3/175 Pitt St, Sydney)  
**Attachments:** [19237029.jpg](#)  
[ATT00001.htm](#)  
[c113825.ics](#)

---

Contact Brenton Attard on S.22 [REDACTED]

Our office is located at Level 3 / 175 Pitt St, Sydney. Below is a the map of our office in relation to 44 Market Street:

At this stage I will set aside 3 December for the meeting. If you could please let me know once the time for Gemma's other meeting has been confirmed.

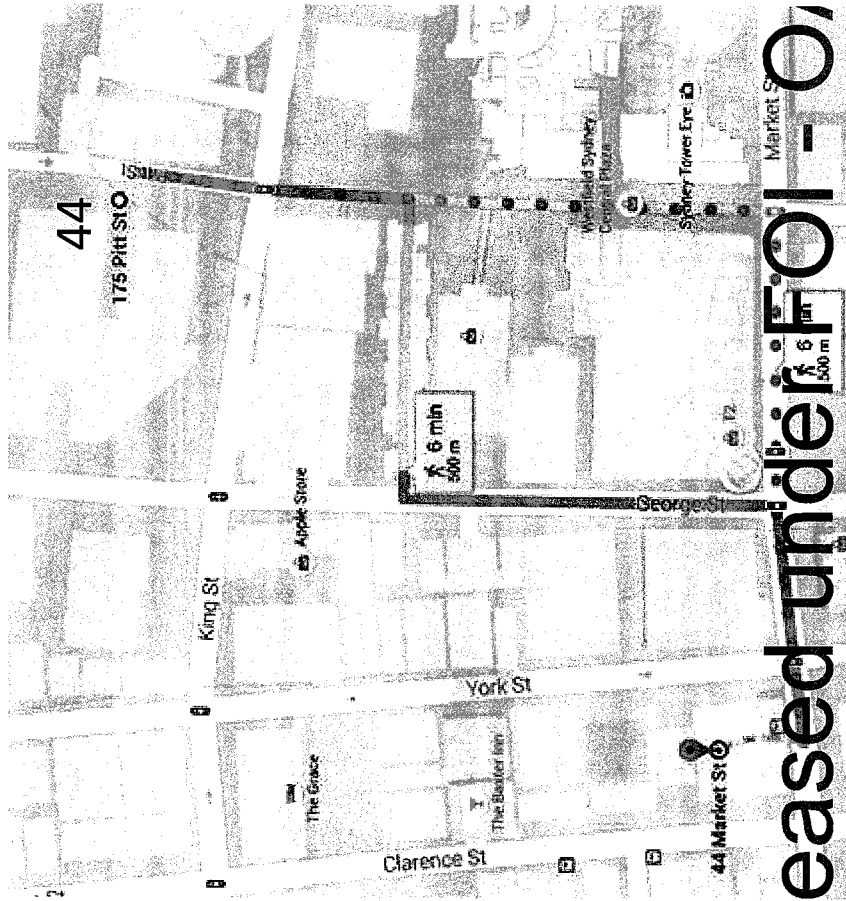
My contact details are below.

Many thanks,

Brenton

Brenton Attard | Office Manager |  
Office of the Australian Information Commissioner |  
GPO Box 5218 SYDNEY NSW 2001 | [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)

S.22 [REDACTED]



eased under FOI - O,

**From:** [Nicole Graham](#)  
**To:** [Brenton Attard](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Meeting with Gemma Van Halderen and Timothy Pilgrim  
**Date:** Thursday, 26 November 2015 11:39:32 AM  
**Attachments:** [graycol.gif](#)  
[20799369.jpg](#)

---

Hi Brenton,

I've sent the invite through.

Thanks for all your help with this!

Cheers,  
Nic

"Brenton Attard" --26/11/2015 11:28:17 AM--Hi Nicole Thanks for the update. It would be great if you could send a meeting invite. The location

**From:** "Brenton Attard" [S.22]  
**To:** "Nicole Graham" [S.22]  
**Date:** 26/11/2015 11:28 AM  
**Subject:** RE: Meeting with Gemma Van Halderen and Timothy Pilgrim [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

---

Hi Nicole

Thanks for the update. It would be great if you could send a meeting invite. The location will Level 3 / 175 Pitt St Sydney. And Gemma may call me on [S.22] if she has any trouble finding us (it can be tricky sometimes).

Timothy's email address is: [S.22]

Many thanks,

Brenton

**From:** Nicole Graham [S.22]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 25 November 2015 2:55 PM  
**To:** Brenton Attard  
**Subject:** RE: Meeting with Gemma Van Halderen and Timothy Pilgrim

Hi Brenton,

I've confirmed that no one will be attending the meeting with Gemma.

Would you like me to send an invitation through, or shall I leave it as it stands?

Kind regards,

Nicole Graham

*Executive Assistant to Gemma Van Halderen*

Strategic Partnerships and Projects Division | Australian Bureau of Statistics

S.22

(W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

"Brenton Attard" ---24/11/2015 04:44:08 PM---Hi Nicole That's ok, I understand these things take a bit of time.

From: "Brenton Attard" [S.22]  
 To: "Nicole Graham" [S.22]  
 Date: 24/11/2015 04:44 PM  
 Subject: RE: Meeting with Gemma Van Halderen and Timothy Pilgrim [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

---

Hi Nicole

That's ok, I understand these things take a bit of time.

I'm happy to confirm that Timothy is able to meet Gemma at 9am on 3 December. Could you please let me know if anyone will join Gemma on the day?

Many thanks,

Brenton

**From:** Nicole Graham [<mailto:nicole.graham@abs.gov.au>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 24 November 2015 4:17 PM  
**To:** Brenton Attard  
**Subject:** Re: Meeting with Gemma Van Halderen and Timothy Pilgrim

Hi Brenton,

I'm sorry it's taken me so long to get back to you, I have only just confirmed Gemma's other meetings today.

Would Timothy be available at 9am on 3 December?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

**Nicole Graham**

*Executive Assistant to Gemma Van Halderen*

Strategic Partnerships and Projects Division | Australian Bureau of Statistics

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"Brenton Attard" ---19/11/2015 03:39:00 PM---Hi Nicole Nice speaking to you earlier.

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From: "Brenton Attard" S.22  
To: S.22  
Date: 19/11/2015 03:39 PM  
Subject: Meeting with Gemma Van Halderen and Timothy Pilgrim [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

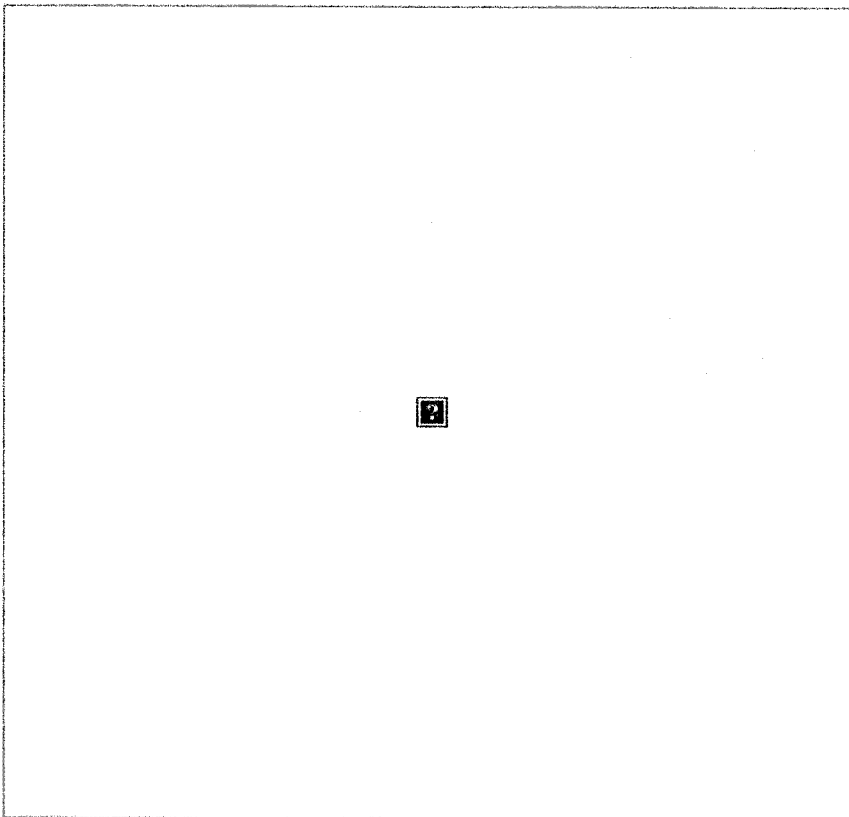
---

Hi Nicole

Nice speaking to you earlier.

As mentioned, Timothy Pilgrim, Acting Australian Information Commissioner, would be pleased to meet with Gemma on 3 December. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the Privacy Impact Assessment for the 2016 Census of Population and Housing.

Our office is located at Level 3 / 175 Pitt St, Sydney. Below is a the map of our office in relation to 44 Market Street:



At this stage I will set aside 3 December for the meeting. If you could please let me know once the time for Gemma's other meeting has been confirmed.

My contact details are below.

Many thanks,

Brenton

**Brenton Attard** | Office Manager |

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner |  
GPO Box 5218 SYDNEY NSW 2001 | [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)

S.22  
[REDACTED]

**From:** Reshma Bargon  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 18 November 2015 1:03 PM  
**To:** Tania Carr  
**Cc:** Brenton Attard; Sarah Ghali  
**Subject:** Contact details for Tania Carr - ABS [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Thank you Tania. I look forward to receiving the draft PIA. Regarding the meeting between Gemma Van Halderen and Timothy Pilgrim on 3 December, Brenton Attard of this office will be in touch before the end of the week to set up a time.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions,

Reshma

**Reshma Bargon** | Adviser | Privacy Practice, Advice and Technology

**Regulation and Strategy Branch**  
**Office of the Australian Information Commissioner**  
GPO Box 5218 SYDNEY NSW 2001 | [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)  
S.22  
[REDACTED]

Please note that I work part time. I work Monday to Wednesday. If your enquiry is urgent, please contact Sarah Ghali on S.22 [REDACTED]

**From:** Tania Carr S.22 [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 18 November 2015 12:27 PM  
**To:** Reshma Bargon  
**Subject:** Contact details for Tania Carr - ABS

Hi Reshma,  
lovely to speak with you this morning. Thanks very much for your time, I look forward to coordinating the details with you to set up a meeting and progress our PIA with yourself and Sarah.

Regards  
Tania

**Tania Carr**

*Director, Data Partnerships and Access*

Public Sector Data Branch | Strategic Partnerships and Projects Division | Australian Bureau of Statistics

S.22  
[REDACTED]

S.22 [REDACTED] (iv) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

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\*\*\*\*\*



**From:** [Bindi Kindermann](#)  
**To:** [Sarah Ghali](#); [Reshma Bargon](#)  
**Cc:** [Zoe Winston-gregson](#); [Tania Carr](#)  
**Subject:** Follow up information  
**Date:** Tuesday, 1 December 2015 7:58:21 AM  
**Attachments:** [Focus group testing - Executive summary.docx](#)

---

Dear Sarah and Reshma

Many thanks for your time last week. It was very helpful for us in refining our privacy design and approach.

I promised to send you an Exec Summary from the Focus Group testing we undertook (see attached) as well as a few lines on international practice.

In terms of international practice, we have reviewed practices in Canada, New Zealand and the UK given the similarity in institutional environments for statistical practice, including their approach to population Censuses. Statistics Canada and New Zealand both retain raw names from responses to the Census indefinitely. The ONS in the UK uses raw name to generate anonymised identifiers which are retained.

I have included a few examples of use:

- Statistics Canada: the Social Data Linkage Environment (for an accurate population list and on-demand linkage of survey and admin data for research or policy purposes).
- Statistics NZ: Integrated Data Infrastructure (links government data for improved policy)
- ONS, UK: the Beyond 2011 project (to enhance Census/population data), and the Longitudinal Study (1% of UK Census records longitudinally linked).

I trust this information is helpful. Gemma is looking forward to meeting with Timothy on Thursday.

Regards

Bindi

**Bindi Kindermann**

Program Manager, Data Integration and Microdata Futures  
Strategic Projects and Partnerships Division | Australian Bureau of Statistics

S.22

S.22 (W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

# Commonwealth of Australia represented by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Provision of Focus Group  
Testing

RFQ ABS2012.234.006

Colmar Brunton Social Research

Contact: James Wunsch, Research Director

Phone (02) 6249 8566

Email [james.wunsch@colmarbrunton.com](mailto:james.wunsch@colmarbrunton.com)

Issue Date: 16 June 2014

# 1. Executive summary

## 1.1. Background

As a part of the national statistical service the ABS provides, as an integral component of surveys it has traditionally collected various forms of personal identifiers (names and addresses), which are deleted as soon as practical after processing. The destruction of these identifiers after processing, has been a way of clearly protecting the privacy of the provider and provider perception of the ABS. However, the increase in the potential for data integration through improved methods, processes, technology and availability of rich administrative datasets has increased the value of personal identifiers, as these identifiers enhance the ability to accurately link records between datasets.

Commencing with the 2006 Census, the ABS began the Census Data Enhancement (CDE) project linking Census data with other datasets using such personal identifiers, in order to leverage more information from the combination of individual datasets than is available from the datasets separately. There have been no privacy or confidentiality issues, breaches or complaints throughout the 2006 and 2011 CDE projects, and focus group testing undertaken prior to the 2011 Census indicated there was strong trust in the ABS, and general support for the ABS progressing the CDE project.

Considering the benefit of retention of personal identifiers, the ABS is currently examining its policies regarding the retention and use of personal identifying information to ensure that there is the right balance between benefits and risks. Furthermore, for the 2016 CDE project, the ABS would like to build on the success of the 2011 CDE project, and expand its data integration program.

The ABS commissioned Colmar Brunton to conduct qualitative research with Australians in order to gain an up-to-date understanding of community views on the retention of personal identifiers, as well as the use of these to link datasets, in order to strike the optimum balance between benefits and risks of retention and use of this information. Two separate but related topics were explored in the study:

- Risks and issues associated with ABS retaining personal identifiers (names and/or addresses); and
- Community views on ABS plans for the 2016 Census Data Enhancement (CDE) program.

## 1.2. Research Methodology

A total of 16 focus groups were conducted in both metropolitan and regional locations across five states as per the following table.

Group	Audience	Location
1	26-49 CALD: personal identifiers	Sydney
2	50+: CDE project	Sydney
3	18-25: CDE project	Perth
4	26-49: personal identifiers	Perth
5	18-25: personal identifiers	Wagga

6	26-49: CDE project	Wagga
7	18-25 CALD: CDE project	Melbourne
8	50+: personal identifiers	Melbourne
9	50+: CDE project	Port Pirie
10	18-25: personal identifiers	Adelaide
11	26-49: CDE project	Adelaide
12	26-49: CDE project	Geelong
13	18-25: personal identifiers	Brisbane
14	50+: personal identifiers	Brisbane
15	18-25: CDE project	Cairns
16	26-49 ATSI: Personal identifiers	Cairns

All focus groups were 1 hour in duration and were held between Monday 26 May and Thursday 5 June 2014. Colmar Brunton worked in close consultation with the ABS to develop discussion guides both for the Personal Identifiers groups and the CDE Project groups.

### 1.3. Key Findings - General

The ABS is widely seen as trustworthy organisation producing important data for decision making. Most people's practical experience of the type of data the ABS collects is limited to their experiences of completing the Australian census, with the vast majority having confidence that the personal data they provide to the ABS is kept safe and secure.

Knowledge of what the ABS does now with data provided is reasonably low. There was a common view across the groups that given Census data is provided in a personally identified manner, the ABS must already use this information for analysis and reporting, either on its own or in combination with other government data (such as ATO, Centrelink or Medicare data

At the broadest level, the concept of linking data is supported and seen to yield practical value in terms of more informed decision making. At a practical level, the intricacies of how this is done at a technical level were difficult to grasp for most participants.

Some have concerns when the details of current and potential linking activities are shared, but most have not actively considered this before. For the majority, there is a presumption that this type of data linkage activity is happening already.

Specific concerns regarding data linkage centre around personal identifiers being permanently stored alongside survey data. Separation of access principles (where no ABS staff members has the power to view identified data from an individual person) are not well known but certainly serve to allay some of these concerns when communicated.

The protections the ABS has in place to secure personal information and protect the privacy of individuals were generally received well and for the majority served to assure them that the ABS would take appropriate precautions to ensure the security of people's data. Notwithstanding this, there is a view that even the best systems and protocols cannot protect against the "rogue agent" scenario or the increasing sophistication of those intent of hacking into such information.

A recurring key concern across the groups was identified data being shared or sold to those who would use this for either illegal or marketing purposes. While ABS is seen as trustworthy, it's obvious to many that their personal data has regularly been shared with others without their express knowledge or permission. This concern would need to be addressed in any planned change.

## 1.4. Key Findings – Personal Identifiers

There was strong support for the ABS to move beyond the 'Bronze standard' linkage level commonly used to link unique individuals across data sets using just personal characteristics. Most felt that an accuracy rate of around just 60%-70% was not good enough and that in order to produce quality research outcomes (and thus inform policy development and service delivery), an approach producing greater accuracy was warranted.

Views varied however about how the appropriateness of using either personal names (or a coded version of names), addresses, or a combination of these to provide a more accurate foundation for linking cases across data sets. Younger participants were typically much more comfortable with more personally identifiable information to be used than either middle aged or older participants.

Once explained (through the provision of several examples), most participants across the groups readily appreciated the value that a more accurate linking process can deliver in terms of being able to monitor trends more accurately over time. Participants were receptive to how data linkage was enabling advances in social domains such as health, education and migration.

The "gains" potentially provided by data linkage were tempered with the risks most people also readily identified that arise through more extensive use of personal identifiers. While the ABS was almost universally viewed as a trustworthy organisation, it was argued that breaches of privacy and security are increasingly commonplace in today's increasingly connected world, and that the use of more personal information in the data linkage process did carry additional risks that needed to be actively considered and managed. It was almost universally agreed that there was no way the ABS could provide 100% safeguards against such risks.

The security, confidentiality and privacy protocols the ABS applies to its data linkage processes were generally felt appropriate, if not surprising (that is, the majority of participants had assumed such safeguards would govern such practices, if not being interested in or familiar with the details of these). At an overall level, the review of these protocols did serve to allay the concerns of those more worried about the use of personal information for data linkage purposes.

A key concern related to a belief that personal identifier information would remain appended to survey or other government data, such that once an individual gained access to an ABS database they would have all the details required to potentially impact on the identified individuals in a negative manner. Those from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background were typically more likely to express concern with personal information being used and retained over time, typically as a result of having experienced less trustworthy government regimes in the past.

Having appraised both the benefits and potential risks of data linkage, the majority seemed comfortable with a move to [at least] a minimum silver level linkage approach. While full names or both name and address for data linkage was endorsed for use by the ABS in data linkage activities by a significant minority (especially among younger participants), the majority felt greater use of an encrypted form of their name was an appropriate step forward that struck the right balance between increasing the accuracy of data linkage activities while still ensuring a greater degree of protection for the security and privacy of the individuals involved.

There was a degree of unease across the groups about how long such personal records were to be used to link cases. Many suggested a finite point in time after the relevant data was collected would give additional assurance that their privacy would be maintained over the longer term. Linked to this was a concern regarding the time lapsed between data collection and linkage – several participants noted it would be ill advised to link data that may well be out of date in relation to an individual.

## 1.5. CDE Project

Very few participants across the groups were familiar with the Australian Census Longitudinal Dataset (ACL) project. When the details of the project were explained to participants, some understood and were broadly supportive of the linkage of unit records across collection periods. However, the majority struggled to understand why linking specific individual cases was important as opposed to comparing the snapshots each Census collection provides.

The concerns expressed in relation to the extended use of “gold” linked data sets over time mirrored the same concerns as note for the personal identifier groups above, namely that such practice significantly enhances the risk that an individual’s privacy and confidentiality could be breached. While the protocols governing the use and linkage of commonwealth data were viewed as relatively comprehensive, the wording of these was clearly recognised as indicating there are no 100% guarantees that the worst could not eventuate, either through a “rogue agent” scenario within the ABS or if IT systems are hacked from an external threat. While it was understood such a level of linkage delivers the best possible level of accuracy for data linkage, it was argued that this should only be kept for those projects where it is essential and subsequently destroyed within an appropriate timeframe, as opposed to being maintained indefinitely.

Topping up of the ACL data set over time to maintain the 5% sample was observed as not overly contentious across the CDE Project groups. There was little objection to the ABS doing this, albeit that it was evident some didn’t quite grasp what this concept actually meant at a technical level.

The issue of moving from a prescribed set of projects to be undertaken using data linkage to a more flexible programme governed by a set of principles was examined in depth across the eight CDE Project groups. Most participants understood the context behind the desire for the change and how such a move would provide significantly greater levels of flexibility for this program. However, there was a degree of concern evident among some participants about potentially giving the ABS (and by extension, government more broadly) unfettered access to, and use of, their linked data. For this group, the concept of individuals needing to provide “informed consent” to such activities was identified as something more difficult to achieve under a principles based project. A possible solution was identified in some groups whereby the principles could govern the broader program, but that the community would still be informed of planned projects (once identified), and potentially having an avenue to raise their concerns at this point. Others argued that so long as the principles were strictly adhered to, the value that this level of linkage could deliver outweighed the risks that would accompany such a change.

In line with the findings of the personal identifier groups above, the majority of participants were reasonably comfortable with a move to a ‘silver’ standard linkage for the CDE project over the longer term. To ensure the Australian community supported such a move, participants felt that the ABS would need to showcase the benefits that can arise from this change, while acknowledging the risks (and associated mitigations) of the proposed change. Again, an encrypted version of people’s name was seen as perhaps the best methodology within the options discussed with the ‘silver’ linkage range.

The need for how widely such a change needed to be communicated was debated across the groups. While some initially felt such a change warranted some form of public awareness campaign, on reflection it was broadly agreed that communication linked to the census completion process itself was more likely to generate appropriate 'cut through' with Australians at a time when they are focussed on the task of proving their census responses. Most felt that so long as the ABS sought to communicate these changes in a clear and transparent manner – along with a clear rationale as to how Australians will benefit from such a change – then most people would continue to complete the Census in good faith (e.g. providing complete and accurate data).

## 1.6. Conclusions & recommendations

Based on the above findings, Colmar Brunton provides the ABS with the following recommendations for its consideration:

- The issue of data linkage is not an issue many people are aware of or engaged with on any meaningful level. More broadly, the ABS is seen as a trustworthy and capable organisation, meaning that there is generally a degree of goodwill that can be leveraged in terms of bringing the community along in terms of any planned changes to data linkage practices.
- While there are increased privacy, security and confidentiality risks associated with greater use of personal identifiers in data linkage practices, the majority of Australians are open to a move beyond the current 'bronze' level linkage practices that yield an accuracy level of only around 60%-70% based on personal characteristics alone. Indeed, many assume current ABS practice to lie somewhere at or very close to the "gold" linkage standard.
- Across the groups, the level identified as one that strikes the best balance between allowing the ABS to make better use of existing data was a "silver" linkage level employing an encrypted or coded version of people's names. If concerns regarding the security of such personal information can be appropriately addressed, we believe there is scope for address to also be used. If such proposed change can be explained in an accessible (e.g. in a non-technical) and transparent manner – including coverage of both benefits and how increased privacy risks would be managed – we believe such a change would be acceptable to the broader community (notwithstanding some sectors of society – such as those from a CALD background – may need greater levels of reassurance than others).

For the CDE Project, the majority were supportive of a move to a move from a set, pre-determined programme of analysis projects to a more flexible principle based programme – especially when being able to access and digest the principles governing such activity. However, there is a perception among a minority of people that they may be ceding control of their data to the ABS for purposes they are not aware of and may subsequently not consent to. If the ABS commits to full disclosure or planned projects (prior to these being undertaken), and ideally allows the opportunity for ongoing community consultation

**From:** Sarah Ghali  
**To:** Bindi Kindermann  
**Cc:** Zoe Winston-gregson; Tania Carr; Reshma Bargon  
**Subject:** RE: Follow up information [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
**Date:** Tuesday, 1 December 2015 11:25:48 AM

---

Hi Bindi

Thank you for providing us with the additional information, particularly that from the Focus Group testing. We have passed the information on to the Commissioner ahead of his meeting with Gemma.

Kind regards

Sarah.

**Sarah Ghali** | Assistant Director |  
**Regulation and Strategy** |  
**Office of the Australian Information Commissioner** |  
 GPO Box 5218 SYDNEY 2001 | [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)

S.22

**From:** Bindi Kindermann S.22  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 1 December 2015 7:58 AM  
**To:** Sarah Ghali; Reshma Bargon  
**Cc:** Zoe Winston-gregson; Tania Carr  
**Subject:** Follow up information

Dear Sarah and Reshma

Many thanks for your time last week. It was very helpful for us in refining our privacy design and approach.

I promised to send you an Exec Summary from the Focus Group testing we undertook (see attached) as well as a few lines on international practice.

In terms of international practice, we have reviewed practices in Canada, New Zealand and the UK given the similarity in institutional environments for statistical practice, including their approach to population Censuses. Statistics Canada and New Zealand both retain raw names from responses to the Census indefinitely. The ONS in the UK uses raw name to generate anonymised identifiers which are retained.

I have included a few examples of use:

- Statistics Canada: the Social Data Linkage Environment (for an accurate population list and on-demand linkage of survey and admin data for research or policy purposes).
- Statistics NZ: Integrated Data Infrastructure (links government data for improved policy)
- ONS, UK: the Beyond 2011 project (to enhance Census/population data), and the Longitudinal Study (1% of UK Census records longitudinally linked).

I trust this information is helpful. Gemma is looking forward to meeting with Timothy on Thursday.

Regards

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Bindi

**Bindi Kindermann**

Program Manager, Data Integration and Microdata Futures  
Strategic Projects and Partnerships Division | Australian Bureau of Statistics

S.22

S.22 (W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

**From:** Tania Carr  
**To:** Sarah Ghali; Reshma Bargon  
**Subject:** Fw: ABS response to Privacy Impact Assessment [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]  
**Date:** Thursday, 17 December 2015 1:28:36 PM  
**Attachments:** [2016 Census - Privacy Impact Assessment.docx](#)  
[2016 Census - Response to PIA.docx](#)

---

Dear Sarah and Reshma,  
the following advice has been sent to Mr Pilgrim regarding the outcome of the ABS's Privacy Impact Assessment and decision to retain names and addresses collected in the 2016 Census of Population and Housing.

Thank you very much for your assistance in this process, we appreciate your input.

Regards  
Tania

**Tania Carr**

*Director, Data Partnerships and Access*

Public Sector Data Branch | Strategic Partnerships and Projects Division | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

S.22

S.22

(V) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

The Australian Bureau of Statistics acknowledges the traditional custodians of country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and elders, both past and present.

— Forwarded by Bindi Kindermann/Staff/ABS on 17/12/2015 12:21 PM —

S.22

Date: 17/12/2015 12:21 PM  
Subject: ABS response to Privacy Impact Assessment [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

---

Timothy Pilgrim  
Australian Privacy Commissioner

Dear Timothy

### **ABS response to Privacy Impact Assessment**

On the 11 November 2015, the Australian Statistician wrote to you concerning the ABS' intention to conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment on the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census of Population and Housing. Thank you for taking the time to consider the proposal, and give your time and that of your office to assist with the process.

I am writing to advise you that after consideration of the Privacy Impact Assessment, focus group testing and feedback from the public and the Australian Privacy Commissioner, as well as State and

Territory Privacy and Information Commissioners, the ABS has made the decision to retain names and addresses from the 2016 Census.

The ABS intends to announce its decision to the public via the ABS Website on **Friday 18th December at 11.30am**. I would appreciate your support in keeping this announcement out of the public domain until the ABS releases it at 11.30am on Friday.

I have attached an advanced copy of the Privacy Impact Assessment and ABS Response to the Privacy Impact Assessment for your information. The documents will be accompanied by a Media Release.

The retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census will support ABS' ability to provide a richer and dynamic statistical picture of Australia through the integration of Census data with other survey and administrative data, the geospatial enablement of that data, and improvements to our household surveys. The retention of names and addresses will also reduce the cost to taxpayers and the burden on Australian households through more efficient ABS survey operations.

The Privacy Impact Assessment assessed the level of risk to personal privacy, considering the protections in place, as very low. The ABS is confident that the risks identified are effectively mitigated by storing names and addresses separately from other Census data as well as separately from each other. The risks are further mitigated by governance and security arrangements the ABS already has in place. These arrangements were found to robustly manage data, protect privacy and guard against misuse of information.

The retention of names and addresses collected in the 2016 Census is consistent with the functions of the ABS prescribed in the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* and compliant with all the provisions in the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* and the *Privacy Act 1988*, including the Australian Privacy Principles.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on the details below. Alternatively, you may wish to contact Ms Bindi Kindermann, Program Manager Data Integration and Microdata Futures on telephone S.22

Regards

**Gemma Van Halderen**

*General Manager*

Strategic Partnerships and Projects Division | Australian Bureau of Statistics

S.22

S.22

W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

(See attached file: 2016 Census - Privacy Impact Assessment.docx)(See attached file: 2016 Census - Response to PIA.docx)



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## **Privacy Impact Assessment:**

# **Proposal to Retain Name and Address Information from Responses to the 2016 Census of Population and Housing**

**December 2015**

## Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
1. Introduction .....	5
1.1. Project Overview.....	5
1.2. Privacy Impact Assessment Methodology .....	5
2. Project Description.....	6
2.1. Background and Rationale .....	6
2.2. Legal Authority.....	8
2.3. Governance and Institutional Arrangements .....	9
2.4. Retention and Use of Information .....	11
2.5. Information Flows .....	12
2.6. Security of Information .....	16
2.7. Disclosure of Information .....	18
2.8. Access to and Correction of Information.....	18
3. Stakeholder Consultation.....	19
4. Privacy Risk and Mitigation.....	21
4.1. RISK: Unauthorised access by ABS staff to data stored in the ABS environment.....	21
4.2. RISK: Unauthorised non-ABS access to data stored in the ABS environment .....	21
4.3. RISK: Accidental release of name and/or address data in ABS outputs or through loss of work related IT equipment and IT documentation.....	22
4.4. RISK: Reduction in participation levels in ABS collections due to loss of public trust .....	23
4.5. RISK: ‘Function creep’ – unintentional expanded future use of retained name and address information .....	23
5. Conclusion.....	25
Recommendations .....	25
Appendix A – Media Release .....	26
Appendix B – Statement of Intent .....	27

## Executive Summary

The Australian Census of Population and Housing (Census) collects information relating to each person and household in Australia. While the Census collects information about each person and household, it is not concerned with information about individuals as such. The Census is conducted to provide information about the community as a whole and about groups within the community. The public expects that the information they provide to the ABS will be kept confidential.

The retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census would support ABS' ability to provide a richer and dynamic statistical picture of Australia through the integration of Census data with other survey and administrative data, the geospatial enablement of that data, and improvements to our household surveys. The retention of names and addresses would also reduce the cost to taxpayers and the burden on Australian households through more efficient ABS survey operations.

Under this proposal, names and addresses would be stored separately from other household and person data collected in the Census. Names and addresses would also be stored separately from each other. Addresses and anonymised versions of names would only be used for projects approved by a senior-level committee, and would be subject to strict information security provisions.

The ABS is committed to maintaining the highest levels of community trust and meeting its legislative obligations. There would be no change to existing ABS practices and obligations that ensure that no information is released in a way that would enable users of Census data to identify any particular individual or household. This includes names and addresses.

Consistent with best practice, the ABS has undertaken a Privacy Impact Assessment to identify the risks that the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census might have to the privacy of individuals, and to assess the ABS' proposed approach to managing, minimising or eliminating those risks. The Privacy Impact Assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the framework for Privacy Impact Assessments set out in the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's *Guide to undertaking Privacy Impact Assessments*. The ABS also referred to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's *Guide to information security* and *Guide to handling personal information security breaches*.

The outcome of the Privacy Impact Assessment has determined that the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census is consistent with the functions of the ABS prescribed in the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* and compliant with all the provisions in the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* and the *Privacy Act 1988*, including the Australian Privacy Principles.

The Privacy Impact Assessment identified a small number of potential risks to personal privacy associated with the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census, but concluded that in each case the likelihood of these risks eventuating was 'very low'. The Privacy Impact Assessment determined that these risks can and would be effectively mitigated by implementation of an internationally accepted practice known as functional separation and by existing ABS governance and security arrangements. Nevertheless, a small number of recommendations have been made in relation to implementation of the proposal.

The outcome of this Privacy Impact Assessment, along with feedback from key stakeholders and the public, will inform the ABS' decision to retain names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census. The ABS will publish its decision and this Privacy Impact Assessment on the ABS website by the end of 2015.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Project Overview

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is conducting this Privacy Impact Assessment on the retention of names and addresses collected in the 2016 Census of Population and Housing (Census). The retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census would enable the ABS to deliver richer statistics and increase the value of existing data to better inform planning decisions and government policies for a better Australia. Section 2.1 provides more information on the public benefits of this proposal.

Historically, the ABS has destroyed name and address information after statistical processing of the Census has been completed.<sup>1</sup> The ABS is now considering the retention of names and addresses from the 2016 Census as a key enabler to meet the growing stakeholder demand to provide a richer and more dynamic statistical picture of Australia through the integration of Census data with other survey and administrative data, the geospatial enablement of that data, and improvements to our household surveys. The retention of names and addresses would also reduce the cost to taxpayers and the burden on Australian households through more efficient ABS survey operations

In considering this change, the ABS remains committed to maintaining the highest levels of community trust and meeting its legislative obligations. The proposal to retain names and addresses from responses to the Census is made in accordance with the provisions for protecting personal privacy in the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* (Cth) and the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth), including the Australian Privacy Principles. No change is proposed to ABS' existing practices and obligations to ensure that no information is released by the ABS in a way that would enable users of Census data to identify any particular individual or household.

The proposal is for names and addresses to be stored separately from other household and person data collected in the Census. The names and addresses themselves would also be stored separately from each other. Only anonymised versions of names would be used for projects that are both approved by a senior-level committee and subject to strict security provisions.

To inform the ABS' decision and approach, the ABS has undertaken this Privacy Impact Assessment and has sought feedback on this proposal. A Media Release and Statement of Intent were released by the ABS on 11 November 2015. Feedback on the proposal was sought by 2 December 2015. Stakeholder feedback has been considered in finalising this Assessment.

### 1.2. Privacy Impact Assessment Methodology

Australian Privacy Principle 1 requires Australian Privacy Principle entities to take reasonable steps to implement practices, procedures and systems that will ensure compliance with the Australian Privacy Principles and enable them to deal with enquiries or complaints about privacy compliance. In this way, the Australian Privacy Principles require 'privacy by design', an approach whereby privacy

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<sup>1</sup> Currently, the ABS destroys all name-identified Census information after statistical processing except where people have explicitly consented to their personal information being retained for 99 years by the National Archives of Australia as part of the Census Time Capsule. The ABS proposal to retain name and address information from responses to the 2016 Census is independent of the Census Time Capsule scheme.



compliance is designed into projects dealing with personal information right from the start, rather than being bolted on afterwards.

As detailed below, the ABS has established governance systems consistent with Australian Privacy Principle 1.

In the interests of transparency, the ABS has undertaken this Privacy Impact Assessment to identify the risks that the proposal to retain names and addresses from responses to the Census might have on the privacy of individuals, and to assess the ABS' proposed approach to managing, minimising or eliminating those risks. This Privacy Impact Assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the framework for Privacy Impact Assessments set out in the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's *Guide to undertaking Privacy Impact Assessments*<sup>2</sup>. The ABS has also referred to Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's *Guide to information security*<sup>3</sup> and *Guide to handling personal information security breaches*<sup>4</sup>.

As a part of the decision making process on whether to adopt the proposal, feedback has been sought directly from Commonwealth, State and Territory Information and/or Privacy Commissioners, or relevant representatives. Feedback has also been sought from the public via a media release and Statement of Intent published on the [ABS website](#). See Appendix A for the Media Release and Appendix B for the Statement of Intent.

The ABS will review the outcomes of this Privacy Impact Assessment and take into consideration all feedback received to decide whether to proceed with the proposal to retain names and address from responses to the 2016 Census.

## 2. Project Description

### 2.1. Background and Rationale

Australia's seventeenth national Census will be held on Tuesday, 9 August 2016. The Census provides a comprehensive picture of Australia in order to inform decision-making, policy development, and the provision of funding and services by governments and other users.

The ABS has four goals for the 2016 Census. These are to:

1. count every dwelling and person in Australia on Census night;
2. maximise the value of Census data to all users;
3. protect the privacy of the public; and
4. increase the efficiency and sustainability of the Census.

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<sup>2</sup> Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (May 2014), *Guide to undertaking privacy impact assessments*.

<sup>3</sup> Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (August 2014), *Guide to information security*.

<sup>4</sup> Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (August 2014), *Guide to handling personal information security breaches*.

Consistent with these goals, the 2016 Census will be a launching pad for a transformation of the way the ABS collects and provides access to data about Australia's population. The ABS aims to move to an integrated approach to the collection and compilation of data from existing datasets.

The 2016 Census also provides an opportunity to improve and expand the information available to Australians through the ABS Census Data Enhancement program<sup>5</sup>. This program uses statistical data integration techniques to bring together 2016 Census data with previous Censuses (2006 and 2011) and other survey and administrative datasets.

Together these initiatives would continue to provide new statistical and analytical insights and ensure that the Census delivers maximum benefit to governments and the community. As part of this transformation, the ABS is exploring the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census to provide a benefit to the ABS and wider community by:

- enabling higher quality and more efficient linkage of high value survey and administrative datasets with the Census, particularly for small or highly mobile sub-populations of policy interest;
- supporting a range of organisational efficiencies, such as the development of an address register, improving sampling, imputation and provider management; and
- supporting more flexible geospatial outputs.

More specifically, the use of statistical data integration techniques to bring together Census data with other survey and administrative data would enable the ABS to meet the growing demand of policy agencies (e.g. Department of Social Services, Department of Health), service providers and the research community for higher quality 'joined-up' information to better inform planning decisions and government policies in the public good. In particular, the use of names and addresses to improve the quality and accuracy of linked information, would enhance the ability of policy makers and researchers to effectively measure changes over time or differences between population sub groups or regions.

Bringing Census data together with education and health data, for example, can provide insight into, and help improve education, employment and health systems and services and can help answer questions such as:

- what is the impact of early childhood experiences on successful transition to school and longer term outcomes?
- how could education approaches be improved across the lifecycle to help young adults achieve higher levels of employment?
- what factors matter for targeting health services for those most in need, including mental health services? How could these insights assist with the design of better programs of support and prevention?

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<sup>5</sup> The ABS Census Data Enhancement Program commenced with the 2006 Census. The Program brings together Census data with other data sources to inform key policy and research questions. The Program continued with the 2011 Census and an overview of outcomes from the 2011 Census can be found in [\*Census Data Enhancement project: An update, 2011, ABS cat. No. 2062.0.\*](#)

- what are the outcomes for individuals and families who receive assistance from a range of social services – child care, housing and homelessness services, child protection services, disability services, etc ?
- do young unemployed adults move to areas of higher employment? For those that move, do they have better or worse outcomes than those who don't?
- what is the impact of industry restructuring (e.g. the automotive industry) on community and individual outcomes?

In considering this proposal to retain names and addresses from the 2016 Census, the ABS remains committed to maintaining the highest levels of community trust. The ABS would apply well established and internationally accepted separation principles to protect privacy and data. These principles essentially separate data items into different data stores. The ABS proposes to store names and addresses separately and securely from other household and personal data collected in the Census. The proposal would be to also store names and addresses separately from each other. Addresses and anonymised versions of names would only be used for approved projects which are also subject to strict security provisions.

The ABS is proposing no change to our practice and legal obligation to ensure that no information would be released by the ABS in a way that would enable users of Census data to identify any particular individual or household.

This Privacy Impact Assessment ensures that appropriate identification and assessment of risks has been undertaken, and that appropriate controls are in place or can be implemented to mitigate risks.

A decision on whether to proceed with the proposal to retain name and address information from responses to the 2016 Census, informed by this Privacy Impact Assessment and stakeholder feedback, will be made and the outcome published by the end of 2015.

## 2.2. Legal Authority

The *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975 (Cth)* and the *Census and Statistics Act 1905 (Cth)* set out the primary functions, duties and powers of the ABS. The ABS is also subject to the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*.

The *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* establishes the ABS as an independent statutory authority. Section 6 prescribes its functions to include the collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of statistics and related information.

The *Census and Statistics Act 1905*:

- empowers the Australian Statistician to collect statistical information on a broad range of demographic, economic, environmental and social topics;
- enables the Australian Statistician to direct a person to provide statistical information, in which case they are legally obliged to do so;
- requires the ABS to publish the results of these statistical collections;
- places a life-long obligation on all ABS officers to maintain the secrecy of information collected under the Act, and provides harsh penalties for those who fail to do so; and

- does not allow data to be published in a manner that is likely to enable the identification of a particular person or organisation.

The ABS undertakes the Census every five years in accordance with the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*. Names and addresses are among the matters in relation to which the Statistician may collect information, as prescribed by regulation 6 and Schedule 1 of the *Census and Statistics (Census) Regulations 2005* (Cth).

The proposal to permanently retain name and address information from responses to the 2016 Census does not involve the collection of additional information than that collected in the 2011 Census.

The *Census and Statistics Act 1905* requires the ABS to publish results in a manner not likely to identify a particular person, household or organisation. Section 19 of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* forbids past or present officers of the ABS (which includes temporary staff) from divulging information collected under this Act, either directly or indirectly, under penalty of up to 120 penalty units (currently \$21,600) or imprisonment for two years, or both. To ensure that confidentiality and privacy provisions are observed, all officers of the ABS sign legally binding undertakings to comply with the secrecy provisions of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*. These undertakings are binding for life and are renewed annually.

The ABS also has an obligation to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988*, including the Australian Privacy Principles. The Australian Privacy Principles regulate how the ABS may collect, use, disclose and store personal information. In accordance with Australian Privacy Principle 3, the ABS may collect personal information (such as name and address) where it is reasonably necessary for, or directly related to, its functions or activities. Australian Privacy Principle 11 provides that the ABS may retain the personal information of an individual where that information continues to meet a business need that is aligned with the purpose for which the information was collected.

The proposal to retain names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census is consistent with the functions of the ABS prescribed in the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* and compliant with all the provisions in the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* and the *Privacy Act 1988*, including the Australian Privacy Principles.

### **2.3. Governance and Institutional Arrangements**

The ABS is Australia's national statistical agency, providing trusted official statistics on a wide range of economic, social, population and environmental matters of importance to Australia. A recent independent [survey](#) showed that trust in the ABS remains high and that 81 per cent of the general public and 100 per cent of informed users trust Australia's official statistical organisation, the ABS.

The ABS and its staff uphold the Australian Public Service (APS) Values and Code of Conduct. These values, which are congruent to the ABS's role as an independent provider of statistical information for Australia, are summarised in the following table:

<b>Impartial</b>	The APS is apolitical and provides the Government with advice that is frank, honest, timely and based on the best available evidence.
<b>Committed to Service</b>	The APS is professional, objective, innovative and efficient, and works collaboratively to achieve the best results for the Australian community and the Government.
<b>Accountable</b>	The APS is open and accountable to the Australian community under the law and within the framework of Ministerial responsibility.
<b>Respectful</b>	The APS respects all people, including their rights and their heritage.
<b>Ethical</b>	The APS demonstrates leadership, is trustworthy, and acts with integrity, in all that it does.

The ABS has a long history of, and a strong culture for, protecting the privacy of individuals and the confidentiality of information supplied by them. The protection of privacy is considered paramount to the successful conduct of the Census. The ABS maintains a Privacy Policy which sets out its personal information handling practices. The ABS Privacy Policy can be found at [www.abs.gov.au/privacy](http://www.abs.gov.au/privacy). The Census Privacy Statement will be released before August 2016 and will be found at [www.abs.gov.au/census](http://www.abs.gov.au/census).

In 2012, the ABS became an accredited Integrating Authority under the Commonwealth statistical data integration interim arrangements. Statistical data integration involves combining data from different sources to provide enhanced datasets for statistical and research purposes – which excludes purposes such as delivery of services to particular individuals, individual compliance monitoring, client management, incident investigation, or regulatory purposes.

As an accredited Integrating Authority, the ABS has been authorised as a safe and effective environment for data integration projects involving Commonwealth data. The ABS was accredited against the following criteria:

- ability to ensure secure data management;
- information that is likely to enable identification of individuals or organisations is not disclosed to external users;
- availability of appropriate skills;
- appropriate technical capability;
- lack of conflict of interest;
- culture and values that ensure protection of confidential information and support the use of data as a strategic resource;
- transparency of operation; and
- existence of an appropriate governance and institutional framework.

A copy of the accreditation claims made by ABS, which have been verified by an independent auditor, is available through the National Statistical Service website.

Consistent with its accreditation status, the ABS has well-established governance infrastructure and procedures to manage the approval, conduct and review of statistical data integration projects undertaken by the ABS. A Senior Committee comprised of senior level ABS staff (SES Band 2 / SES Band 1 level) oversees this process. All data integration projects undertaken by the ABS must be approved by the Committee prior to integration commencing. Approval is based on a written application endorsed by the project owner (SES Band 1 level) which covers the proposed data and risk management strategies for the project. Projects which the Committee deem to be 'high risk' under the [Commonwealth Data Integration Risk Assessment Guidelines](#) require approval by the Australian Statistician. Project owners must notify the Committee of any proposed amendments to their project, and if a major amendment is needed, submit a new proposal for approval. In the interests of transparency, outlines of approved data integration projects within scope of the Commonwealth arrangements are published on the [ABS website](#).

#### **2.4. Retention and Use of Information**

The Census collects information relating to each person and household in Australia. While the Census collects information relating to each person and household in the country, it is not concerned with information about individuals as such. The Census is taken to provide information about the community as a whole and about groups within the community. The public expects that the information they provide will be kept confidential.

Protection of personal privacy is paramount at the ABS. Based on a strong track record, people can be confident that the ABS will keep their personal information secure – both that provided on paper Census forms and the online eCensus.

The ABS proposes to retain names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census for statistical and operational purposes within the existing protective legislative and procedural frameworks, with no disclosure of identifiable personal information.

Consistent with Australian Privacy Principle 11, name and address information would only be retained where there continues to be a business need for doing so. After processing of the Census data, names and addresses would be separated from other personal and household information on the Census data set. Names and addresses would also be separated from each other. Names would not be brought back together with other information collected from respondents to the Census. Anonymised versions of names would be generated for data integration purposes and addresses geocoded.

This Privacy Impact Assessment will inform the decision on whether the ABS will retain the names and addresses collected from responses to the Census; the outcome of this decision will be published by the end of 2015. If a decision is made to proceed with the proposal, the ABS will ensure transparency of this decision and how personal information will be managed, consistent with Australian Privacy Principle 1. It will do this by:

1. publishing the decision and the privacy impact assessment on the ABS website by the end of the year;
2. detailing how Census name and address information would be held and used by the ABS in the publication – 'How Australia takes a Census', to be published in March 2016;
3. releasing the Census Privacy Statement before the 2016 Census; and

4. publishing responses to frequently asked questions for participants of the Census.

## 2.5. Information Flows

Following the completion of Census processing, the ABS proposes to permanently separate name and address information from other information on the Census dataset, and to store names and addresses separately from other data and from each other, and securely. This separation is considered a key element of the privacy design, protecting against the accidental or malicious disclosure of personal information from responses to the 2016 Census.

The separation principle would be enforced to separate name and address variables from analysis or content information during both data storage and use in statistical data integration or for operational purposes. The separation principle is a well-established approach applied internationally to protect privacy and the security of data by ensuring that no-one working with the data can view both identifying information (such as name and address) together with the analysis or content data (such as country of birth or educational attainment).

As an accredited Integrating Authority, the ABS has been audited and accredited for its application of the separation principle for the purposes of statistical data integration activities.

Under the separation principle, authorised ABS officers would only have access to the information required to support their role. That is, separation would be functionally based. This means that only a limited number of ABS staff would have access to the retained information.

The key layers of protection that would be in place as a result of applying functional separation are:

- names, anonymised names and addresses would be stored securely and separately to each other and to other Census data;
- access to name, anonymised name and addresses is restricted and approved on a need-to-know basis;
- names would be used to generate anonymised versions of names to use as linkage keys in statistical and research projects that have been assessed and approved consistent with the *Commonwealth Statistical Data Integration principles, governance and institutional arrangements*; and
- neither names nor anonymised names would be part of a Census analytical file, nor would they ever be disclosed by the ABS.

The proposed functional separation roles as applied for data integration projects are outlined in Box 1.

### **Box 1. Functional Separation Roles**

Functional separation involves placing project members into separate roles during the lifecycle of a data integration project. Access to data will vary depending on the role that each project member performs. Under the separation principle, any one staff member is prevented from accessing both identifying and analytical information from datasets during the linkage process.

There are four roles, as follows, of which the first two are most relevant to the proposal:

**Librarian:** A staff member in this role performs processes such as the acquisition of data to be used for linking purposes, standardisation of the data and creation of the files for input into linking. Separation is maintained by staff only performing one role at a time per project. Librarians may also be responsible for creating anonymised linkage keys for names for additional or new datasets such as survey and administrative data. These anonymised keys would be stored separately to the file containing names.

**Linker:** A staff member in this role performs the linkage of the two datasets. Their access is limited to fields they require for linking and clerical review (when applicable), which can include identifying information such as anonymised name and address.

**Assembler:** A staff member in this role takes the linked outputs (from the linker) and combines them with the analysis variables provided by the data custodian. At this point a new identifier, 'Analysis identifier', is created for research and analysis to be undertaken.

**Analyst:** A researcher in this role performs analysis on the linked dataset. Their access is limited to data needed for analytical purposes, which typically does not include identifying information.

Staff in the above roles are provided with access to data on a need-to-know basis by a designated Role Manager, with access restricted to either the linking or the analysis information based on their data requirements.

The process flows for the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census are outlined below.

### **Name Information**

Once Census processing is complete, names would be separated from the remainder of the Census dataset, and retained in a separate file as long as there is a purpose for doing so (consistent with Australian Privacy Principle 11). Names would not be brought back together with other information collected from respondents to the Census. Anonymised versions of names would be generated from the names and stored separately from both the file of names and the Census dataset. The name and anonymised name files would be the responsibility of functionally separate sections in the ABS.

Access to and use of the name file would be restricted and subject to approval from a senior officer in order to create new anonymised versions of names to ensure linkage keys for statistical data integration keep pace with evolving standards and methodology and are fit-for-purpose.



The anonymised name file would be used as a resource for data linkage research and practice, forming part of the foundational infrastructure underpinning ABS statistical data integration activities involving Census data.

Neither names nor anonymised names would be part of a Census analytical file, nor would this information ever be disclosed by the ABS.

The functional separation approach is consistent with international best practice, and is utilised effectively by the Office of National Statistics in the United Kingdom, Statistics New Zealand and Statistics Canada, for example.

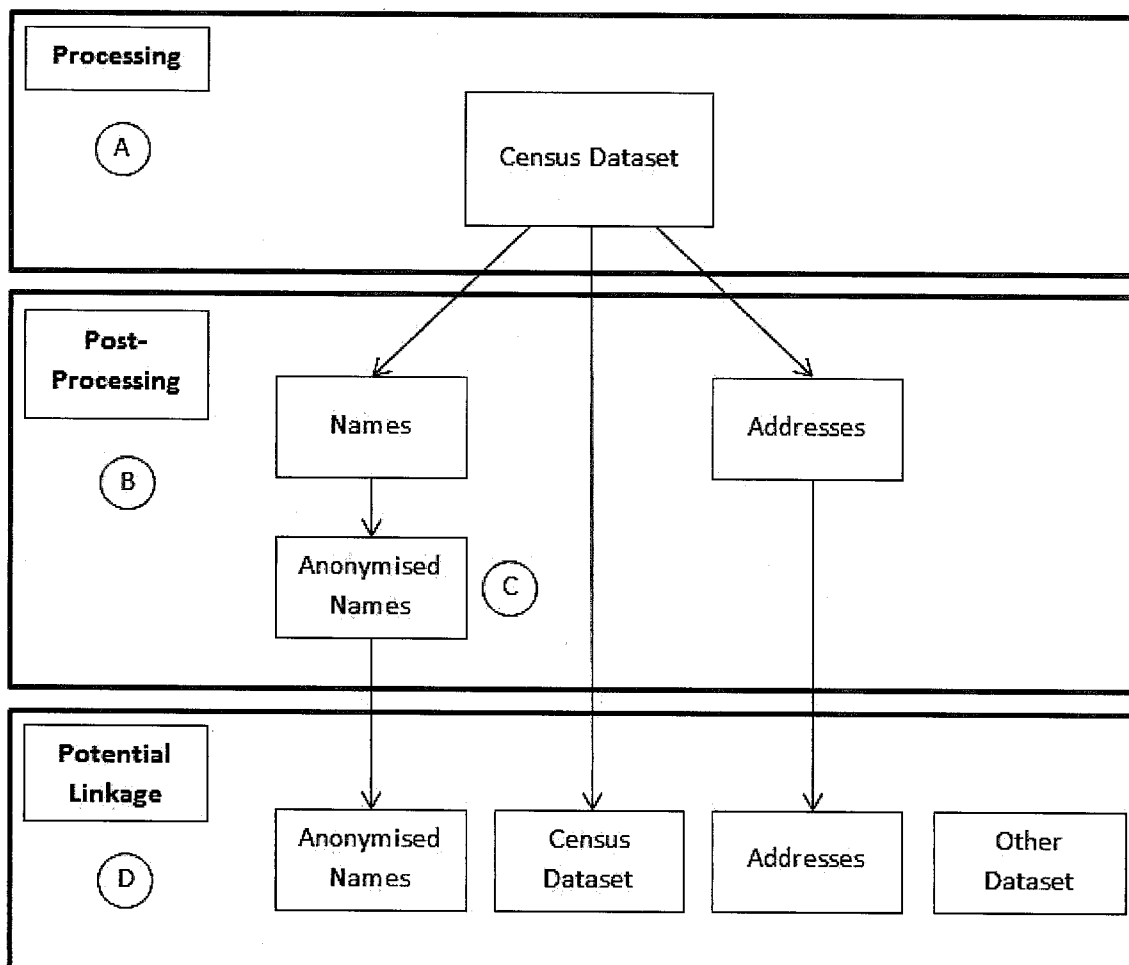
#### **Address Information**

Once processing is complete, addresses and their associated coordinate geocodes would be retained separate to the Census dataset as long as there is a purpose for doing so (consistent with Australian Privacy Principle 11). This file would only be for internal use.

Once separated from the Census dataset, addresses would not be brought back together with other personal and household information in the Census dataset. A senior staff member (e.g. Executive Level 2) would have responsibility for the address file.

Address information from the 2016 Census would be used to support the improvement of geospatial statistics, the ABS Address Register, and other operational efficiencies.

Figure 1. Map of Information Flows



- A. ABS 2016 Census staff will collect and process data from the 2016 Census.
- B. Once processing is complete, names and addresses would be permanently separated from the remainder of the Census dataset, and stored securely in separate files with restricted access.
- C. Anonymised versions of names would be generated from the names; these would be stored separately from both the file of names and the Census dataset. ABS staff in the librarian role would perform these functions.
- D. For approved data integration projects involving 2016 Census data, staff in the librarian role would recombine demographic and anonymised name information on an as-needed basis to allow the Census dataset to be used for statistical data linkage. ABS staff in the linker role would perform the linking.

## 2.6. Security of Information

The ABS has an embedded culture of security and compliance, and has established robust and effective processes to protect the integrity and privacy of information collected from individuals and businesses.

The ABS complies with the mandatory requirements established by the Australian Commonwealth *Protective Security Policy Framework*. The Protective Security Policy Framework provides the appropriate controls for the Australian Government to protect its people, information and assets, at home and overseas.

The ABS also takes reasonable steps to comply with the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's *Guide to information security* and *Guide to handling personal information security breaches*.

### Governance Security

To enhance physical, IT and systems security, the ABS has established governance arrangements including reporting to the portfolio Minister (the Treasurer) on compliance with the Protective Security Policy Framework, implementing risk management policies and strategies, and creating and maintaining security plans.

The ABS has a rolling annual audit program, including audits of protective security (which focusses on different areas such as building access, document handling and contractors), information security and access (which focusses on different systems such as secure deposit box, email, computer assisted interviewing, and laptops). These audits are undertaken annually.

### Personnel and Physical Security

All ABS staff and contractors who require unescorted access to ABS premises are required to undergo a pre-employment suitability and eligibility assessment. This requirement may be waived in certain circumstances, such as confirmation from the vetting authority that the person has recently obtained a National Security clearance. New employees also undergo police checks and are required to make a declaration of interests to ensure there are no conflicts of interest prior to employment commencing.

Access to ABS physical premises, excluding public areas, is at all times restricted to approved persons, and controls such as an electronic access control system, sign-in registers, reception personnel and security guards are in place.

### Information Security

The ABS recognises and strongly respects the information security responsibility it bears as a result of retaining names and addresses. People can be confident in the numerous and robust security measures implemented by the ABS to safeguard their data to prevent identity theft or misuse of data.

The ABS has an excellent track record of data security, with few serious breaches over its history, and is committed to ensuring this position continues into the future. The prosecution and conviction

of a former staff member for an economic data breach (not a privacy breach) demonstrates that the ABS and the Australian judicial system has no tolerance for malicious acts of data breach and the ABS will not hesitate to apply the full authority of the law to these acts. Such a breach was unprecedented in ABS' 110 year history and resulted in an independent review of security arrangements (the Gibson Review). The outcome of the review was a set of recommendations, all of which were implemented, resulting in greater assurance that sensitive information in the possession of the ABS is more secure and controls on information stores are more robust. The ABS also applies secure practices to avoid accidental breaches.

The ABS information technology environment has comprehensive security measures in place, including Australian Signals Directorate Strategies to Mitigate Targeted Cyber Intrusions<sup>6</sup> and industry best practice.

In 2014, the ABS was one of seven government agencies which handle sensitive information whose information security strategies and related controls were assessed by an Australian National Audit Office cross-agency audit.<sup>7</sup> The audit examined ABS' overall security position. The ABS was ranked as the most compliant with the 'Top Four' mandatory mitigation strategies against cyber intrusions. The ABS was also rated as an Internally Secure Zone i.e. as having security controls in place which provide protection against breaches and disclosures of information from internal sources.

A key protection against identity theft is the 'privacy by design' concept to address personal information security. The ABS is compliant with the Australian Government's core security policies (the Protective Security Policy Framework and Information Security Manual) and have designed privacy into the application of whole of government information security. Email servers and gateway security have been configured to block emails containing the marking 'Sensitive: Statistics', and this in turn reduces the likelihood of accidental data leakage via digital means.

The current information security practices that are in place within the ABS to safeguard data include:

1. high level encryption of data, including tight security around the storage and creation of the encryption keys;
2. an audited linking environment, involving staff activity being logged, monitored and, if inappropriate activity is found, investigated. Any misuse would result in immediate termination of access for the staff member, with further sanctions imposed if necessary;
3. ABS staff and in-posted officers sign legally binding Undertakings of Fidelity and Secrecy to ensure they are aware of their obligation to protect confidential information, and the consequences of disclosure (which include criminal penalties);
4. enforcement of the clear desks and clear screen policy;
5. access on a 'need to know' basis;
6. annual IT audits;
7. Vulnerability Assessments are carried out on all new IT Systems by specialised staff in IT Security trained in the field of Ethical Hacking;

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.asd.gov.au/infosec/mitigationstrategies.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Australian National Audit Office Audit Report No.50 2013–14, *Cyber Attacks: Securing Agencies' ICT Systems*, <http://www.anao.gov.au/Publications/Audit-Reports/2013-2014/Cyber-Attacks-Securing-Agencies-ICT-Systems/Audit-summary>.

8. ethical hacks carried out every 12 months on existing systems;
9. Protective Security Management Committee reviewing security risks quarterly;
10. ongoing reporting of compliance with Government Security Policy including the Protective Security Policy Framework and Australian Signals Directorate Information Security Manual.

In addition to the information security practices described above, the ABS would apply the separation principle (refer to Section 2.5 for detail) to ensure that name and address files are stored securely, access is granted on an approved need-to-know-basis, and that no one working with the data can view both identifying information (name and address) at the same time as analysis information (such as country of birth or educational attainment).

These combined measures would safeguard retained name and address information and address confidentiality, privacy, identify theft and security risks.

## 2.7. Disclosure of Information

In accordance with the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, name and address information from the 2016 Census, as well as outputs from any secondary integrated datasets using Census data, would not be disclosed, published or disseminated in a manner which is likely to enable the identification of a particular person, household or organisation.

Section 19 of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* makes it an offence for any past or present ABS officer to divulge, either directly or indirectly, any confidential information collected under this Act. The Act provides for heavy criminal penalties (fines of up to \$21,600 or imprisonment for 2 years or both) for anybody convicted of breaching this obligation - even if they are no longer employed by the ABS. Staff are required to sign Undertakings of Fidelity and Secrecy which are renewed annually.

## 2.8. Access to and Correction of Information

In accordance with Australian Privacy Principles 12 and 13, respondents have the right to request access to their personal information held by the ABS and to request its correction. This is clearly stated in the [ABS Privacy Policy](#), which is publically available on the ABS website. If such a request is made, the ABS would respond within 30 days. No charge is made to individuals for requesting access to or correction of their information, or for access being granted.

A decision by the ABS to grant a privacy request to access or correct an individual's personal information would take into account whether the ABS is required or authorised to refuse the request under relevant legislation including the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* or any other Commonwealth legislation which provides for access by persons to documents, in particular the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

The ABS Privacy Policy provides information and contact details for individuals who are concerned that the ABS may have breached its responsibilities or their privacy rights. The ABS acknowledges complaints within five business days of receipt, and will investigate and respond within 30 days for non-complex matters.

### 3. Stakeholder Consultation

The ABS sought public submissions on both the nature and content of the 2016 Census from November 2012 to May 2013. In August 2015, the ABS published and promoted the 'Census of Population & Housing: Nature and Content, Australia, 2016' which highlighted that the ABS is considering the retention of both names and addresses for statistical purposes. In October 2015, the ABS published the 'Information Paper: Census of Population and Housing – Proposed Products and Services, 2016' which highlighted that data integration will continue to be a central element of the Census.

In order to understand contemporary community expectations, the ABS conducted a series of 16 focus groups across the country (in both metropolitan and regional locations), arranged through a market research company, in order to understand public attitudes and acceptability of the retention of name and address information from the Census. The focus group testing found that the ABS was seen as a trustworthy organisation producing important data for decision making, with the vast majority of participants having confidence that the personal data they provide to the ABS is kept safe and secure. This finding was consistent with the results from a recent independent survey which found that trust in the ABS remains high and that 81 per cent of the general public and 100 per cent of informed users trust Australia's official statistical organisation, the ABS.

More specifically, feedback from focus group testing indicated a general level of support for retaining names and addresses, and the use of anonymised linkage keys for the purposes of ensuring a higher accuracy in the linkage rate than is currently possible for joined up datasets. In particular, there was a general view that it was important that this work was of sufficient quality to enable accurate monitoring of trends over time. Participants also held concerns about the quality and usefulness of current linked datasets that had lower linkage rates of around 60% - 70%. In working through examples, focus groups were generally comfortable with the protections that the ABS would put in place to preserve privacy and confidentiality on the proviso that the ABS be transparent about how it handles people's personal information.

Following the above preliminary stakeholder consultation processes, the ABS directly notified key internal and external stakeholders of its proposal to retain names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census in November 2015, and invited feedback to inform this Privacy Impact Assessment and the final decision on whether to adopt the proposal

The ABS publicised its intent to conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment by publishing a Statement of Intent on the ABS website in November 2015, as well as a Media Release directing attention to the Statement of Intent. Both releases included an invitation to comment and provided contact details to facilitate this.

The Office of the Australian Privacy Commissioner was consulted throughout this Assessment and will continue to be consulted in the lead up, and during, the conduct of the 2016 Census. Contact with the State and Territory Privacy Commissioners or relevant representatives for each State and Territory on this matter was made via a letter and copy of the Statement of Intent and Media Release. No substantive privacy-related concerns were raised by these offices.

Media coverage consisted of two articles of which the nature was informative and favourable. Articles appeared in IT News (12/11/2015) and PS News (13/11/2015).

Public feedback consisted of three responses from private citizens who all raised concerns with the proposal.

After consideration of this Privacy Impact Assessment and of all feedback received, the ABS will decide whether to proceed with the proposal to retain names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census. The outcome of this decision will be published in December 2015, and will be further described in the March 2016 publication of 'How Australia takes a Census' and reflected in the Census Privacy Statement.

## 4. Privacy Risk and Mitigation

### 4.1. RISK: Unauthorised access by ABS staff to data stored in the ABS environment

**Likelihood:** Very low.

**Consequence of breach:** ABS staff may inadvertently or maliciously identify an individual.

**Management of risk:** To guard against identification of an individual, and any subsequent misuse of their personal information, by an ABS staff member, the functional separation principle and security arrangements will be implemented, as detailed in Sections 2.5 and 2.6.

**Management of data breach:** Depending on the circumstances, the ABS will:

- Take reasonable steps to comply with the guidelines for handling personal information security breaches established by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner;
- Notify affected individuals of the breach;
- Implement immediate mitigating controls to prevent further spreading of the breach;
- Involve ABS security, senior line management and where necessary, the police.

### 4.2. RISK: Unauthorised non-ABS access to data stored in the ABS environment

**Likelihood:** Very low.

**Consequence of breach:** The consequences of breach of privacy depend on whether names, anonymised names, or linked data is accessed.

- If names or addresses are accessed, individuals or households are likely to be directly identifiable but no other information about the individual would be available
- Data contained in anonymised or linked datasets will only be brought together by anonymised linkage keys and is unlikely to enable direct identification of an individual or household.

**Management of risk:**

- Functional separation principle implemented – see Sections 2.5 and 2.6 for details;
- names, anonymised names and addresses would be stored securely and separately to each other and to other Census data;
- access to names, anonymised names and addresses is restricted and approved on a need-to-know basis;
- neither names nor anonymised names would be part of a Census analytical file, nor would they ever be disclosed by the ABS.
- All ABS data, including names and addresses, are stored in a secure environment in accordance with the mandatory requirements of the Australian Government Protective Security Policy Framework (PSPF) and consistent with the Information and Communications Technology Security Manual (ISM).



**Management of data breach:** Depending on the circumstances, the ABS will:

- Take reasonable steps to comply with the guidelines for handling personal information security breaches established by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner;
- Endeavour to recover the data;
- Implement immediate mitigating controls to prevent further spreading of the breach;
- Notify affected individuals of the breach;
- Involve ABS Security and the Australian Federal Police.

#### **4.3. RISK: Accidental release of name and/or address data in ABS outputs or through loss of work related IT equipment and IT documentation**

**Likelihood:** Very low.

**Consequence of breach:** Name and/or address information is publically released.

**Management of risk:**

The ABS already successfully manages and protects the privacy of Australians throughout data integration processes involving sensitive datasets, including the Census, and thus effective privacy protections are already in place and in practice.

ABS staff are legally obliged to ensure that data will not be released in a manner which is likely to enable the identification of a person. This is a requirement under the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*; under the Act, ABS staff are subject to criminal penalties if found guilty of breaching its secrecy provisions. Annually, ABS staff sign legally-enforceable undertakings acknowledging that they understand their legal obligations as well as undertake training on the handling of personal information.

The separation principle will be enforced to separate names and addresses from analysis or content information during data storage, linking and analysis. Names and addresses will never be re-joined back with Census data.

Staff who require access to name and address information from the Census for their approved role will only access this information through secure electronic server environments, reducing the risk of an accidental release of personal information through potential loss of IT equipment such as a laptop or work documents (for example: emails).

**Management of data breach:** Depending on the circumstances, the ABS will:

- Take reasonable steps to comply with the guidelines for handling personal information security breaches established by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner;
- Endeavour to recover the data;
- Notify affected individuals of the breach;
- Involve ABS security, senior line management and where necessary, the police.

#### **4.4. RISK: Reduction in participation levels in ABS collections due to loss of public trust**

**Likelihood:** Very low

**Consequence:** The proposal to retain names and addresses from responses to the Census may cause public concern which results in a reduction of participation levels in ABS collections, and/or a public backlash.

**Management of risk:** To mitigate this risk, the ABS:

- Has informed Commonwealth, State and Territory Information and Privacy Commissioners of the proposal and has committed to addressing any feedback;
- Sought feedback from the public through publication of a Media Release and a Statement of Intent to conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment;
- Will comply with established legislative and procedural frameworks which safeguard privacy and data security;
- Will be transparent about objectives, processes and outcomes;
- Will prepare responses to frequently asked questions and ensure Census Field Officers are equipped to respond to concerns from respondents.

**Management if risk eventuates:** Depending on the circumstances, the ABS will:

- Respond to concern from the media, stakeholders and the public;
- Conduct further consultations;
- Reconsider the privacy design for the proposal, if required.

#### **4.5. RISK: 'Function creep' – unintentional expanded future use of retained name and address information**

**Likelihood:** Very low

**Consequence:** In the future, name and address information from responses to the 2016 Census may be used for purposes beyond what is currently contemplated by the ABS.

**Management of risk:** Compliance with the legislative and governance framework described in Sections 2.2 and 2.3 will guard against function creep by ensuring that:

- names and addresses are retained in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles;
- any data integration project involving retained information is undertaken for statistical and research purposes only;
- no information will be released in a manner which would enable the identification of a person or household.

In addition, usage of name and address information from responses to the 2016 Census will be subject to established approval, evaluation and review procedures including:

- Internal approval processes, as described in Section 2.3, for data integration projects which assesses the benefits and risks of each project and their compliance with ABS policies;
- Periodic reviews of policies including the policy on retention of personal information and the privacy policy, to ensure these policies are achieving their objectives, are implemented in practice, and remain aligned with public commitments made by the ABS;
- Annual internal audits of information and protective (physical) security.

**Management if risk eventuates:** Depending on the circumstances, the ABS will:

- Consult affected stakeholders;
- Review relevant internal policies.

## 5. Conclusion

The outcome of this Privacy Impact Assessment has determined that the proposal to retain names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census is consistent with the functions of the ABS prescribed in the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* and compliant with all the provisions in the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* and the *Privacy Act 1988*, including the Australian Privacy Principles.

In relation to the proposed retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census, a small number of potential risks to personal privacy and public perception have been identified. This Assessment concludes that in each case, the likelihood of the risks eventuating is 'very low'. It also concludes that the ABS has implemented robust processes to manage data and protect privacy, and that these arrangements effectively mitigate these risks. Any residual risks are such that the ABS is capable of managing.

### Recommendations

In accordance with the above conclusions, it is recommended that the ABS:

1. Retain names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census.
2. Update the Census Privacy Policy prior to conducting the Census on 9 August 2016 to ensure the Australian public are informed that names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census will be retained by the ABS for statistical and operational purposes as long as there is a purpose for doing so.
3. Implement business processes which are necessary to manage the separation and retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census.
4. Develop training and support materials for staff accessing name and address data as well as guidelines for ABS Census Field Officers, and publish online responses to frequently asked questions concerning the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census to support queries from the public.
5. Conduct an internal audit of the implementation of the above recommendations as part of the internal audit program scheduled for the 2017-2018 financial year.
6. Assign responsibility to a senior committee for monitoring whether there is an ongoing need for the retention of name and address information.

## Appendix A – Media Release

### MEDIA RELEASE

11 November 2015

Embargo: 11:30am (Canberra Time)

#### **ABS to conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment**

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) today announced it will conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment on the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census of Population and Housing.

The ABS is considering the retention of names and addresses as a key enabler for improved household surveys and high quality statistics.

The retention of names and addresses would support the integration of Census data with other survey and administrative data to provide a richer and dynamic statistical picture of Australia.

Historically, the ABS has destroyed all name and address information after statistical processing of the Census has been completed.

In considering this change, the ABS remains committed to maintaining high levels of community trust. No information will be released in a way that would enable users of Census data to identify any particular individual or household. Names and addresses will be separated from other household and personal data collected in the Census. Addresses and anonymous versions of names will only be used for approved projects.

To inform both our decision and approach, the ABS will undertake a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) and is seeking feedback on this proposal.

Further information is contained in the [ABS Statement of Intent](#). To provide feedback on the proposal, please write to [privacy@abs.gov.au](mailto:privacy@abs.gov.au) by 2 December 2015.

## Appendix B – Statement of Intent

### Statement of Intent

#### ABS to conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment on retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census

The ABS has a long and proud history of Census taking in Australia, and the 2016 Census will be the seventeenth national Census of Population and Housing. The Census is the largest collection the ABS conducts, and one of the most important. The protection of the privacy and confidentiality of every person and household in Australia is of the highest priority. Maintaining the trust that the community has in the ABS is also paramount.<sup>8</sup>

The 2016 Census will introduce significant changes to the way the Census is conducted, with a move to a digital-first approach. Australia's first predominantly digital Census will be faster, more efficient and easier for the public.

The 2016 Census will also provide an opportunity to improve and expand the information available to Australians through continuing the use of statistical data integration techniques to bring together 2016 Census data with previous Censuses (2006 and 2011) and other high value research datasets. Together these initiatives will continue to provide new insights and ensure the Census delivers maximum benefit to governments and the community. For information on current Census data integration initiatives please follow the [link](#).

Building on the successes of the 2006 and 2011 Censuses, the ABS intends to explore the retention of names and addresses from the 2016 Census to provide a benefit to the ABS and wider community by:

- enabling higher quality and more efficient linkage of high value survey and administrative datasets with the Census, particularly for small or highly mobile population sub groups of policy interest;
- supporting a range of organisational efficiencies, such as the development of an address register, improving sampling, imputation and provider management; and
- supporting more flexible geospatial outputs.

To give full effect to these changes, the ABS would need to cease the historical practice of the destruction of name and address information collected in the Census. The ABS proposes to instead apply well established separation principles to protect privacy by storing both name and address separately and securely from other household and personal data collected in the Census. This is an internationally recognised approach to protecting privacy and ensuring personal information is kept secure. Under this proposed approach, names will never be brought together with other Census data. Only anonymised versions of name will be used for approved statistical data integration

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<sup>8</sup> Trust in the ABS remains high, with a recent independent [survey](#) showing that 81 per cent of the general public and 100 per cent of informed users trust Australia's official statistical organisation.

projects. Addresses will only be used for approved data integration, operational and geospatial purposes.

The ABS intends to conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment on the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census. The Privacy Impact Assessment will ensure the right privacy design can be put in place and inform the processes, risks and risk mitigation strategies that would be required to enable the secure retention of name and address information from the 2016 Census.

At the completion of the Privacy Impact Assessment process, and after considering all feedback received, a decision will be made on whether to progress with the retention of name and address from 2016 Census responses. The outcome of this decision will be published on the ABS website by the end of 2015.

As our track record demonstrates, the ABS takes its role in protecting the privacy and confidentiality of all respondents very seriously. The Census and Statistics Act 1905 commits the ABS to protect the confidentiality of persons, households and organisations. The Privacy Act 1988 commits the ABS to protect privacy. The ABS recognises that protecting the privacy of individuals and the confidentiality of information supplied by them are paramount to the successful conduct of a Census. For more information on how we approach privacy and confidentiality in the Census please follow the [link](#).

The ABS invites feedback on the retention of name and address from the 2016 Census. Any feedback should be provided in writing by close of business **Wednesday, 2 December 2015** to the following address: [privacy@abs.gov.au](mailto:privacy@abs.gov.au).

## Retention of names and addresses collected in the 2016 Census of Population and Housing

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has decided to retain names and addresses collected in the 2016 Census of Population and Housing in order to enable a richer and dynamic statistical picture of Australia through the combination of Census data with other survey and administrative data.

Whilst the Census has always been valuable in its own right, when used in combination with other data the Census can provide even greater insight. Some examples are:

- The combination of Census data and education data can provide insight into employment outcomes from the various educational pathways available to Australians, and
- The combination of Census data and health data can help improve Australia's understanding and support of people who require mental health services and assist with the design of better programs of support and prevention.

The retention of addresses will also support the ABS Address Register enabling more efficient survey operations, reducing the cost to taxpayers and the burden on Australian households.

This decision has been informed by public submissions, public testing and the conduct of a Privacy Impact Assessment.

### What about privacy?

The ABS is committed to the protection of the privacy and confidentiality of everyone who completes the Census. In order to assess this proposed change, the ABS commissioned a full Privacy Impact Assessment in order to identify privacy, confidentiality and security considerations, and assess strategies in place to mitigate any risks.

The Privacy Impact Assessment assessed the level of risk to personal privacy, considering the protections in place, as very low. The risks identified are mitigated by storing names and addresses separately from other Census data as well as separately from each other. The risks are further mitigated by governance and security arrangements the ABS already has in place. These arrangements were found to robustly manage data, protect privacy and guard against misuse of information.

The retention of names and addresses collected in the 2016 Census is consistent with the functions of the ABS prescribed in the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* and compliant with all the provisions in the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* and the *Privacy Act 1988*, including the Australian Privacy Principles.

### How will the ABS safeguard names and addresses?

The ABS has legal obligations to keep data secure and ensure that it does not disclose identifiable information about a person, household or business.

The ABS has been accredited as a safe environment for statistical data integration projects. The ABS will use well-established governance infrastructure and procedures to manage the approval, conduct and review of statistical data integration projects using Census data.



To secure Census data, the ABS will remove names and addresses from other personal and household information after data collection and processing. Names and addresses will be stored separately and securely. No-one working with the data will be able to view identifying information (name and address) at the same time as other Census information (such as occupation or level of education).

Addresses and anonymised versions of names will only be used for projects approved by a senior-level committee, and will be subject to strict information security provisions.

The ABS complies with the mandatory requirements established by the Australian Commonwealth Protective Security Policy Framework, which include implementing governance, physical, and information security measures to protect data held by the ABS. Key measures to safeguard information include strong encryption of data and all staff access is logged, monitored, and restricted on a need-to-know basis.

The ABS will conduct regular audits of the protection mechanisms, and the use and the need for retention of Census names and addresses.

#### **How will people know about the ABS' plans?**

The ABS is completely transparent around the collection, protection and use of data. The ABS has published the Privacy Impact Assessment and the decision to retain names and addresses. The ABS publishes its approach to conducting the Census "Nature and Content of Census 2016" and "How Australia Takes a Census".

All Census forms will provide information about how to access the Census Privacy Statement. This Privacy Statement will clearly communicate our plans to retain and use names and addresses. There will also be information available through Census field officers, the Census Inquiry Service and online help materials.

The ABS also publishes details of every statistical data integration project that it conducts on its website.

**From:** Sarah Ghali  
**To:** Tania Carr  
**Cc:** Reshma Bargon  
**Subject:** RE: ABS response to Privacy Impact Assessment [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]  
**Date:** Thursday, 17 December 2015 1:39:55 PM

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Hi Tania

Thank you for sending us a copy of the advice sent to the Commissioner and for Bindi's call earlier this week.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if there are any further developments in relation to this issue or other privacy considerations in relation the 2016 Census of Population and Housing that you would like to discuss.

Kind regards

Sarah.

**Sarah Ghali** | Assistant Director |  
**Regulation and Strategy** |  
**Office of the Australian Information Commissioner** |  
GPO Box 5218 SYDNEY 2001 | [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au) |

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**From:** Tania Carr S.22  
**Sent:** Thursday, 17 December 2015 12:36 PM  
**To:** Sarah Ghali; Reshma Bargon  
**Subject:** Fw: ABS response to Privacy Impact Assessment [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

Dear Sarah and Reshma,  
the following advice has been sent to Mr Pilgrim regarding the outcome of the ABS's Privacy Impact Assessment and decision to retain names and addresses collected in the 2016 Census of Population and Housing.

Thank you very much for your assistance in this process, we appreciate your input.

Regards  
Tania

**Tania Carr**

*Director, Data Partnerships and Access*

Public Sector Data Branch | Strategic Partnerships and Projects Division | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

S.22

S.22 (W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

The Australian Bureau of Statistics acknowledges the traditional custodians of country throughout

**Released under FOI - OAIC**

Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and elders, both past and present.

— Forwarded by Bindi Kindermann S.22 on 17/12/2015 12:21 PM —

From: Gemma Van Halderen S.22  
 To: S.22  
 Cc: Bindi Kindermann S.22  
 Date: 17/12/2015 12:21 PM  
 Subject: ABS response to Privacy Impact Assessment [DLM=For-Official-Use-Only]

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Timothy Pilgrim  
 Australian Privacy Commissioner

Dear Timothy

### ABS response to Privacy Impact Assessment

On the 11 November 2015, the Australian Statistician wrote to you concerning the ABS' intention to conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment on the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census of Population and Housing. Thank you for taking the time to consider the proposal, and give your time and that of your office to assist with the process.

I am writing to advise you that after consideration of the Privacy Impact Assessment, focus group testing and feedback from the public and the Australian Privacy Commissioner, as well as State and Territory Privacy and Information Commissioners, the ABS has made the decision to retain names and addresses from the 2016 Census.

The ABS intends to announce its decision to the public via the ABS Website on **Friday 18th December at 11.30am**. I would appreciate your support in keeping this announcement out of the public domain until the ABS releases it at 11.30am on Friday.

I have attached an advanced copy of the Privacy Impact Assessment and ABS Response to the Privacy Impact Assessment for your information. The documents will be accompanied by a Media Release.

The retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census will support ABS' ability to provide a richer and dynamic statistical picture of Australia through the integration of Census data with other survey and administrative data, the geospatial enablement of that data, and improvements to our household surveys. The retention of names and addresses will also reduce the cost to taxpayers and the burden on Australian households through more efficient ABS survey operations.

The Privacy Impact Assessment assessed the level of risk to personal privacy, considering the protections in place, as very low. The ABS is confident that the risks identified are effectively mitigated by storing names and addresses separately from other Census data as well as separately from each other. The risks are further mitigated by governance and security arrangements the ABS already has in place. These arrangements were found to robustly manage data, protect privacy and guard against misuse of information.

The retention of names and addresses collected in the 2016 Census is consistent with the functions of the ABS prescribed in the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* and compliant with all the provisions in the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* and the *Privacy Act 1988*, including the Australian Privacy Principles.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on the details below. Alternatively, you may wish to contact Ms Bindi Kindermann, Program Manager Data Integration and Microdata Futures on telephone S.22

S.22

Regards

**Gemma Van Halderen**

*General Manager*

Strategic Partnerships and Projects Division | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

S.22

S.22 (W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

*(See attached file: 2016 Census - Privacy Impact Assessment.docx)(See attached file: 2016 Census - Response to PIA.docx)*

From: Reshma Bargon  
To: Media  
Cc: Sarah Ghali, Melanie Draxton  
Subject: FYI: Crikey article about ABS data retention of names. [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
Date: Wednesday, 27 January 2016 4:09:53 PM

Hi

FYI the ABS has been receiving some media enquires about a PIA about which we were consulted on the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census.

Just in case we did receive any queries Sarah Ghali and I both were involved in the ABS consultation and would be happy to assist if you had any questions?

The issue was raised in an article last Friday and in a further article posted on Crikey today set out below.

Thanks!  
Reshma

From: Tania Carr  
Sent: Wednesday, 27 January 2016 3:20 PM  
To: Reshma Bargon  
Subject: Crikey article that mentions Privacy Commissioner

Hi Reshma, for your information,  
If you have any questions, please just let me know.

Regards  
Tania

The following article appeared on Crikey on Friday 22/1/2016.

From the Crikey grapevine the latest tips and rumours ...

All your names are belong to us. In a little-reported announcement late last year, the Australian Bureau of Statistics announced it would retain, indefinitely, the names and addresses from the 2016 census. It says that the retention of addresses can "enable more efficient survey operations, reducing the cost to taxpayers and the burden on Australian households." The ABS claims it will keep the data secure and will remove names and addresses from other personal and household information it is collecting, with the names and addresses stored separately and securely. No one who is working with the census data will be able to view name and address information at the same time as the other census data. It has conducted a privacy impact assessment with the Australian Privacy Commissioner before making its decision. It isn't the first time the company has attempted to keep a hold of all our names and addresses. The Australian Privacy Foundation notes people were given the option to have their data kept by the National Archives of Australia in 2001, and 54.4% opted for it. Then before the 2006 census, the ABS then tried to keep the data indefinitely, but after public outcry announced it would only attempt to make changes again "if it was acceptable to the Australian community". Has consensus on the census been reached?

This morning the following enquiry was received:

Hi  
Doing a piece on ABS's decision on name & address retention in the census for today's Crikey, grateful for a response on this:  
\* why has the ABS ignored the advice it received in 2005 from Nigel Waters ( [http://www.aipr.gov.au/media-releases/2011/12/20111220\\_ABS\\_Proposal\\_2016\\_Census\\_Protection\\_of\\_Personal\\_and\\_Household\\_Information\\_Impact\\_Assessment](http://www.aipr.gov.au/media-releases/2011/12/20111220_ABS_Proposal_2016_Census_Protection_of_Personal_and_Household_Information_Impact_Assessment)) about the privacy concerns of name and address retention?

If you could provide a response by noon today that I much appreciated, thanks.

Bernard

Bernard Keane  
Politics Editor  
Crikey  
0406377844 / 0262735744 / @bernardkeane  
PGP public key [http://media.crikey.com.au/wordpress/explore/2016/01/20160120\\_BK.asc](http://media.crikey.com.au/wordpress/explore/2016/01/20160120_BK.asc)

And the Crikey article and ABS response that followed is below

Govt to store a trove of highly personal data, putting you at risk  
Bernard Keane | Jan 27 2016 1:02PM

The ABS has rejected advice from a decade ago not to keep names and addresses from its national census creating a data trove that future governments may find too tempting.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics is pressing ahead with plans to retain names and addresses obtained in the 2016 census despite having commissioned advice warning against it a decade ago.

Last week Crikey explained that the ABS had decided it would retain the names and addresses of every individual in the country collected as part of the 2016 census. According to the ABS media release, this would "provide a richer and dynamic statistical picture of Australia" particularly when coupled with matching up census data "with other survey and administrative data". To address privacy concerns the ABS commissioned a Privacy Impact Assessment that had given the idea the all-clear. Retaining your name and address — to be held separately from the main census information, the ABS says — will enable "more efficient survey operations reducing the cost to taxpayers and the burden on Australian households".

In announcing the decision what the ABS didn't say was that when it proposed the same retention for the 2006 census it was told by a privacy expert it was a bad idea. In 2005 the ABS commissioned Nigel Waters to conduct a privacy impact assessment report. Waters is a privacy sector veteran who was deputy Australian federal privacy commissioner in the 1990s. Assessing the ABS proposal to retain names and addresses and to use unique identifiers Waters told the ABS

"Some will see the Proposal as a radical departure from established practice which will create a data resource so rich and valuable for administrative uses that the privacy and secrecy framework under which the ABS operates may come under great and possibly irresistible pressure, if not immediately then at least in the medium to long term... Despite the rigour of the legislative protections and the ABS track record both of procedural safeguards and of defence of the principle of confidentiality there remains a residual privacy risk of future changes in legislation to allow administrative or other nonstatistical uses."

Waters in recommending name matching be abandoned noted that there were strong legislative safeguards in place to prevent unauthorised and authorised but unnecessary access to ABS data. And the ABS had demonstrated a commitment to observing these safeguards but this offered no guarantees or protections into the future.

"Neither the ABS nor the current government can guarantee that the current and proposed legislative controls will remain indefinitely in the absence of any constitutional protection of privacy they are ultimately vulnerable to the decisions of the government of the day subject to parliamentary approval. Those concerned about the possibility of changes typically referred to in the privacy context as function creep will inevitably cite the example of the progressive extension of the use of the Tax File Number (TFN) since 1989 despite very firm promises and assurances."

This reflects a point that should be at the heart of any privacy debate the best way to prevent breaches or misuse of personal information is never to collect it in the first place because you don't know future governments third parties or actors who exploit security breaches will do with the information. While critics of censuses around the world cite historical examples such as Hitler's use of the German census data and the use of US census data to help with internment of Japanese-American citizens during WWII not all the examples are from the history books. In 2004 the US census bureau provided the Department of Homeland Security with a database of information from the 2000 US census on the location of Arab-Americans and their countries of origin.

While the ABS has a good history of protecting Australians' privacy that's no guarantee that future governments won't decide — possibly in the midst of a national security scare — that that privacy is secondary to public policy. In that event the 2016 census — the greatest population-wide infringement on Australians' privacy since census-taking began in Australia in colonial times — will offer a trove of information.

The ABS has provided the following response after deadline

"After a long period of consideration public submissions and consultation the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) announced in December that it will retain the names and addresses collected in the 2016 Census of Population and Housing to provide a richer and dynamic statistical picture of Australia through the combination of Census data with other survey and administrative data.

The ABS is committed to the protection of the privacy and confidentiality of everyone who completes the Census. The ABS has legal obligations to keep data secure and ensure that it does not disclose identifiable information about a person household or business. These protections been central to the ABS since its formation and have been consistent in our legislation throughout our 111 year history (Census and Statistics Act 1905).

To secure Census data the ABS will remove names and addresses from other personal and household information after data collection and processing. Names and addresses will be stored separately and securely. No-one working with the data will be able to view identifying information (name and address) at the same time as other Census information (such as occupation or level of education).

The names are used to generate anonymised linkage keys which are then used to link Census data to other data sets - thus maintaining the separation of names from Census data at all time. This is explained in detail in the Privacy Impact Assessment on pages 12 to 15 - [http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedocs/3310114.nsf/4a25635301a3e44b2562bb0012156d41701d5a4b684aa30a25711e0021a392/SEIL\\_F/ABS%20Privacy%20Impact%20Assessment%202016%20Census.pdf](http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedocs/3310114.nsf/4a25635301a3e44b2562bb0012156d41701d5a4b684aa30a25711e0021a392/SEIL_F/ABS%20Privacy%20Impact%20Assessment%202016%20Census.pdf).

The ABS will use well-established governance infrastructure and procedures to manage the approval conduct and review of statistical data integration projects using Census data.

Before making its decision the ABS conducted a Privacy Impact Assessment which has been published on the ABS website. It shows that the retention of names and addresses in the manner proposed has very low risks to privacy confidentiality and security. The Privacy Impact Assessment process included consultation with the Australian Privacy Commissioner as well as State and Territory Privacy Commissioners."

Thanks  
Tania

Tania Carr  
Director Data Partnerships and Access

Public Sector Data Branch | Strategic Partnerships and Projects Division | Australian Bureau of Statistics

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www.abs.gov.au

The Australian Bureau of Statistics acknowledges the traditional custodians of country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and elders, both past and present.

**From:** Tania Carr  
**To:** Sarah Ghali  
**Cc:** Reshma Bargon  
**Subject:** ABS response published to website  
**Date:** Thursday, 10 March 2016 1:58:23 PM  
**Attachments:** ABS AFR Census article response 100316.docx

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Hi Sarah,  
the ABS has responded to the article in the AFR with the following letter.  
This is now available on the ABS Website via the link:  
[http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/ABS+responds+to+%E2%80%9CCensus+no+longer+anonymous%E2%80%9D+\(Australian+Financial+Review,+10+March+2016\)](http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/ABS+responds+to+%E2%80%9CCensus+no+longer+anonymous%E2%80%9D+(Australian+Financial+Review,+10+March+2016))

*(See attached file: ABS AFR Census article response 100316.docx)*

Regards,  
Tania

**Tania Carr**

*Director, Data Partnerships and Access*

Public Sector Data Branch | Strategic Partnerships and Projects Division | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

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S.22 (M) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

The Australian Bureau of Statistics acknowledges the traditional custodians of country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and elders, both past and present.

**Australian Bureau of Statistics****Response to Australian Financial Review article, "Census no longer anonymous", 10 March 2016**

The headline of the Australian Financial Review article, "Census no longer anonymous", published on 10 March 2016, is false.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) never has and never will release identifiable Census data.

Names and addresses have always been collected in the Census, and the public has always willingly cooperated with this knowing their confidentiality is protected by legislation.

This will not change in the 2016 Census. What will change is the retention of names and addresses to make the Census even more valuable. Combining Census data with other national datasets can allow the ABS to produce statistics that will inform better decisions around health, education, infrastructure and the economy.

Names and addresses will be stored securely and separately from other Census data, and each other, and will never be recombined with other Census data.

The article suggests that there is a risk that the strong protections in the legislation may be changed in the future. Privacy of data collected is a fundamental pillar of an official statistical system. In Australia these protections have existed since the foundation of the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 1905. This will not change.

The article further suggests the ABS released the decision to retain names and addresses in the 2016 Census in a non-transparent way. This change was informed by a long, transparent public consultation and stakeholder engagement process. We invited public submissions and consulted directly with the Australian Privacy Commissioner, and State and Territory Privacy Commissioners.

The ABS will continue to listen and engage with the public and stakeholders in the lead up to the 2016 Census on 9 August 2016 to achieve full and accurate participation, and maintain its position as a global leader in Census-taking.

David W. Kalisch  
Australian Statistician



**From:** Tania Carr  
**To:** Media  
**Cc:** Melanie Drayton; Richard O'Neill; Sarah Ghali  
**Subject:** RE: ABS response published to website  
**Date:** Thursday, 10 March 2016 4:03:11 PM  
**Attachments:** graycol.oif

---

Thank you very much for advising of the Commissioner's response, I will inform the ABS team managing this issue.

Regards  
Tania

Tania Carr

Director, Data Partnerships and Access

Public Sector Data Branch | Strategic Partnerships and Projects Division | Australian Bureau of Statistics

S.22

S.22 (W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

The Australian Bureau of Statistics acknowledges the traditional custodians of country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and elders, both past and present.

"Media" --10/03/2016 03:58:58 PM--Hi Tania, Thank you for sharing the statement previously.

From: "Media" <media@oaic.gov.au>  
 To: "Tania Carr" S.22  
 Cc: "Sarah Ghali" S.22; "Richard O'Neill" S.22; "Melanie Drayton" S.22  
 Date: 10/03/2016 03:58:58 PM  
 Subject: RE: ABS response published to website [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

---

Hi Tania,

Thank you for sharing the statement previously.

Please note we have prepared the statement below. We will be sending this through to ABC Radio's PM program and Jacob Grebber from the AFR now as they had requested this information.

Kind regards,  
Alison

**Statement from the Acting Australian Information Commissioner**

The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) was consulted on the *Privacy Impact Assessment: Proposal to Retain Name and Address Information from Responses to the 2016 Census of Population and Housing in 2015*.

It is positive to see that a Privacy Impact Assessment was completed for this project. We have been encouraging agencies for some time to take a 'privacy by design' approach when making decisions or planning for new projects or policies. We have found that many agencies are recognising the benefits of completing a Privacy Impact Assessment, to ensure that privacy protection is a key component of project planning.

Organisations need to have open and transparent practices when collecting personal information. This includes clear privacy policies and notices that explain how personal information is managed and used. They should also be mindful of their obligation to protect personal information from misuse, interference and loss, and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure.

We look forward to working with the Australian Bureau of Statistics and other agencies and organisations to ensure that privacy management is at the forefront of new developments and project plans.

As always, we would also encourage individuals to contact us if they have any concerns via 1300 363 992 or

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[www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au).

- ENDS -

**From:** Sarah Ghali  
**Sent:** Thursday, 10 March 2016 2:59 PM  
**To:** Tania Carr  
**Cc:** Alison Wares  
**Subject:** RE: ABS response published to website [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Tania

Thank you for sending us a copy of the ABS response to the article. I have passed it on to Alison Wares, Assistant Director Strategic Communications and Coordination, who is the OAIC's media contact.

Kind regards

Sarah.

Sarah Ghali | Assistant Director |  
 Regulation and Strategy |  
 Office of the Australian Information Commissioner |  
 GPO Box 5218 SYDNEY 2001 | [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au) |

S.22

**From:** Tania Carr S.22  
**Sent:** Thursday, 10 March 2016 1:58 PM  
**To:** Sarah Ghali  
**Cc:** Reshma Bargon  
**Subject:** ABS response published to website

Hi Sarah,  
 the ABS has responded to the article in the AFR with the following letter.  
 This is now available on the ABS Website via the link:  
[http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/ABS+responds+to+%E2%80%9CCensus+no+longer+anonymous%E2%80%9D+\(Australian+Financial+Review.+10+March+2016\)](http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/ABS+responds+to+%E2%80%9CCensus+no+longer+anonymous%E2%80%9D+(Australian+Financial+Review.+10+March+2016))

*(See attached file: ABS AFR Census article response 100316.docx)*

Regards,  
 Tania

Tania Carr

*Director, Data Partnerships and Access*

Public Sector Data Branch | Strategic Partnerships and Projects Division | Australian Bureau of Statistics

S.22

S.22 (W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

The Australian Bureau of Statistics acknowledges the traditional custodians of country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and elders, both past and present. [attachment "img\_info.txt" deleted by Tania Carr S.22]

**From:** Angelene Falk  
**To:** Timothy Pilgrim; Melanie Drayton; Richard O'Neill; Sarah Ghali  
**Subject:** Fwd: Further update from ABS re 2016 Census of Population and Housing and retention of names and addresses [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
**Date:** Thursday, 14 April 2016 6:25:06 PM

---

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Enquiries <enquiries@oaic.gov.au>  
**Date:** 14 April 2016 at 5:56:42 PM AEST  
**To:** Karen Toohey S.22 [REDACTED] Angelene Falk  
 S.22 [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** DR Enquiries <DRenquiries@oaic.gov.au>  
**Subject:** FW: Further update from ABS re 2016 Census of Population and Housing and retention of names and addresses [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

FYI

Thanks  
 Kristy

---

**From:** Gemma Van Halderen S.22 [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, 9 April 2016 4:52 PM  
**To:** Gemma Van Halderen  
**Cc:** Bindi Kindermann  
**Subject:** Further update from ABS re 2016 Census of Population and Housing and retention of names and addresses

Dear Information Commissioners, Privacy Commissioners, Ombudsmen

**Update on ABS response to issues regarding 2016 Census of Population and Housing and retention of names and addresses**

Further to my email of 11 March, last Thursday (7th April) the ABS published an update to the Census Security, Privacy and Confidentiality document on the ABS Website to provide great clarity and certainty around the period of time for which names and addresses will be retained from the 2016 Census.

The relevant change is highlighted in the following extract.

***When should the ABS destroy names and addresses?***

*In recent Censuses names and addresses have been destroyed at the end of Census data processing, approximately eighteen months after the Census. This has reduced the value of the Census data and the ability for it to be used to inform future planning and decisions.*

*Recent public consultation and engagement has revealed that Australians expect the ABS to keep their information secure and to use their data for the*

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*benefit of them, their community and Australia.*

*There is also an expectation that the ABS should retain and use the information collected in the Census for as long as there is a benefit for the community to do so. Consistent with the Australian Privacy Principles, the information should be destroyed once this need no longer exists.*

*For the 2016 Census, the ABS will destroy names and addresses when there is no longer any community benefit to their retention or four years after collection (i.e. August 2020), whichever is earliest.*

*The ABS has and will always ensure that sufficient safeguards are in place to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the information it collects in the Census, including names and addresses.*

Please do not hesitate to contact me on the details below if you have any questions. Alternatively, you may wish to contact Ms Bindi Kindermann, Program Manager Data Integration and Microdata Futures on telephone S.22 [REDACTED] or email S.22 [REDACTED]

Kind regards, Gemma.

**Gemma Van Halderen**

*General Manager*

Strategic Partnerships and Projects Division | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

S.22 [REDACTED]

S.22 [REDACTED] (W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

----- Forwarded by Gemma Van Halderen S.22 [REDACTED] on 09/04/2016 04:45 PM -----

From: Gemma Van Halderen S.22 [REDACTED]  
Date: 11/03/2016 05:59 PM  
Subject: ABS response to media coverage regarding 2016 Census of Population and Housing

Dear Information Commissioners, Privacy Commissioners, Ombudsmen

**ABS response to media coverage regarding 2016 Census of Population and Housing and retention of names and addresses**

On the 18 December 2015, I wrote to you advising of the ABS' decision to retain names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census of Population and Housing following the completion a Privacy Impact Assessment.

Yesterday, 10th March, you may have noted that the Australian Financial Review published several articles reflecting concerns expressed by the Australian Privacy Foundation, along with the ABS's response to the concerns.

In response to this coverage, the Australian Statistician issued a statement correcting the false information reported by the journalist, as well as reinforcing the commitment to the protection of privacy and the engagement process that underpinned the ABS's decision. The response can be found [here](#).

I would like to thank you for your support of the ABS on this topic and will keep you

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informed of any further developments in relation to this matter.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on the details below. Alternatively, you may wish to contact Ms Bindi Kindermann, Program Manager Data Integration and Microdata Futures on telephone S.22 [REDACTED]

Kind regards, Gemma.

**Gemma Van Halderen**

*General Manager*

Strategic Partnerships and Projects Division | Australian Bureau of Statistics

S.22 [REDACTED]

S.22 [REDACTED]

(W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

**From:** Media  
**To:** Mark Hindle  
**Subject:** RE: Census enquiry from CNET [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
**Date:** Thursday, 12 May 2016 5:46:00 PM  
**Attachments:** image001.png

---

Thanks for this Mark, we didn't end up commenting on this occasion.

However Claire from CNET is attending our Privacy Awareness Week Business Breakfast on Monday morning so she might ask some further questions then. I'll keep you posted.

Have a great evening,  
 Alison

**Alison Wares** | Assistant Director | Strategic Communications and Coordination  
**Regulation and Strategy Branch**  
**Office of the Australian Information Commissioner** |  
 GPO Box 5218 SYDNEY 2001 | www.oaic.gov.au |

S.22

PAW email banner



**From:** Mark Hindle S.22  
**Sent:** Thursday, 12 May 2016 3:42 PM  
**To:** Alison Wares S.22  
**Subject:** Census enquiry from CNET

Hi Alison,

Thanks so much for getting in contact, for future notice, my best contact details are below.

Please see link to the [Privacy, confidentiality & Security](#) page on the Census website.

Below is our full response which was provided to CNet. I've highlighted in **BLUE** the question in which the OAIC is referenced, however I've given you our full response so you have the full context of their line of questioning.

**- Why was this change necessary?**

*The Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) role is to both collect and protect data, and also to unleash its power to inform important decisions. Whilst Census data is valuable in its own right, when enhanced by other data the Census can provide even greater insights.*

*For example, the combination of Census data and education data can provide insight into employment outcomes from the various educational pathways available to Australians, and thus lead to better information for students and better targeting of educational funding.*

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**- What is it about current data/methodology that is insufficient? What, specifically, will this new capability allow ABS to track that it previously couldn't?**

*The destruction of names and addresses shortly after each Census has meant the ability for Australians to really understand some of the complex challenges in improving Australia's future, such as how best to provide health services to an ageing nation, has been very limited. No one data set in isolation can provide the information to help solve these problems.*

*Improved insights into these national challenges will not come at the expense of personal privacy.*

**- Which agencies/groups would information be shared with?**

*The Census and Statistics Act, which has been in place since 1905, ensures that Census data is never released in an identifiable form, or released to any court, tribunal or any other agency. This will not change. No identifiable, private or confidential data will be shared by the ABS with anyone.*

*Non-identifiable statistics produced from Census data are freely available on the ABS website and is used by the community, academics, local/state/federal governments, media and businesses.*

**- What is meant when ABS says data points will be stored separately? Any mechanism that ABS uses to link information could surely be exploited by an unauthorised third party to link personal details?**

*The ABS stores all of its data in highly secure environments, protected by layers of physical and information technology security. These environments are regularly audited, quality assured and continuously upgraded to ensure the most robust security is in place. No third party has access to the ABS' data storage environments.*

*The separation of names, addresses and other personal data provide another layer of both security and privacy protection for Census data – ensuring that no individual has a need or an ability to access both someone's identifiable information and their Census responses. This is a common and well-regarded international, privacy-preserving practice.*

**- The ABS is not required by law to notify of data breaches. What procedure do you commit to following in the case of a data breach?**

*The ABS works closely with the Privacy Commissioners in every state and territory, as well as the Australian Information Commissioner and regularly consults them on our practices to protect individual privacy. The ABS proactively consulted with each of these Commissioners on the changes being introduced in the 2016 Census.*

*While the ABS is not required under law to do so, in the event that the ABS does experience a privacy breach, the ABS reports all matters to the Australian Information Commissioner. This ensures that the Australian Information Commissioner has the opportunity to input into how the ABS can establish a regime of continual improvement in how we secure and protect personal privacy.*

**- Many people trust the census in its current form and are willing to give over information because they know it is anonymous. Will this change lead to lower completion rates/higher levels of misinformation?**

*Australians both trust and value the Census and the Australian Bureau of Statistics. In all modern Censuses, the public have provided their names and addresses to the ABS as part of their Census response and trusted the ABS to maintain their data securely, consistent with our legislation. The ABS is asking for no additional information in 2016 than in previous Censuses.*

*There is also a public expectation that the ABS will use the data that has been provided for public benefit, and that there is an expectation that ABS will not destroy names and addresses whilst there is a strong public good in using it.*

The ABS has conducted large public tests in the preparation of Australia's exciting first digital Census in 2016 and these have indicated continuing high levels of response and strong public support.

**- What repercussions are there for people deliberately lying on the census?**

The Census and Statistics Act 1905 requires the truthful completion of Census forms. The Australian Census is self-completed and the vast majority of respondents provide the accurate information that allows the provision of the necessary services and funding to their communities.

It is an offense for a person to make a statement or provide information that they know is false or misleading.

**- Do Australians have the right to conscientiously object to filling out the census over privacy concerns?**

The Census and Statistics Act 1905 does not provide provisions for people to opt out of the Census, however in following up Census responses the ABS has always sought to understand individual's personal circumstances and tried to make adjustments to ensure that everyone is still counted as part of their community and Australia.

This is consistent with the Privacy Act 1988 and the Australian Privacy Principles.

Ends.

As previously stated, if you have any further questions or require any info don't hesitate to contact me.

Thanks,

MJH

**Mark Hindle**

*Media & PR Manager*

Census Communication | Communication and Dissemination Branch | **Australian Bureau of Statistics**

S.22

(W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

Contact the ABS Communication team on 1300 175 070 (ext 8703) or [media@abs.gov.au](mailto:media@abs.gov.au)

The ABS Privacy Policy outlines how the ABS handles any personal information that you provide to us.



**From:** Angelene Falk  
**To:** Reshma Bargon  
**Subject:** Fwd: Preparations for Census 2016  
**Date:** Monday, 15 August 2016 9:57:10 PM

---

Please add to the chronology document

Angelene Falk  
Assistant Commissioner

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Duncan Young S.22  
**Date:** 28 June 2016 at 5:44:01 PM AEST  
**To:** S.22  
**Cc:** Craig Lindenmayer S.22 Gemma Van Halderen S.22  
**Subject:** Preparations for Census 2016

Hi Angelene,

I am the Program Manager for the 2016 Census of Population and Housing.

My colleague, Gemma Van Halderen, advised me that you were interested in understanding some information on our security infrastructure for the next Census. Can you provide any more detail about what you are keen to see and we will be happy to see what we can do to assist? Some of the details of our security approaches and infrastructure are confidential, however keen to help where possible.

I have copied in Craig Lindenmayer, ABS' IT Security Advisor, who may be best placed to respond to your questions.

kind regards,  
Duncan

Duncan Young  
Program Manager  
Census of Population & Housing | Australian Bureau of Statistics  
S.22 (W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

**From:** Angelene Falk  
**To:** D'Arcy Jackson; Alun Thomas  
**Cc:** Melanie Drayton; Sarah Ghali; Brenton Attard  
**Subject:** FW: Preparations for Census 2016 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
**Date:** Thursday, 30 June 2016 11:35:23 PM  
**Attachments:** RE ABS PIA SECUNCLASSIFIED.msg

---

Hi D'Arcy and Alun

I had a meeting with the ABS recently about a number of things, mainly data linkage/deidentification / big data issues, and in passing, I asked whether we could have a contact for any questions we might have on the security of the census. I was thinking about the possible assessment, and whether there is information, additional to that contained in their PIA (Attached) that would assist us in deciding whether such an assessment was necessary. I didn't raise any possibility of an assessment seeing as that matter is not yet settled, just that we were interested to have a good understanding ahead of the census going live.

I have looked at the PIA and there are a number of issues that could be further explored. Two that strike me are to get more information about their rolling audit program referred to. The PIA says that they audit annually, but I'm not clear whether all aspects listed are subject to an audit annually, or just one aspect each year. The other is for them to expand on the security measures specifically in relation to names and address, mentioned in 2.6 of the PIA. It may be that security issues prevent them from going much further outside of us exercising formal powers, but it may be worth asking?

I propose to email Duncan back on Friday saying that you will give the matter some consideration and we will be in touch shortly. Given the timing of the census, I think making contact sooner rather than later is preferable.

If you think there's nothing to be gained by a briefing at this point, then I'm open to hearing that too.

I'll leave it to you to decide who is best placed to advance this, I was thinking D'Arcy in terms of the strategic assessment angle, but also Alun from the info security guide angle. Sarah has dealt with the ABS in relation to the PIA. I've let Sarah know I don't think she needs to attend the briefing, but that you can pass on any relevant info.

Does that sound ok?

Many thanks

Angelene

---

**From:** Duncan Young S.22  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 28 June 2016 5:44 PM  
**To:** Angelene Falk S.22  
**Cc:** Craig Lindenmayer S.22; Gemma Van Halderen S.22  
**Subject:** Preparations for Census 2016

Hi Angelene,

I am the Program Manager for the 2016 Census of Population and Housing.

My colleague, Gemma Van Halderen, advised me that you were interested in understanding some information on our security infrastructure for the next Census. Can you provide any more detail about what you are keen to see and we will be happy to see what we can do to assist? Some of the details of our security approaches and infrastructure are confidential, however keen to help where possible.

I have copied in Craig Lindenmayer, ABS' IT Security Advisor, who may be best placed to respond to your questions.

kind regards,  
Duncan

Duncan Young  
Program Manager  
Census of Population & Housing | Australian Bureau of Statistics  
S.22 (W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

**From:** [Sarah Ghali](#)  
**To:** [Angelene Falk](#)  
**Cc:** [Melanie Drayton](#)  
**Subject:** RE: ABS PIA [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
**Date:** Thursday, 30 June 2016 3:28:22 PM  
**Attachments:** [2016 Census - Privacy Impact Assessment.docx](#)  
[2016 Census - Response to PIA.docx](#)

---

Hi Angelene

Please find attached a copy of the Census PIA and the ABS statement. This is the final version provided to TP after the consultation and the version made public.

I am happy to leave it to assessments to attend the briefing but would be happy to come if that was desirable.

Thanks

Sarah.

-----Original Message-----

From: Angelene Falk

Sent: Thursday, 30 June 2016 3:02 PM

To: Melanie Drayton S.22

Sarah Ghali S.22

Subject: ABS PIA

Hello

ABS have offered us a briefing on security of the census, following the recent meeting with Gemma.

Can you send me the PIA please to look at the security bit. If I accept I'll get assessments to have the briefing. Let me know if you want to join.

Thanks.



Canberra Office  
ABS House  
45 Benjamin Way  
Belconnen ACT 2617  
Phone 1300 135 070

Locked Bag 10  
Belconnen ACT 2616  
[www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)  
ABN 26 331 428 522

## **Privacy Impact Assessment:**

# **Proposal to Retain Name and Address Information from Responses to the 2016 Census of Population and Housing**

**December 2015**

## Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
1. Introduction .....	5
1.1. Project Overview.....	5
1.2. Privacy Impact Assessment Methodology .....	5
2. Project Description.....	6
2.1. Background and Rationale .....	6
2.2. Legal Authority.....	8
2.3. Governance and Institutional Arrangements .....	9
2.4. Retention and Use of Information .....	11
2.5. Information Flows .....	12
2.6. Security of Information .....	16
2.7. Disclosure of Information .....	18
2.8. Access to and Correction of Information.....	18
3. Stakeholder Consultation.....	19
4. Privacy Risk and Mitigation.....	21
4.1. RISK: Unauthorised access by ABS staff to data stored in the ABS environment.....	21
4.2. RISK: Unauthorised non-ABS access to data stored in the ABS environment .....	21
4.3. RISK: Accidental release of name and/or address data in ABS outputs or through loss of work related IT equipment and IT documentation.....	22
4.4. RISK: Reduction in participation levels in ABS collections due to loss of public trust .....	23
4.5. RISK: 'Function creep' – unintentional expanded future use of retained name and address information .....	23
5. Conclusion.....	25
Recommendations .....	25
Appendix A – Media Release .....	26
Appendix B – Statement of Intent .....	27

## Executive Summary

The Australian Census of Population and Housing (Census) collects information relating to each person and household in Australia. While the Census collects information about each person and household, it is not concerned with information about individuals as such. The Census is conducted to provide information about the community as a whole and about groups within the community. The public expects that the information they provide to the ABS will be kept confidential.

The retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census would support ABS' ability to provide a richer and dynamic statistical picture of Australia through the integration of Census data with other survey and administrative data, the geospatial enablement of that data, and improvements to our household surveys. The retention of names and addresses would also reduce the cost to taxpayers and the burden on Australian households through more efficient ABS survey operations.

Under this proposal, names and addresses would be stored separately from other household and person data collected in the Census. Names and addresses would also be stored separately from each other. Addresses and anonymised versions of names would only be used for projects approved by a senior-level committee, and would be subject to strict information security provisions.

The ABS is committed to maintaining the highest levels of community trust and meeting its legislative obligations. There would be no change to existing ABS practices and obligations that ensure that no information is released in a way that would enable users of Census data to identify any particular individual or household. This includes names and addresses.

Consistent with best practice, the ABS has undertaken a Privacy Impact Assessment to identify the risks that the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census might have to the privacy of individuals, and to assess the ABS' proposed approach to managing, minimising or eliminating those risks. The Privacy Impact Assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the framework for Privacy Impact Assessments set out in the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's *Guide to undertaking Privacy Impact Assessments*. The ABS also referred to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's *Guide to information security* and *Guide to handling personal information security breaches*.

The outcome of the Privacy Impact Assessment has determined that the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census is consistent with the functions of the ABS prescribed in the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* and compliant with all the provisions in the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* and the *Privacy Act 1988*, including the Australian Privacy Principles.

The Privacy Impact Assessment identified a small number of potential risks to personal privacy associated with the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census, but concluded that in each case the likelihood of these risks eventuating was 'very low'. The Privacy Impact Assessment determined that these risks can and would be effectively mitigated by implementation of an internationally accepted practice known as functional separation and by existing ABS governance and security arrangements. Nevertheless, a small number of recommendations have been made in relation to implementation of the proposal.

The outcome of this Privacy Impact Assessment, along with feedback from key stakeholders and the public, will inform the ABS' decision to retain names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census. The ABS will publish its decision and this Privacy Impact Assessment on the ABS website by the end of 2015.



## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Project Overview

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is conducting this Privacy Impact Assessment on the retention of names and addresses collected in the 2016 Census of Population and Housing (Census). The retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census would enable the ABS to deliver richer statistics and increase the value of existing data to better inform planning decisions and government policies for a better Australia. Section 2.1 provides more information on the public benefits of this proposal.

Historically, the ABS has destroyed name and address information after statistical processing of the Census has been completed.<sup>1</sup> The ABS is now considering the retention of names and addresses from the 2016 Census as a key enabler to meet the growing stakeholder demand to provide a richer and more dynamic statistical picture of Australia through the integration of Census data with other survey and administrative data, the geospatial enablement of that data, and improvements to our household surveys. The retention of names and addresses would also reduce the cost to taxpayers and the burden on Australian households through more efficient ABS survey operations

In considering this change, the ABS remains committed to maintaining the highest levels of community trust and meeting its legislative obligations. The proposal to retain names and addresses from responses to the Census is made in accordance with the provisions for protecting personal privacy in the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* (Cth) and the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth), including the Australian Privacy Principles. No change is proposed to ABS' existing practices and obligations to ensure that no information is released by the ABS in a way that would enable users of Census data to identify any particular individual or household.

The proposal is for names and addresses to be stored separately from other household and person data collected in the Census. The names and addresses themselves would also be stored separately from each other. Only anonymised versions of names would be used for projects that are both approved by a senior-level committee and subject to strict security provisions.

To inform the ABS' decision and approach, the ABS has undertaken this Privacy Impact Assessment and has sought feedback on this proposal. A Media Release and Statement of Intent were released by the ABS on 11 November 2015. Feedback on the proposal was sought by 2 December 2015. Stakeholder feedback has been considered in finalising this Assessment.

### 1.2. Privacy Impact Assessment Methodology

Australian Privacy Principle 1 requires Australian Privacy Principle entities to take reasonable steps to implement practices, procedures and systems that will ensure compliance with the Australian Privacy Principles and enable them to deal with enquiries or complaints about privacy compliance. In this way, the Australian Privacy Principles require 'privacy by design', an approach whereby privacy

---

<sup>1</sup> Currently, the ABS destroys all name-identified Census information after statistical processing except where people have explicitly consented to their personal information being retained for 99 years by the National Archives of Australia as part of the Census Time Capsule. The ABS proposal to retain name and address information from responses to the 2016 Census is independent of the Census Time Capsule scheme.

compliance is designed into projects dealing with personal information right from the start, rather than being bolted on afterwards.

As detailed below, the ABS has established governance systems consistent with Australian Privacy Principle 1.

In the interests of transparency, the ABS has undertaken this Privacy Impact Assessment to identify the risks that the proposal to retain names and addresses from responses to the Census might have on the privacy of individuals, and to assess the ABS' proposed approach to managing, minimising or eliminating those risks. This Privacy Impact Assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the framework for Privacy Impact Assessments set out in the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's *Guide to undertaking Privacy Impact Assessments*<sup>2</sup>. The ABS has also referred to Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's *Guide to information security*<sup>3</sup> and *Guide to handling personal information security breaches*<sup>4</sup>.

As a part of the decision making process on whether to adopt the proposal, feedback has been sought directly from Commonwealth, State and Territory Information and/or Privacy Commissioners, or relevant representatives. Feedback has also been sought from the public via a media release and Statement of Intent published on the [ABS website](#). See Appendix A for the Media Release and Appendix B for the Statement of Intent.

The ABS will review the outcomes of this Privacy Impact Assessment and take into consideration all feedback received to decide whether to proceed with the proposal to retain names and address from responses to the 2016 Census.

## 2. Project Description

### 2.1. Background and Rationale

Australia's seventeenth national Census will be held on Tuesday, 9 August 2016. The Census provides a comprehensive picture of Australia in order to inform decision-making, policy development, and the provision of funding and services by governments and other users.

The ABS has four goals for the 2016 Census. These are to:

1. count every dwelling and person in Australia on Census night;
2. maximise the value of Census data to all users;
3. protect the privacy of the public; and
4. increase the efficiency and sustainability of the Census.

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<sup>2</sup> Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (May 2014), *Guide to undertaking privacy impact assessments*.

<sup>3</sup> Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (August 2014), *Guide to information security*.

<sup>4</sup> Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (August 2014), *Guide to handling personal information security breaches*.

Consistent with these goals, the 2016 Census will be a launching pad for a transformation of the way the ABS collects and provides access to data about Australia's population. The ABS aims to move to an integrated approach to the collection and compilation of data from existing datasets.

The 2016 Census also provides an opportunity to improve and expand the information available to Australians through the ABS Census Data Enhancement program<sup>5</sup>. This program uses statistical data integration techniques to bring together 2016 Census data with previous Censuses (2006 and 2011) and other survey and administrative datasets.

Together these initiatives would continue to provide new statistical and analytical insights and ensure that the Census delivers maximum benefit to governments and the community. As part of this transformation, the ABS is exploring the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census to provide a benefit to the ABS and wider community by:

- enabling higher quality and more efficient linkage of high value survey and administrative datasets with the Census, particularly for small or highly mobile sub-populations of policy interest;
- supporting a range of organisational efficiencies, such as the development of an address register, improving sampling, imputation and provider management; and
- supporting more flexible geospatial outputs.

More specifically, the use of statistical data integration techniques to bring together Census data with other survey and administrative data would enable the ABS to meet the growing demand of policy agencies (e.g. Department of Social Services, Department of Health), service providers and the research community for higher quality 'joined-up' information to better inform planning decisions and government policies in the public good. In particular, the use of names and addresses to improve the quality and accuracy of linked information, would enhance the ability of policy makers and researchers to effectively measure changes over time or differences between population sub groups or regions.

Bringing Census data together with education and health data, for example, can provide insight into, and help improve education, employment and health systems and services and can help answer questions such as:

- what is the impact of early childhood experiences on successful transition to school and longer term outcomes?
- how could education approaches be improved across the lifecycle to help young adults achieve higher levels of employment?
- what factors matter for targeting health services for those most in need, including mental health services? How could these insights assist with the design of better programs of support and prevention?

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<sup>5</sup> The ABS Census Data Enhancement Program commenced with the 2006 Census. The Program brings together Census data with other data sources to inform key policy and research questions. The Program continued with the 2011 Census and an overview of outcomes from the 2011 Census can be found in [Census Data Enhancement project: An update, 2011, ABS cat. No. 2062.0.](#)

- what are the outcomes for individuals and families who receive assistance from a range of social services – child care, housing and homelessness services, child protection services, disability services, etc ?
- do young unemployed adults move to areas of higher employment? For those that move, do they have better or worse outcomes than those who don't?
- what is the impact of industry restructuring (e.g. the automotive industry) on community and individual outcomes?

In considering this proposal to retain names and addresses from the 2016 Census, the ABS remains committed to maintaining the highest levels of community trust. The ABS would apply well established and internationally accepted separation principles to protect privacy and data. These principles essentially separate data items into different data stores. The ABS proposes to store names and addresses separately and securely from other household and personal data collected in the Census. The proposal would be to also store names and addresses separately from each other. Addresses and anonymised versions of names would only be used for approved projects which are also subject to strict security provisions.

The ABS is proposing no change to our practice and legal obligation to ensure that no information would be released by the ABS in a way that would enable users of Census data to identify any particular individual or household.

This Privacy Impact Assessment ensures that appropriate identification and assessment of risks has been undertaken, and that appropriate controls are in place or can be implemented to mitigate risks.

A decision on whether to proceed with the proposal to retain name and address information from responses to the 2016 Census, informed by this Privacy Impact Assessment and stakeholder feedback, will be made and the outcome published by the end of 2015.

## 2.2. Legal Authority

The *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975 (Cth)* and the *Census and Statistics Act 1905 (Cth)* set out the primary functions, duties and powers of the ABS. The ABS is also subject to the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*.

The *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* establishes the ABS as an independent statutory authority. Section 6 prescribes its functions to include the collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of statistics and related information.

The *Census and Statistics Act 1905*:

- empowers the Australian Statistician to collect statistical information on a broad range of demographic, economic, environmental and social topics;
- enables the Australian Statistician to direct a person to provide statistical information, in which case they are legally obliged to do so;
- requires the ABS to publish the results of these statistical collections;
- places a life-long obligation on all ABS officers to maintain the secrecy of information collected under the Act, and provides harsh penalties for those who fail to do so; and

- does not allow data to be published in a manner that is likely to enable the identification of a particular person or organisation.

The ABS undertakes the Census every five years in accordance with the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*. Names and addresses are among the matters in relation to which the Statistician may collect information, as prescribed by regulation 6 and Schedule 1 of the *Census and Statistics (Census) Regulations 2005* (Cth).

The proposal to permanently retain name and address information from responses to the 2016 Census does not involve the collection of additional information than that collected in the 2011 Census.

The *Census and Statistics Act 1905* requires the ABS to publish results in a manner not likely to identify a particular person, household or organisation. Section 19 of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* forbids past or present officers of the ABS (which includes temporary staff) from divulging information collected under this Act, either directly or indirectly, under penalty of up to 120 penalty units (currently \$21,600) or imprisonment for two years, or both. To ensure that confidentiality and privacy provisions are observed, all officers of the ABS sign legally binding undertakings to comply with the secrecy provisions of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*. These undertakings are binding for life and are renewed annually.

The ABS also has an obligation to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988*, including the Australian Privacy Principles. The Australian Privacy Principles regulate how the ABS may collect, use, disclose and store personal information. In accordance with Australian Privacy Principle 3, the ABS may collect personal information (such as name and address) where it is reasonably necessary for, or directly related to, its functions or activities. Australian Privacy Principle 11 provides that the ABS may retain the personal information of an individual where that information continues to meet a business need that is aligned with the purpose for which the information was collected.

The proposal to retain names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census is consistent with the functions of the ABS prescribed in the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* and compliant with all the provisions in the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* and the *Privacy Act 1988*, including the Australian Privacy Principles.

### **2.3. Governance and Institutional Arrangements**

The ABS is Australia's national statistical agency, providing trusted official statistics on a wide range of economic, social, population and environmental matters of importance to Australia. A recent independent [survey](#) showed that trust in the ABS remains high and that 81 per cent of the general public and 100 per cent of informed users trust Australia's official statistical organisation, the ABS.

The ABS and its staff uphold the Australian Public Service (APS) Values and Code of Conduct. These values, which are congruent to the ABS's role as an independent provider of statistical information for Australia, are summarised in the following table:

<b>Impartial</b>	The APS is apolitical and provides the Government with advice that is frank, honest, timely and based on the best available evidence.
<b>Committed to Service</b>	The APS is professional, objective, innovative and efficient, and works collaboratively to achieve the best results for the Australian community and the Government.
<b>Accountable</b>	The APS is open and accountable to the Australian community under the law and within the framework of Ministerial responsibility.
<b>Respectful</b>	The APS respects all people, including their rights and their heritage.
<b>Ethical</b>	The APS demonstrates leadership, is trustworthy, and acts with integrity, in all that it does.

The ABS has a long history of, and a strong culture for, protecting the privacy of individuals and the confidentiality of information supplied by them. The protection of privacy is considered paramount to the successful conduct of the Census. The ABS maintains a Privacy Policy which sets out its personal information handling practices. The ABS Privacy Policy can be found at [www.abs.gov.au/privacy](http://www.abs.gov.au/privacy). The Census Privacy Statement will be released before August 2016 and will be found at [www.abs.gov.au/census](http://www.abs.gov.au/census).

In 2012, the ABS became an accredited Integrating Authority under the [Commonwealth statistical data integration interim arrangements](#). Statistical data integration involves combining data from different sources to provide enhanced datasets for statistical and research purposes – which excludes purposes such as delivery of services to particular individuals, individual compliance monitoring, client management, incident investigation, or regulatory purposes.

As an accredited Integrating Authority, the ABS has been authorised as a safe and effective environment for data integration projects involving Commonwealth data. The ABS was accredited against the following criteria:

- ability to ensure secure data management;
- information that is likely to enable identification of individuals or organisations is not disclosed to external users;
- availability of appropriate skills;
- appropriate technical capability;
- lack of conflict of interest;
- culture and values that ensure protection of confidential information and support the use of data as a strategic resource;
- transparency of operation; and
- existence of an appropriate governance and institutional framework.

A copy of the accreditation claims made by ABS, which have been verified by an independent auditor, is available through the [National Statistical Service](#) website.

Consistent with its accreditation status, the ABS has well-established governance infrastructure and procedures to manage the approval, conduct and review of statistical data integration projects undertaken by the ABS. A Senior Committee comprised of senior level ABS staff (SES Band 2 / SES Band 1 level) oversees this process. All data integration projects undertaken by the ABS must be approved by the Committee prior to integration commencing. Approval is based on a written application endorsed by the project owner (SES Band 1 level) which covers the proposed data and risk management strategies for the project. Projects which the Committee deem to be 'high risk' under the Commonwealth Data Integration Risk Assessment Guidelines require approval by the Australian Statistician. Project owners must notify the Committee of any proposed amendments to their project, and if a major amendment is needed, submit a new proposal for approval. In the interests of transparency, outlines of approved data integration projects within scope of the Commonwealth arrangements are published on the ABS website.

#### **2.4. Retention and Use of Information**

The Census collects information relating to each person and household in Australia. While the Census collects information relating to each person and household in the country, it is not concerned with information about individuals as such. The Census is taken to provide information about the community as a whole and about groups within the community. The public expects that the information they provide will be kept confidential.

Protection of personal privacy is paramount at the ABS. Based on a strong track record, people can be confident that the ABS will keep their personal information secure – both that provided on paper Census forms and the online eCensus.

The ABS proposes to retain names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census for statistical and operational purposes within the existing protective legislative and procedural frameworks, with no disclosure of identifiable personal information.

Consistent with Australian Privacy Principle 11, name and address information would only be retained where there continues to be a business need for doing so. After processing of the Census data, names and addresses would be separated from other personal and household information on the Census data set. Names and addresses would also be separated from each other. Names would not be brought back together with other information collected from respondents to the Census. Anonymised versions of names would be generated for data integration purposes and addresses geocoded.

This Privacy Impact Assessment will inform the decision on whether the ABS will retain the names and addresses collected from responses to the Census; the outcome of this decision will be published by the end of 2015. If a decision is made to proceed with the proposal, the ABS will ensure transparency of this decision and how personal information will be managed, consistent with Australian Privacy Principle 1. It will do this by:

1. publishing the decision and the privacy impact assessment on the ABS website by the end of the year;
2. detailing how Census name and address information would be held and used by the ABS in the publication – 'How Australia takes a Census', to be published in March 2016;
3. releasing the Census Privacy Statement before the 2016 Census; and

4. publishing responses to frequently asked questions for participants of the Census.

## 2.5. Information Flows

Following the completion of Census processing, the ABS proposes to permanently separate name and address information from other information on the Census dataset, and to store names and addresses separately from other data and from each other, and securely. This separation is considered a key element of the privacy design, protecting against the accidental or malicious disclosure of personal information from responses to the 2016 Census.

The separation principle would be enforced to separate name and address variables from analysis or content information during both data storage and use in statistical data integration or for operational purposes. The separation principle is a well-established approach applied internationally to protect privacy and the security of data by ensuring that no-one working with the data can view both identifying information (such as name and address) together with the analysis or content data (such as country of birth or educational attainment).

As an accredited Integrating Authority, the ABS has been audited and accredited for its application of the separation principle for the purposes of statistical data integration activities.

Under the separation principle, authorised ABS officers would only have access to the information required to support their role. That is, separation would be functionally based. This means that only a limited number of ABS staff would have access to the retained information.

The key layers of protection that would be in place as a result of applying functional separation are:

- names, anonymised names and addresses would be stored securely and separately to each other and to other Census data;
- access to name, anonymised name and addresses is restricted and approved on a need-to-know basis;
- names would be used to generate anonymised versions of names to use as linkage keys in statistical and research projects that have been assessed and approved consistent with the *Commonwealth Statistical Data Integration principles, governance and institutional arrangements*; and
- neither names nor anonymised names would be part of a Census analytical file, nor would they ever be disclosed by the ABS.

The proposed functional separation roles as applied for data integration projects are outlined in Box 1.



### **Box 1. Functional Separation Roles**

Functional separation involves placing project members into separate roles during the lifecycle of a data integration project. Access to data will vary depending on the role that each project member performs. Under the separation principle, any one staff member is prevented from accessing both identifying and analytical information from datasets during the linkage process.

There are four roles, as follows, of which the first two are most relevant to the proposal:

**Librarian:** A staff member in this role performs processes such as the acquisition of data to be used for linking purposes, standardisation of the data and creation of the files for input into linking. Separation is maintained by staff only performing one role at a time per project. Librarians may also be responsible for creating anonymised linkage keys for names for additional or new datasets such as survey and administrative data. These anonymised keys would be stored separately to the file containing names.

**Linker:** A staff member in this role performs the linkage of the two datasets. Their access is limited to fields they require for linking and clerical review (when applicable), which can include identifying information such as anonymised name and address.

**Assembler:** A staff member in this role takes the linked outputs (from the linker) and combines them with the analysis variables provided by the data custodian. At this point a new identifier, 'Analysis identifier', is created for research and analysis to be undertaken.

**Analyst:** A researcher in this role performs analysis on the linked dataset. Their access is limited to data needed for analytical purposes, which typically does not include identifying information.

Staff in the above roles are provided with access to data on a need-to-know basis by a designated Role Manager, with access restricted to either the linking or the analysis information based on their data requirements.

The process flows for the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census are outlined below.

### **Name Information**

Once Census processing is complete, names would be separated from the remainder of the Census dataset, and retained in a separate file as long as there is a purpose for doing so (consistent with Australian Privacy Principle 11). Names would not be brought back together with other information collected from respondents to the Census. Anonymised versions of names would be generated from the names and stored separately from both the file of names and the Census dataset. The name and anonymised name files would be the responsibility of functionally separate sections in the ABS.

Access to and use of the name file would be restricted and subject to approval from a senior officer in order to create new anonymised versions of names to ensure linkage keys for statistical data integration keep pace with evolving standards and methodology and are fit-for-purpose.

The anonymised name file would be used as a resource for data linkage research and practice, forming part of the foundational infrastructure underpinning ABS statistical data integration activities involving Census data.

Neither names nor anonymised names would be part of a Census analytical file, nor would this information ever be disclosed by the ABS.

The functional separation approach is consistent with international best practice, and is utilised effectively by the Office of National Statistics in the United Kingdom, Statistics New Zealand and Statistics Canada, for example.

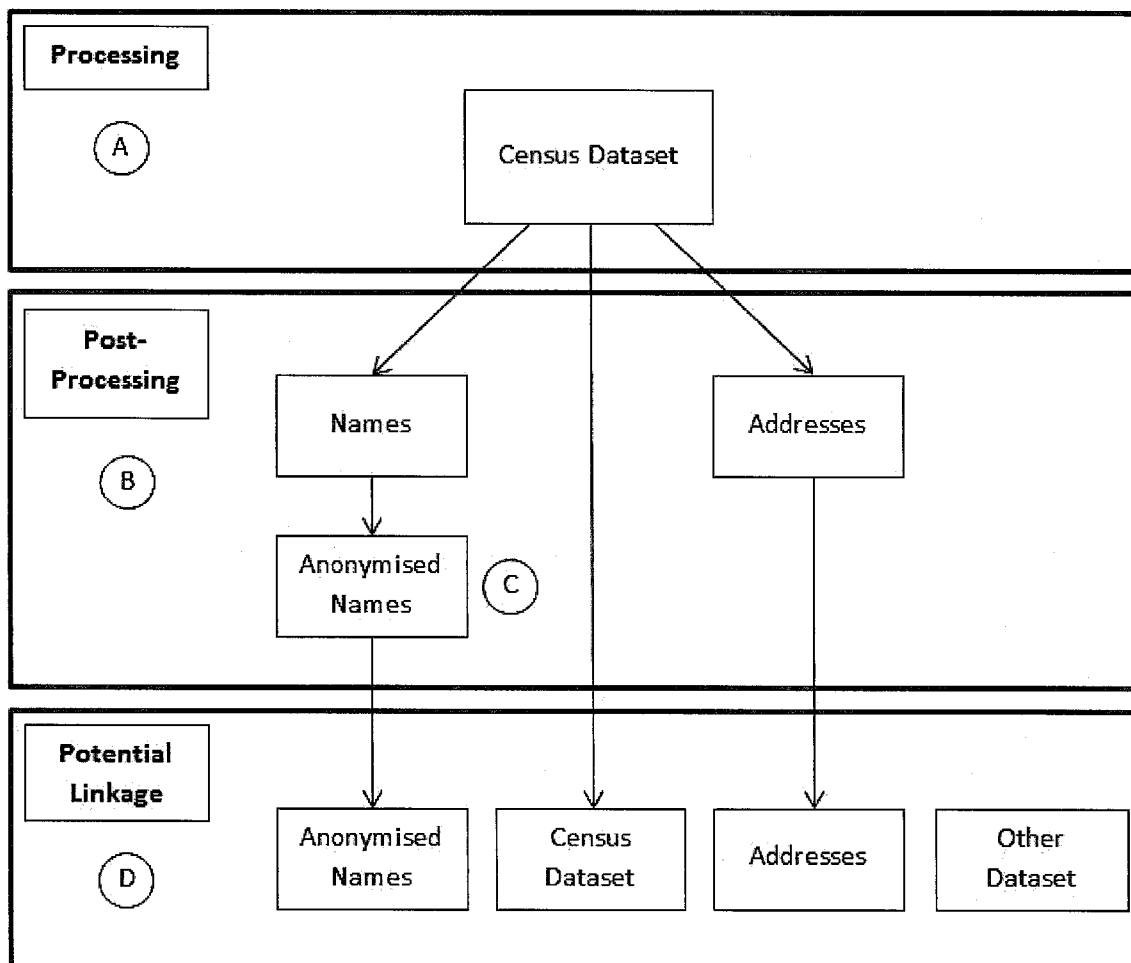
#### **Address Information**

Once processing is complete, addresses and their associated coordinate geocodes would be retained separate to the Census dataset as long as there is a purpose for doing so (consistent with Australian Privacy Principle 11). This file would only be for internal use.

Once separated from the Census dataset, addresses would not be brought back together with other personal and household information in the Census dataset. A senior staff member (e.g. Executive Level 2) would have responsibility for the address file.

Address information from the 2016 Census would be used to support the improvement of geospatial statistics, the ABS Address Register, and other operational efficiencies.

Figure 1. Map of Information Flows



- A. ABS 2016 Census staff will collect and process data from the 2016 Census.
- B. Once processing is complete, names and addresses would be permanently separated from the remainder of the Census dataset, and stored securely in separate files with restricted access.
- C. Anonymised versions of names would be generated from the names; these would be stored separately from both the file of names and the Census dataset. ABS staff in the librarian role would perform these functions.
- D. For approved data integration projects involving 2016 Census data, staff in the librarian role would recombine demographic and anonymised name information on an as-needed basis to allow the Census dataset to be used for statistical data linkage. ABS staff in the linker role would perform the linking.

## 2.6. Security of Information

The ABS has an embedded culture of security and compliance, and has established robust and effective processes to protect the integrity and privacy of information collected from individuals and businesses.

The ABS complies with the mandatory requirements established by the Australian Commonwealth *Protective Security Policy Framework*. The Protective Security Policy Framework provides the appropriate controls for the Australian Government to protect its people, information and assets, at home and overseas.

The ABS also takes reasonable steps to comply with the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner's *Guide to information security* and *Guide to handling personal information security breaches*.

### Governance Security

To enhance physical, IT and systems security, the ABS has established governance arrangements including reporting to the portfolio Minister (the Treasurer) on compliance with the Protective Security Policy Framework, implementing risk management policies and strategies, and creating and maintaining security plans.

The ABS has a rolling annual audit program, including audits of protective security (which focusses on different areas such as building access, document handling and contractors), information security and access (which focusses on different systems such as secure deposit box, email, computer assisted interviewing, and laptops). These audits are undertaken annually.

### Personnel and Physical Security

All ABS staff and contractors who require unescorted access to ABS premises are required to undergo a pre-employment suitability and eligibility assessment. This requirement may be waived in certain circumstances, such as confirmation from the vetting authority that the person has recently obtained a National Security clearance. New employees also undergo police checks and are required to make a declaration of interests to ensure there are no conflicts of interest prior to employment commencing.

Access to ABS physical premises, excluding public areas, is at all times restricted to approved persons, and controls such as an electronic access control system, sign-in registers, reception personnel and security guards are in place.

### Information Security

The ABS recognises and strongly respects the information security responsibility it bears as a result of retaining names and addresses. People can be confident in the numerous and robust security measures implemented by the ABS to safeguard their data to prevent identity theft or misuse of data.

The ABS has an excellent track record of data security, with few serious breaches over its history, and is committed to ensuring this position continues into the future. The prosecution and conviction

of a former staff member for an economic data breach (not a privacy breach) demonstrates that the ABS and the Australian judicial system has no tolerance for malicious acts of data breach and the ABS will not hesitate to apply the full authority of the law to these acts. Such a breach was unprecedented in ABS' 110 year history and resulted in an independent review of security arrangements (the Gibson Review). The outcome of the review was a set of recommendations, all of which were implemented, resulting in greater assurance that sensitive information in the possession of the ABS is more secure and controls on information stores are more robust. The ABS also applies secure practices to avoid accidental breaches.

The ABS information technology environment has comprehensive security measures in place, including Australian Signals Directorate Strategies to Mitigate Targeted Cyber Intrusions<sup>6</sup> and industry best practice.

In 2014, the ABS was one of seven government agencies which handle sensitive information whose information security strategies and related controls were assessed by an Australian National Audit Office cross-agency audit.<sup>7</sup> The audit examined ABS' overall security position. The ABS was ranked as the most compliant with the 'Top Four' mandatory mitigation strategies against cyber intrusions. The ABS was also rated as an Internally Secure Zone i.e. as having security controls in place which provide protection against breaches and disclosures of information from internal sources.

A key protection against identity theft is the 'privacy by design' concept to address personal information security. The ABS is compliant with the Australian Government's core security policies (the Protective Security Policy Framework and Information Security Manual) and have designed privacy into the application of whole of government information security. Email servers and gateway security have been configured to block emails containing the marking 'Sensitive: Statistics', and this in turn reduces the likelihood of accidental data leakage via digital means.

The current information security practices that are in place within the ABS to safeguard data include:

1. high level encryption of data, including tight security around the storage and creation of the encryption keys;
2. an audited linking environment, involving staff activity being logged, monitored and, if inappropriate activity is found, investigated. Any misuse would result in immediate termination of access for the staff member, with further sanctions imposed if necessary;
3. ABS staff and in-posted officers sign legally binding Undertakings of Fidelity and Secrecy to ensure they are aware of their obligation to protect confidential information, and the consequences of disclosure (which include criminal penalties);
4. enforcement of the clear desks and clear screen policy;
5. access on a 'need to know' basis;
6. annual IT audits;
7. Vulnerability Assessments are carried out on all new IT Systems by specialised staff in IT Security trained in the field of Ethical Hacking;

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.asd.gov.au/infosec/mitigationstrategies.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Australian National Audit Office Audit Report No.50 2013–14, *Cyber Attacks: Securing Agencies' ICT Systems*, <http://www.anao.gov.au/Publications/Audit-Reports/2013-2014/Cyber-Attacks-Securing-Agencies-ICT-Systems/Audit-summary>.

8. ethical hacks carried out every 12 months on existing systems;
9. Protective Security Management Committee reviewing security risks quarterly;
10. ongoing reporting of compliance with Government Security Policy including the Protective Security Policy Framework and Australian Signals Directorate Information Security Manual.

In addition to the information security practices described above, the ABS would apply the separation principle (refer to Section 2.5 for detail) to ensure that name and address files are stored securely, access is granted on an approved need-to-know-basis, and that no one working with the data can view both identifying information (name and address) at the same time as analysis information (such as country of birth or educational attainment).

These combined measures would safeguard retained name and address information and address confidentiality, privacy, identify theft and security risks.

## 2.7. Disclosure of Information

In accordance with the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, name and address information from the 2016 Census, as well as outputs from any secondary integrated datasets using Census data, would not be disclosed, published or disseminated in a manner which is likely to enable the identification of a particular person, household or organisation.

Section 19 of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* makes it an offence for any past or present ABS officer to divulge, either directly or indirectly, any confidential information collected under this Act. The Act provides for heavy criminal penalties (fines of up to \$21,600 or imprisonment for 2 years or both) for anybody convicted of breaching this obligation - even if they are no longer employed by the ABS. Staff are required to sign Undertakings of Fidelity and Secrecy which are renewed annually.

## 2.8. Access to and Correction of Information

In accordance with Australian Privacy Principles 12 and 13, respondents have the right to request access to their personal information held by the ABS and to request its correction. This is clearly stated in the [ABS Privacy Policy](#), which is publically available on the ABS website. If such a request is made, the ABS would respond within 30 days. No charge is made to individuals for requesting access to or correction of their information, or for access being granted.

A decision by the ABS to grant a privacy request to access or correct an individual's personal information would take into account whether the ABS is required or authorised to refuse the request under relevant legislation including the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* or any other Commonwealth legislation which provides for access by persons to documents, in particular the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

The ABS Privacy Policy provides information and contact details for individuals who are concerned that the ABS may have breached its responsibilities or their privacy rights. The ABS acknowledges complaints within five business days of receipt, and will investigate and respond within 30 days for non-complex matters.

### 3. Stakeholder Consultation

The ABS sought public submissions on both the nature and content of the 2016 Census from November 2012 to May 2013. In August 2015, the ABS published and promoted the '[Census of Population & Housing: Nature and Content, Australia, 2016](#)' which highlighted that the ABS is considering the retention of both names and addresses for statistical purposes. In October 2015, the ABS published the '[Information Paper: Census of Population and Housing – Proposed Products and Services, 2016](#)' which highlighted that data integration will continue to be a central element of the Census.

In order to understand contemporary community expectations, the ABS conducted a series of 16 focus groups across the country (in both metropolitan and regional locations), arranged through a market research company, in order to understand public attitudes and acceptability of the retention of name and address information from the Census. The focus group testing found that the ABS was seen as a trustworthy organisation producing important data for decision making, with the vast majority of participants having confidence that the personal data they provide to the ABS is kept safe and secure. This finding was consistent with the results from a recent independent [survey](#) which found that trust in the ABS remains high and that 81 per cent of the general public and 100 per cent of informed users trust Australia's official statistical organisation, the ABS.

More specifically, feedback from focus group testing indicated a general level of support for retaining names and addresses, and the use of anonymised linkage keys for the purposes of ensuring a higher accuracy in the linkage rate than is currently possible for joined up datasets. In particular, there was a general view that it was important that this work was of sufficient quality to enable accurate monitoring of trends over time. Participants also held concerns about the quality and usefulness of current linked datasets that had lower linkage rates of around 60% - 70%. In working through examples, focus groups were generally comfortable with the protections that the ABS would put in place to preserve privacy and confidentiality on the proviso that the ABS be transparent about how it handles people's personal information.

Following the above preliminary stakeholder consultation processes, the ABS directly notified key internal and external stakeholders of its proposal to retain names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census in November 2015, and invited feedback to inform this Privacy Impact Assessment and the final decision on whether to adopt the proposal

The ABS publicised its intent to conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment by publishing a Statement of Intent on the ABS website in November 2015, as well as a Media Release directing attention to the Statement of Intent. Both releases included an invitation to comment and provided contact details to facilitate this.

The Office of the Australian Privacy Commissioner was consulted throughout this Assessment and will continue to be consulted in the lead up, and during, the conduct of the 2016 Census. Contact with the State and Territory Privacy Commissioners or relevant representatives for each State and Territory on this matter was made via a letter and copy of the Statement of Intent and Media Release. No substantive privacy-related concerns were raised by these offices.

Media coverage consisted of two articles of which the nature was informative and favourable. Articles appeared in IT News (12/11/2015) and PS News (13/11/2015).

Public feedback consisted of three responses from private citizens who all raised concerns with the proposal.

After consideration of this Privacy Impact Assessment and of all feedback received, the ABS will decide whether to proceed with the proposal to retain names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census. The outcome of this decision will be published in December 2015, and will be further described in the March 2016 publication of 'How Australia takes a Census' and reflected in the Census Privacy Statement.



## 4. Privacy Risk and Mitigation

### 4.1. RISK: Unauthorised access by ABS staff to data stored in the ABS environment

**Likelihood:** Very low.

**Consequence of breach:** ABS staff may inadvertently or maliciously identify an individual.

**Management of risk:** To guard against identification of an individual, and any subsequent misuse of their personal information, by an ABS staff member, the functional separation principle and security arrangements will be implemented, as detailed in Sections 2.5 and 2.6.

**Management of data breach:** Depending on the circumstances, the ABS will:

- Take reasonable steps to comply with the guidelines for handling personal information security breaches established by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner;
- Notify affected individuals of the breach;
- Implement immediate mitigating controls to prevent further spreading of the breach;
- Involve ABS security, senior line management and where necessary, the police.

### 4.2. RISK: Unauthorised non-ABS access to data stored in the ABS environment

**Likelihood:** Very low.

**Consequence of breach:** The consequences of breach of privacy depend on whether names, anonymised names, or linked data is accessed.

- If names or addresses are accessed, individuals or households are likely to be directly identifiable but no other information about the individual would be available
- Data contained in anonymised or linked datasets will only be brought together by anonymised linkage keys and is unlikely to enable direct identification of an individual or household.

**Management of risk:**

- Functional separation principle implemented – see Sections 2.5 and 2.6 for details;
- names, anonymised names and addresses would be stored securely and separately to each other and to other Census data;
- access to names, anonymised names and addresses is restricted and approved on a need-to-know basis;
- neither names nor anonymised names would be part of a Census analytical file, nor would they ever be disclosed by the ABS.
- All ABS data, including names and addresses, are stored in a secure environment in accordance with the mandatory requirements of the Australian Government Protective Security Policy Framework (PSPF) and consistent with the Information and Communications Technology Security Manual (ISM).

**Management of data breach:** Depending on the circumstances, the ABS will:

- Take reasonable steps to comply with the guidelines for handling personal information security breaches established by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner;
- Endeavour to recover the data;
- Implement immediate mitigating controls to prevent further spreading of the breach;
- Notify affected individuals of the breach;
- Involve ABS Security and the Australian Federal Police.

#### **4.3. RISK: Accidental release of name and/or address data in ABS outputs or through loss of work related IT equipment and IT documentation**

**Likelihood:** Very low.

**Consequence of breach:** Name and/or address information is publically released.

**Management of risk:**

The ABS already successfully manages and protects the privacy of Australians throughout data integration processes involving sensitive datasets, including the Census, and thus effective privacy protections are already in place and in practice.

ABS staff are legally obliged to ensure that data will not be released in a manner which is likely to enable the identification of a person. This is a requirement under the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*; under the Act, ABS staff are subject to criminal penalties if found guilty of breaching its secrecy provisions. Annually, ABS staff sign legally-enforceable undertakings acknowledging that they understand their legal obligations as well as undertake training on the handling of personal information.

The separation principle will be enforced to separate names and addresses from analysis or content information during data storage, linking and analysis. Names and addresses will never be re-joined back with Census data.

Staff who require access to name and address information from the Census for their approved role will only access this information through secure electronic server environments, reducing the risk of an accidental release of personal information through potential loss of IT equipment such as a laptop or work documents (for example: emails).

**Management of data breach:** Depending on the circumstances, the ABS will:

- Take reasonable steps to comply with the guidelines for handling personal information security breaches established by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner;
- Endeavour to recover the data;
- Notify affected individuals of the breach;
- Involve ABS security, senior line management and where necessary, the police.

#### **4.4. RISK: Reduction in participation levels in ABS collections due to loss of public trust**

**Likelihood:** Very low

**Consequence:** The proposal to retain names and addresses from responses to the Census may cause public concern which results in a reduction of participation levels in ABS collections, and/or a public backlash.

**Management of risk:** To mitigate this risk, the ABS:

- Has informed Commonwealth, State and Territory Information and Privacy Commissioners of the proposal and has committed to addressing any feedback;
- Sought feedback from the public through publication of a Media Release and a Statement of Intent to conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment;
- Will comply with established legislative and procedural frameworks which safeguard privacy and data security;
- Will be transparent about objectives, processes and outcomes;
- Will prepare responses to frequently asked questions and ensure Census Field Officers are equipped to respond to concerns from respondents.

**Management if risk eventuates:** Depending on the circumstances, the ABS will:

- Respond to concern from the media, stakeholders and the public;
- Conduct further consultations;
- Reconsider the privacy design for the proposal, if required.

#### **4.5. RISK: 'Function creep' – unintentional expanded future use of retained name and address information**

**Likelihood:** Very low

**Consequence:** In the future, name and address information from responses to the 2016 Census may be used for purposes beyond what is currently contemplated by the ABS.

**Management of risk:** Compliance with the legislative and governance framework described in Sections 2.2 and 2.3 will guard against function creep by ensuring that:

- names and addresses are retained in accordance with the Australian Privacy Principles;
- any data integration project involving retained information is undertaken for statistical and research purposes only;
- no information will be released in a manner which would enable the identification of a person or household.

In addition, usage of name and address information from responses to the 2016 Census will be subject to established approval, evaluation and review procedures including:

- Internal approval processes, as described in Section 2.3, for data integration projects which assesses the benefits and risks of each project and their compliance with ABS policies;
- Periodic reviews of policies including the policy on retention of personal information and the privacy policy, to ensure these policies are achieving their objectives, are implemented in practice, and remain aligned with public commitments made by the ABS;
- Annual internal audits of information and protective (physical) security.

**Management if risk eventuates:** Depending on the circumstances, the ABS will:

- Consult affected stakeholders;
- Review relevant internal policies.

## 5. Conclusion

The outcome of this Privacy Impact Assessment has determined that the proposal to retain names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census is consistent with the functions of the ABS prescribed in the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* and compliant with all the provisions in the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* and the *Privacy Act 1988*, including the Australian Privacy Principles.

In relation to the proposed retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census, a small number of potential risks to personal privacy and public perception have been identified. This Assessment concludes that in each case, the likelihood of the risks eventuating is 'very low'. It also concludes that the ABS has implemented robust processes to manage data and protect privacy, and that these arrangements effectively mitigate these risks. Any residual risks are such that the ABS is capable of managing.

### Recommendations

In accordance with the above conclusions, it is recommended that the ABS:

1. Retain names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census.
2. Update the Census Privacy Policy prior to conducting the Census on 9 August 2016 to ensure the Australian public are informed that names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census will be retained by the ABS for statistical and operational purposes as long as there is a purpose for doing so.
3. Implement business processes which are necessary to manage the separation and retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census.
4. Develop training and support materials for staff accessing name and address data as well as guidelines for ABS Census Field Officers, and publish online responses to frequently asked questions concerning the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census to support queries from the public.
5. Conduct an internal audit of the implementation of the above recommendations as part of the internal audit program scheduled for the 2017-2018 financial year.
6. Assign responsibility to a senior committee for monitoring whether there is an ongoing need for the retention of name and address information.

## Appendix A – Media Release

### MEDIA RELEASE

11 November 2015

Embargo: 11:30am (Canberra Time)

#### **ABS to conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment**

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) today announced it will conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment on the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census of Population and Housing.

The ABS is considering the retention of names and addresses as a key enabler for improved household surveys and high quality statistics.

The retention of names and addresses would support the integration of Census data with other survey and administrative data to provide a richer and dynamic statistical picture of Australia.

Historically, the ABS has destroyed all name and address information after statistical processing of the Census has been completed.

In considering this change, the ABS remains committed to maintaining high levels of community trust. No information will be released in a way that would enable users of Census data to identify any particular individual or household. Names and addresses will be separated from other household and personal data collected in the Census. Addresses and anonymous versions of names will only be used for approved projects.

To inform both our decision and approach, the ABS will undertake a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) and is seeking feedback on this proposal.

Further information is contained in the [ABS Statement of Intent](#). To provide feedback on the proposal, please write to [privacy@abs.gov.au](mailto:privacy@abs.gov.au) by 2 December 2015.

## Appendix B – Statement of Intent

### Statement of Intent

#### ABS to conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment on retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census

The ABS has a long and proud history of Census taking in Australia, and the 2016 Census will be the seventeenth national Census of Population and Housing. The Census is the largest collection the ABS conducts, and one of the most important. The protection of the privacy and confidentiality of every person and household in Australia is of the highest priority. Maintaining the trust that the community has in the ABS is also paramount.<sup>8</sup>

The 2016 Census will introduce significant changes to the way the Census is conducted, with a move to a digital-first approach. Australia's first predominantly digital Census will be faster, more efficient and easier for the public.

The 2016 Census will also provide an opportunity to improve and expand the information available to Australians through continuing the use of statistical data integration techniques to bring together 2016 Census data with previous Censuses (2006 and 2011) and other high value research datasets. Together these initiatives will continue to provide new insights and ensure the Census delivers maximum benefit to governments and the community. For information on current Census data integration initiatives please follow the [link](#).

Building on the successes of the 2006 and 2011 Censuses, the ABS intends to explore the retention of names and addresses from the 2016 Census to provide a benefit to the ABS and wider community by:

- enabling higher quality and more efficient linkage of high value survey and administrative datasets with the Census, particularly for small or highly mobile population sub groups of policy interest;
- supporting a range of organisational efficiencies, such as the development of an address register, improving sampling, imputation and provider management; and
- supporting more flexible geospatial outputs.

To give full effect to these changes, the ABS would need to cease the historical practice of the destruction of name and address information collected in the Census. The ABS proposes to instead apply well established separation principles to protect privacy by storing both name and address separately and securely from other household and personal data collected in the Census. This is an internationally recognised approach to protecting privacy and ensuring personal information is kept secure. Under this proposed approach, names will never be brought together with other Census data. Only anonymised versions of name will be used for approved statistical data integration

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<sup>8</sup> Trust in the ABS remains high, with a recent independent [survey](#) showing that 81 per cent of the general public and 100 per cent of informed users trust Australia's official statistical organisation.

projects. Addresses will only be used for approved data integration, operational and geospatial purposes.

The ABS intends to conduct a Privacy Impact Assessment on the retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census. The Privacy Impact Assessment will ensure the right privacy design can be put in place and inform the processes, risks and risk mitigation strategies that would be required to enable the secure retention of name and address information from the 2016 Census.

At the completion of the Privacy Impact Assessment process, and after considering all feedback received, a decision will be made on whether to progress with the retention of name and address from 2016 Census responses. The outcome of this decision will be published on the ABS website by the end of 2015.

As our track record demonstrates, the ABS takes its role in protecting the privacy and confidentiality of all respondents very seriously. The Census and Statistics Act 1905 commits the ABS to protect the confidentiality of persons, households and organisations. The Privacy Act 1988 commits the ABS to protect privacy. The ABS recognises that protecting the privacy of individuals and the confidentiality of information supplied by them are paramount to the successful conduct of a Census. For more information on how we approach privacy and confidentiality in the Census please follow the [link](#).

The ABS invites feedback on the retention of name and address from the 2016 Census. Any feedback should be provided in writing by close of business **Wednesday, 2 December 2015** to the following address: [privacy@abs.gov.au](mailto:privacy@abs.gov.au).



## **Retention of names and addresses collected in the 2016 Census of Population and Housing**

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has decided to retain names and addresses collected in the 2016 Census of Population and Housing in order to enable a richer and dynamic statistical picture of Australia through the combination of Census data with other survey and administrative data.

Whilst the Census has always been valuable in its own right, when used in combination with other data the Census can provide even greater insight. Some examples are:

- The combination of Census data and education data can provide insight into employment outcomes from the various educational pathways available to Australians, and
- The combination of Census data and health data can help improve Australia's understanding and support of people who require mental health services and assist with the design of better programs of support and prevention.

The retention of addresses will also support the ABS Address Register enabling more efficient survey operations, reducing the cost to taxpayers and the burden on Australian households.

This decision has been informed by public submissions, public testing and the conduct of a Privacy Impact Assessment.

### **What about privacy?**

The ABS is committed to the protection of the privacy and confidentiality of everyone who completes the Census. In order to assess this proposed change, the ABS commissioned a full Privacy Impact Assessment in order to identify privacy, confidentiality and security considerations, and assess strategies in place to mitigate any risks.

The Privacy Impact Assessment assessed the level of risk to personal privacy, considering the protections in place, as very low. The risks identified are mitigated by storing names and addresses separately from other Census data as well as separately from each other. The risks are further mitigated by governance and security arrangements the ABS already has in place. These arrangements were found to robustly manage data, protect privacy and guard against misuse of information.

The retention of names and addresses collected in the 2016 Census is consistent with the functions of the ABS prescribed in the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975* and compliant with all the provisions in the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* and the *Privacy Act 1988*, including the Australian Privacy Principles.

### **How will the ABS safeguard names and addresses?**

The ABS has legal obligations to keep data secure and ensure that it does not disclose identifiable information about a person, household or business.

The ABS has been accredited as a safe environment for statistical data integration projects. The ABS will use well-established governance infrastructure and procedures to manage the approval, conduct and review of statistical data integration projects using Census data.

To secure Census data, the ABS will remove names and addresses from other personal and household information after data collection and processing. Names and addresses will be stored separately and securely. No-one working with the data will be able to view identifying information (name and address) at the same time as other Census information (such as occupation or level of education).

Addresses and anonymised versions of names will only be used for projects approved by a senior-level committee, and will be subject to strict information security provisions.

The ABS complies with the mandatory requirements established by the Australian Commonwealth Protective Security Policy Framework, which include implementing governance, physical, and information security measures to protect data held by the ABS. Key measures to safeguard information include strong encryption of data and all staff access is logged, monitored, and restricted on a need-to-know basis.

The ABS will conduct regular audits of the protection mechanisms, and the use and the need for retention of Census names and addresses.

#### **How will people know about the ABS' plans?**

The ABS is completely transparent around the collection, protection and use of data. The ABS has published the Privacy Impact Assessment and the decision to retain names and addresses. The ABS publishes its approach to conducting the Census "Nature and Content of Census 2016" and "How Australia Takes a Census".

All Census forms will provide information about how to access the Census Privacy Statement. This Privacy Statement will clearly communicate our plans to retain and use names and addresses. There will also be information available through Census field officers, the Census Inquiry Service and online help materials.

The ABS also publishes details of every statistical data integration project that it conducts on its website.

**From:** Angelene Falk  
**To:** Reshma Bargon  
**Subject:** Fwd: Preparations for Census 2016 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
**Date:** Monday, 15 August 2016 10:24:42 PM

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For the chronology please

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Angelene Falk S.22  
**Date:** 1 July 2016 at 10:19:38 AM AEST  
**To:** Duncan Young S.22  
**Cc:** Craig Lindenmayer S.22 Gemma Van Halderen S.22 D'Arcy Jackson S.22 Alun Thomas S.22  
**Subject:** RE: Preparations for Census 2016 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Duncan

Thank you very much for your email, much appreciated.

Things have been a bit hectic here this week so I'm yet to have the opportunity to discuss your offer with my colleagues, and I'm on leave next week.

However I have copied in my colleagues D'Arcy Jackson and Alun Thomas who will give the matter further consideration and we will get back to you.

Thanks again

Regards

Angelene

**Angelene Falk** | Assistant Commissioner | Regulation and Strategy Branch  
**Office of the Australian Information Commissioner**  
 GPO Box 5218 SYDNEY NSW 2001 | [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au) |  
 S.22

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**From:** Duncan Young S.22  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 28 June 2016 5:44 PM  
**To:** Angelene Falk S.22  
**Cc:** Craig Lindenmayer S.22 Gemma Van Halderen S.22  
**Subject:** Preparations for Census 2016

Released under FOI - OAIC

Hi Angelene,

I am the Program Manager for the 2016 Census of Population and Housing.

My colleague, Gemma Van Halderen, advised me that you were interested in understanding some information on our security infrastructure for the next Census. Can you provide any more detail about what you are keen to see and we will be happy to see what we can do to assist? Some of the details of our security approaches and infrastructure are confidential, however keen to help where possible.

I have copied in Craig Lindenmayer, ABS' IT Security Advisor, who may be best placed to respond to your questions.

kind regards,  
Duncan

Duncan Young  
Program Manager  
Census of Population & Housing | Australian Bureau of Statistics  
S.22 (W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

**From:** [D'Arcy Jackson](#)  
**To:** [Sarah Ghali](#); [Alun Thomas](#)  
**Subject:** FW: ABS name and address retention - further information [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
**Date:** Wednesday, 13 July 2016 12:51:40 PM

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Thanks for this Alun. I've summarised the areas you've outlined below in a draft email to Duncan. I've kept it a bit more open ended and general at this stage.

**Sarah** – we spoke to Duncan Young at the ABS on Monday re. getting a briefing/ more info on the ABS retention of name and address detail. We agreed to send him a list of the things we were looking to get more info on so he can start identifying the right people to provide it (and id their availability).

A draft email is below – is there anything else in particular that you'd be interested in finding out about from them at this stage? I'm hoping to send the email this PM so any comments appreciated.

Cheers – D'Arcy

XX  
 Hi Duncan

Thanks for your time the other day. As we discussed, the OAIC is interested in obtaining some further, high level information (additional to that contained in the PIA) in relation to the retention of names and addresses in the next Census.

From looking over the PIA and media release, the broad areas we are particularly interested in include:

- further information on the governance/ assurance mechanisms the ABS has put in place for this retention, such as the rolling annual audit program and any other general governance/ assurance activities (which could include staff training, data segregation, data retention, DBN response plans etc)
- further general and contextual information on the IT security measures in place (specifically in relation to names and address detail) as set out in Section 2.6 of the PIA.

As indicated, we're really just looking for further background and contextual information help us understand the measures put in place by the ABS in relation to this.

Could you let us know who is best placed to provide this type of information and their possible availability over the next two weeks, and we'll work from there.

Thanks and kind regards – D'Arcy

XX

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**From:** Alun Thomas  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 12 July 2016 1:39 PM  
**To:** D'Arcy Jackson S.22  
**Subject:** ABS [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Released under FOI - OAIC

Hi D'Arcy

At a high level, it would be interesting to understand how ABS will manage the following regarding the storage and use of names and addresses going forwards:

- Governance
- Training
- Physical security
- Segregation of data
- IT Security, including:
  - Network
  - Software
  - Encryption
  - Back ups
- Testing
- Response plans (including data breach)
- Access controls, including segregation of duties, authentication, logging, monitoring, remote access
- De-identification/destruction

Question is how far do we want to go into intended use? Or should we limit it to info sec issues? Prob the latter. May be good to talk to Sarah G about what they are up to as well as AF.

Cheers

A

**Alun Thomas** | Assistant Director  
**Regulation and Strategy Branch**  
**Office of the Australian Information Commissioner** |  
GPO Box 5218 SYDNEY NSW 2001 | [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au) |

S.22

**From:** Enquiries  
**To:** Executive OAIC  
**Cc:** DR Enquiries  
**Subject:** FW: ABS response to media coverage regarding 2016 Census of Population and Housing [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
**Date:** Monday, 25 July 2016 10:26:42 AM  
**Attachments:** Peter Martin 21st July.pdf  
 Peter Martin 22nd July.pdf

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FYI from the ABS

**From:** Gemma Van Halderen S.22  
**Sent:** Friday, 22 July 2016 11:05 AM  
**To:** Gemma Van Halderen S.22  
**Cc:** Chris Libreri S.22 Phillip Gould S.22  
**Subject:** ABS response to media coverage regarding 2016 Census of Population and Housing

Dear Information Commissioners, Privacy Commissioners, Ombudsmen

**ABS response to media coverage regarding 2016 Census of Population and Housing and retention of names and addresses**

Further to my email of March this year, I am writing to let you know about the most recent media activity and ABS response.

Yesterday, 21st July, Peter Martin, the Economics Editor for the Sydney Morning Herald issued an article titled "Census gets personal, calls for names". A copy of the article is attached.

The Australian Statistician responded in today's mainstream media.

<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/comment/give-us-your-name-on-census-night-itll-be-safe-20160721-ggank1.html>

Peter Martin has issued a second article today titled "Census admits tracking us for years". See attached.

The ABS is monitoring the media very actively. We have also been in contact with a number of key supporters of the value of well-informed public policy who are also considering how they can best contribute, possibly through the media.

Postal activities for this year's Census start on Sunday - letters will start arriving in people's letter boxes from Monday for an August 9 go-online message. We are very conscious of the importance of a high quality Census to Australia and Australians, and are doing everything possible to maximise its success.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

Kind regards, Gemma.

*(See attached file: Peter Martin 21st July.pdf)*

*(See attached file: Peter Martin 22nd July.pdf)*

**Gemma Van Halderen**

*General Manager*

Strategy and Partnerships Division | Australian Bureau of Statistics

S.22 [Redacted]

S.22 [Redacted] (W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)





# Census gets personal, calls for names

**Peter Martin**



**E**xpect to hear lots about the census. From August 1 we will be getting letters advising us of our login codes instead of the traditional hand-delivered forms. The catchphrase is “get on-line on August 9”.

But what we won't be told as loudly is that there's another more fundamental revolution planned for 2016. The Bureau of Statistics is going to keep our names.

The deal used to be that our answers were anonymous. The bureau got to find out where we lived, where we were born, who we worked for, what we got paid and what religion we subscribed to, but it didn't get to keep our names.

The census collected statistics rather than information on individuals (although it was extended 10 years ago when the bureau began to ask us about our date of birth rather than our age).

This provision of our names will be compulsory. At least that's what the bureau says, although it is hard to see what legal basis it would have to prosecute someone who refused to hand over their name.

The Census and Statistics Act empowers it to direct people to provide “statistical information” and requires it to “publish the results of these statistical collections”. Names aren't usually thought of as statistics, and there would be an outrage if the bureau actually published them. Bill McLennan, a former

head of the bureau who helped rewrite the Census and Statistics Act in the early 1980s, says flatly that it doesn't have the authority to demand names.

The bureau says they will be stored separately from the rest of the census for up to four years and released only in an “anonymised” form for projects “approved by a senior-level committee and subject to strict security provisions”. Those projects will link what the bureau knows about us from the census with other information authorities know about us, “in the public good”.

I can think of any number of such worthwhile linkages in the public good. One would be linking the census to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme to find out what drugs are prescribed to people in what occupations and what family circumstances. Examples the bureau uses are weaker, including the better targeting of mental health services, something that could probably just as easily be done without names.

But tell the ABS this is the first you've heard of its decision to retain everyone's name and it'll scoff. It outlined it in a press release issued the Friday before Christmas with the misleadingly vague title of *ABS response to Privacy Impact Assessment*. It conducted the privacy impact assessment itself and found “retaining names and addresses for the purpose of richer and more-dynamic statistics and more-efficient statistical operations has very low risks to privacy, confidentiality and security”.

In place of broad consultation (it appears not to have approached the Australian Privacy Founda-

tion) it convened its own small focus groups. “In working through examples, focus groups were generally comfortable with the protections that the ABS would put in place,” it says.

Which would be a change. The first time it put forward the idea in the lead-up to the 2006 census, it was rewarded with a damning (genuinely independent) privacy impact assessment by privacy expert Nigel Waters. It considered trying again in the lead-up to 2011 census but was overruled by then Australian Statistician Brian Pink amid concern of a public backlash.

Since Pink left in 2014, the ABS has rumbled along in a leadership and oversight vacuum. He wasn't replaced for 11 months, during which time the bureau suffered appalling problems with its unemployment survey and drew up cost-saving plans to abandon the 2016 census and move to 10-year surveys rather than five. Pink's successor, David Kalisch, flicked the switch to “go” only last May when the parliamentary secretary, Kelly O'Dwyer, managed to secure enough money to both upgrade the bureau's ageing computer system and retain the census.

Four months later O'Dwyer was promoted and replaced by Alex Hawke who has just been promoted and replaced by ... well this week no one was quite sure, but the census will probably become the responsibility of the Treasurer, Scott Morrison.

The daftest thing about the bureau's poorly communicated decision to retain and use our names is that it'll run alongside its existing “time capsule” program in which



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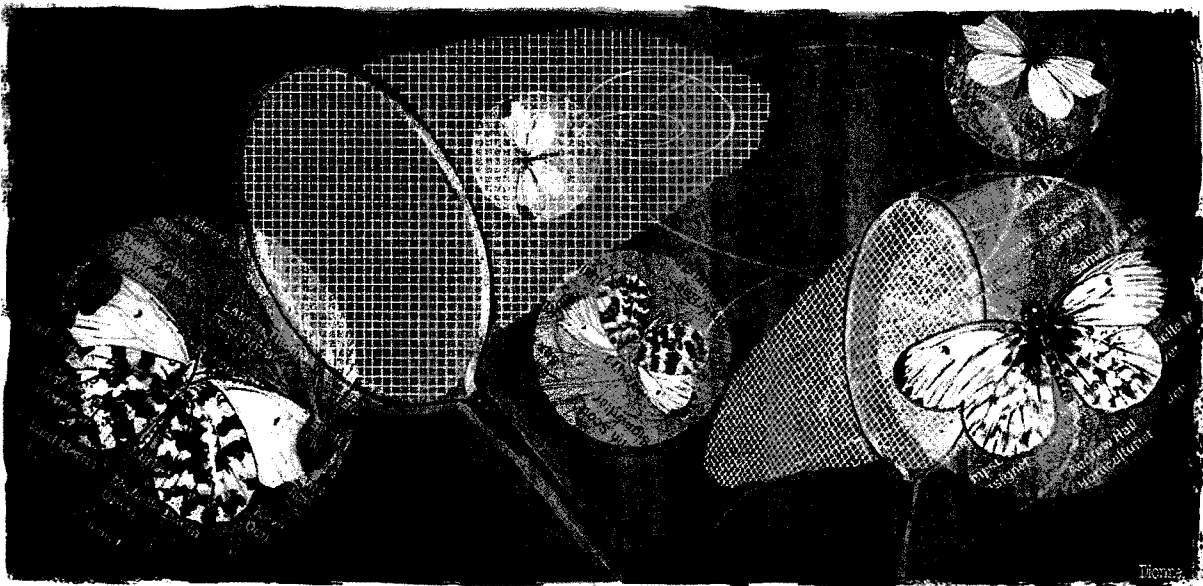
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we are invited to give our consent for our details to be accessed in 99 years, but not before.

“Information is only kept for those persons who explicitly give their consent,” the bureau’s website assures us. McLennan says what’s planned is without doubt “the most significant invasion of privacy ever perpetrated on Australians by the ABS”.

When the Crikey website wrote about it earlier this year, the ABS accused it of undermining the “complete public trust” it needed to conduct the census and get accurate rather than falsified information. It’s making a good fist of it itself.

Peter Martin is economics editor of *The Age*.





# Census admits tracking us for years

**EXCLUSIVE**  
**Peter Martin**  
Economics Editor

The Bureau of Statistics has been quietly hanging on to the names it collects with the census to conduct studies, despite a public commitment to destroy them.

Australian statistician David Kalisch told Fairfax Media the Bureau had been keeping the names it collected for up to 18 months.

"They've done it under the guise of: 'this is while we are processing the data'," he said.

"They've done linkages, they've done other things. What's happening now is we are being more transparent about it."

The studies have been conducted despite a commitment on the ABS website that "name and address information will be destroyed once statistical processing has been completed".

They used the names and addresses on census forms to link the census answers to department of immigration records, to school enrolment records and to the Australian Early Development Index.

The names were destroyed only after the records were linked.

Separately, and without asking for consent, the bureau has been tracking 5 per cent of the population (more than 1 million people) through what it calls the Australian Census Longitudinal Dataset.

It has been using the names on the forms to create "linkage keys", which enable it to follow respondents over time. Each census, the same name produces the same linkage key, enabling movements to be tracked. Once each key has been created, the name itself has been destroyed. It is impossible to reverse-engineer a key to derive the name.

"In 2016, I have decided to keep names and addresses for longer," Mr Kalisch writes in Fairfax

Continued Page 5



22 Jul 2016  
Age, Melbourne

156

Author: Peter Martin • Section: General News • Article type : News Item  
Audience : 96,120 • Page: 1 • Printed Size: 242.00cm<sup>2</sup> • Market: VIC • Country: Australia  
ASR: AUD 14,892 • Words: 457 • Item ID: 630660093

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Page 2 of 2

## Census was tracking us for years

### ■ From Page 1

Media. "This will enable the ABS to produce statistics on important economic and social areas such as educational outcomes, and measuring outcomes for migrants."

Labelled by former Australian Statistician Bill McLennan "the most significant invasion of privacy ever perpetrated on Australians by the ABS," the decision will formalise what was happening informally before

Mr Kalisch joined the ABS in 2014. It will extend the period for research using names from 18 months to four years. All names collected will be deleted by August 2020 or when studies have been completed, whichever is the soonest.

The decision is a retreat on a announcement in December that names and addresses on census forms would be retained indefinitely.

"There are extremely robust

safeguards in place to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the information collected in the census, including names and addresses," Mr Kalisch writes in today's Fairfax Media publications. "The ABS never has and never will release identifiable census data."

Kat Lane, vice-chair of the Australian Privacy Foundation, said the real issue wasn't the ABS security system. It was that there was no justification for tracking or personally identifying Australians.

**From:** D'Arcy Jackson  
**To:** Paula Cheng; Alun Thomas  
**Cc:** Sarah Ghali  
**Subject:** FW: Census 2016 - Name and Address detail [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
**Date:** Monday, 1 August 2016 3:26:28 PM  
**Attachments:** image001.jpg

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Hi Paula and Alun

I've just spoken to Phillip Gould, who works with Duncan Young at the ABS re. this briefing. They're happy to have a teleconference this Thursday morning (time to be confirmed, but around 10-11am) with their relevant census and security people to talk over the issues we're seeking further information on.

Phillip will pop through an email with list of ABS attendees and confirming the time/ number for us to call

Alun – you'll be back from Canberra, so I'm assuming you're Ok to be a starter for this

Paula – are you interested in coming along FYI?

Sarah - FYI (and if interested in sitting in, all OK as well)

Regards – D'Arcy S.22

---

**From:** D'Arcy Jackson  
**Sent:** Monday, 1 August 2016 2:58 PM  
**To:** S.22  
**Cc:** Alun Thomas S.22; Paula Cheng S.22  
**Subject:** RE: Census 2016 - Name and Address detail [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Duncan

I'm just following up on our last discussion re. a briefing for the OAIC on the upcoming census as per below – are you able to give me a call on S.22 or return email in relation to when and where this briefing could take place.

Thanks and kind regards

D'Arcy

**D'Arcy Jackson** | Assistant Director | Assessments and Data Matching  
**Regulation and Strategy Branch**  
**Office of the Australian Information Commissioner**  
 GPO Box 5218 SYDNEY NSW 2001 | [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)  
 S.22

*Protecting information rights – advancing information policy*



**From:** D'Arcy Jackson  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 13 July 2016 1:55 PM  
**To:** S.22  
**Cc:** Alun Thomas S.22 Sarah Ghali S.22 Paula Cheng S.22  
**Subject:** Census 2016 - Name and Address detail [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Duncan

Thanks for your time the other day. As we discussed, the OAIC is interested in obtaining some further, high level information (additional to that contained in the PIA) in relation to the retention of names and addresses in the next Census.

From looking over the PIA and media release, the broad areas we are particularly interested in include:

- further information on the governance/ assurance mechanisms the ABS has put in place for this retention, such as the rolling annual audit program and any other general governance/ assurance activities (which could include staff training, data segregation, data retention, DBN response plans etc)
- further general and contextual information on the IT security measures in place (specifically in relation to names and address detail) as set out in Section 2.6 of the PIA.

As indicated, we're really just looking for further background and contextual information help us understand the measures put in place by the ABS in relation to this.

Could you let us know who is best placed to provide this type of information and their possible availability over the next two weeks, and we'll work from there.

Thanks and kind regards – D'Arcy

**D'Arcy Jackson** | Assistant Director  
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S.22

*Protecting information rights – advancing information policy*



**From:** Duncan Young S.22  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 28 June 2016 5:44 PM  
**To:** Angelene Falk S.22  
**Cc:** Craig Lindenmayer S.22 Gemma Van Halderen  
S.22  
**Subject:** Preparations for Census 2016

Hi Angelene,

I am the Program Manager for the 2016 Census of Population and Housing.

My colleague, Gemma Van Halderen, advised me that you were interested in understanding some information on our security infrastructure for the next Census. Can you provide any more detail about what you are keen to see and we will be happy to see what we can do to assist? Some of the details of our security approaches and infrastructure are confidential, however keen to help where possible.

I have copied in Craig Lindenmayer, ABS' IT Security Advisor, who may be best placed to respond to your questions.

kind regards,  
Duncan

Duncan Young  
Program Manager  
Census of Population & Housing | Australian Bureau of Statistics  
S.22 (W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

**From:** S.22 [REDACTED] on behalf of SPPD WDB  
**To:** S.22 [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Invitation: ABS / OAIC - Census Name Retention (4 Aug 04:00 PM ZE10 in CO 5A 104 Med VC Room/VC\_ABS@ABS)  
**Attachments:** ATT00001.htm  
c123900.ics

---

External dial in number S.22 [REDACTED]  
Internal dial in number S.22 [REDACTED]

ABS Sydney office - 44 Market St, Sydney  
More information to follow re ABS officer to escort you to the meeting room.

If you have any questions, please contact me on S.22 [REDACTED]

Regards,  
Michelle Cosentini  
EA to Bindi Kindermann



**From:** S.22 [REDACTED] on behalf of SPPD WDB  
**To:** S.22 [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Information Update - Description has changed: ABS / OAIC - Census Name Retention  
**Attachments:** [ATT00001.htm](#)  
[c143426.ics](#)

---

External dial in number: S.22 [REDACTED]

Internal dial in number: S.22 [REDACTED]

ABS Sydney office - 44 Market St. Sydney

On arrival, S.22 [REDACTED] and Terriann Bale will greet you and escort you to the meeting room.

If you have any questions, please contact me on S.22 [REDACTED]

Regards,  
Michelle Cosentini  
EA to Bindi Kindermann

**From:** Angelene Falk  
**To:** Reshma Bargon  
**Subject:** Fwd: Preparations for Census 2016 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
**Date:** Monday, 15 August 2016 9:57:31 PM  
**Attachments:** image001.jpg

---

Please add to the policy document

Angelene Falk  
 Assistant Commissioner

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** D'Arcy Jackson S.22  
**Date:** 18 July 2016 at 5:02:53 PM AEST  
**To:** Angelene Falk S.22 Alun Thomas  
 S.22  
**Cc:** Paula Cheng S.22  
**Subject:** RE: Preparations for Census 2016 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Angelene

We spoke to Duncan last week, and followed up with an email (reproduced below) with the type of information we were after, so that he could identify the appropriate people within ABS to provide the information. We're waiting for him to get back to us at this stage with some suggested times/dates for the briefing.

Regards – D'Arcy

---

**From:** D'Arcy Jackson  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 13 July 2016 1:55 PM  
**To:** S.22  
**Cc:** Alun Thomas S.22 Sarah Ghali  
 S.22 Paula Cheng S.22  
**Subject:** Census 2016 - Name and Address detail [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Duncan

Thanks for your time the other day. As we discussed, the OAIC is interested in obtaining some further, high level information (additional to that contained in the PIA) in relation to the retention of names and addresses in the next Census.

From looking over the PIA and media release, the broad areas we are particularly interested in include:

<!--[if !supportLists]-->• <!--[endif]-->further information on the governance/ assurance mechanisms the ABS has put in place for

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this retention, such as the rolling annual audit program and any other general governance/ assurance activities (which could include staff training, data segregation, data retention, DBN response plans etc)

• further general and contextual information on the IT security measures in place (specifically in relation to names and address detail) as set out in Section 2.6 of the PIA.

As indicated, we're really just looking for further background and contextual information help us understand the measures put in place by the ABS in relation to this.

Could you let us know who is best placed to provide this type of information and their possible availability over the next two weeks, and we'll work from there.

Thanks and kind regards – D'Arcy

**D'Arcy Jackson** | Assistant Director  
**Regulation and Strategy Branch**  
**Office of the Australian Information Commissioner**  
 GPO Box 5218 SYDNEY NSW 2001 | [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)  
 S.22

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**From:** Angelene Falk  
**Sent:** Monday, 18 July 2016 4:56 PM  
**To:** D'Arcy Jackson S.22 Alun Thomas  
 S.22  
**Cc:** Paula Cheng S.22  
**Subject:** Fwd: Preparations for Census 2016 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi D'Arcy and Alun

Have you had the chance to consider this offer?

I'm mindful that I said we would get back to them.

If you need to wait and discuss with me when I'm back let me know and I'll

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send another holding email.

Thanks

Angelene

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Angelene Falk S.22  
**Date:** 1 July 2016 at 8:19:38 AM GMT+8  
**To:** Duncan Young S.22  
**Cc:** Craig Lindenmayer S.22  
Gemma Van Halderen S.22 D'Arcy  
Jackson S.22 Alun Thomas  
S.22  
**Subject:** RE: Preparations for Census 2016  
[SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Duncan

Thank you very much for your email, much appreciated.

Things have been a bit hectic here this week so I'm yet to have the opportunity to discuss your offer with my colleagues, and I'm on leave next week.

However I have copied in my colleagues D'Arcy Jackson and Alun Thomas who will give the matter further consideration and we will get back to you.

Thanks again

Regards

Angelene

**Angelene Falk** | Assistant Commissioner | Regulation and Strategy  
Branch

**Office of the Australian Information Commissioner**  
GPO Box 5218 SYDNEY NSW 2001 | [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au) |

S.22

---

**From:** Duncan Young S.22  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 28 June 2016 5:44 PM  
**To:** Angelene Falk S.22

Cc: Craig Lindenmayer S.22 [REDACTED] Gemma Van Halderen S.22 [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Preparations for Census 2016

Hi Angelene,

I am the Program Manager for the 2016 Census of Population and Housing.

My colleague, Gemma Van Halderen, advised me that you were interested in understanding some information on our security infrastructure for the next Census. Can you provide any more detail about what you are keen to see and we will be happy to see what we can do to assist? Some of the details of our security approaches and infrastructure are confidential, however keen to help where possible.

I have copied in Craig Lindenmayer, ABS' IT Security Advisor, who may be best placed to respond to your questions.

kind regards,  
Duncan

Duncan Young  
Program Manager  
Census of Population & Housing | Australian Bureau of Statistics  
S.22 [REDACTED] (W)  
[www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

**From:** [Reshma Bargon](#)  
**To:** [Amanda Nowland](#)  
**Subject:** FW: 36 Census and lessons from Singapore [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
**Date:** Tuesday, 22 November 2016 10:48:15 AM

---

**From:** Sarah Ghali  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 26 July 2016 12:06 PM  
**To:** D'Arcy Jackson S.22  
**Subject:** RE: Census and lessons from Singapore [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Thanks D'Arcy

I agree removing/covering materials seems weak. I'm wondering if there is more to it that isn't captured in the brief information provided or am I being too generous.

SG.

**From:** D'Arcy Jackson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 26 July 2016 11:43 AM  
**To:** Sarah Ghali S.22  
**Subject:** RE: Census and lessons from Singapore [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Sarah

Thanks for this. On the quick read below it seems fine, as long as everything goes as they plan.

The only two issues of concern to me are:

- ABS seeing no privacy risk associated with mail back of completed census forms. There's always going to be some risk of loss/ misuse etc – it may be small but ABS shouldn't describe it as no privacy risk (ie. acknowledge that there is a small risk, and describe reasonable steps taken to mitigate or why no reasonable steps are necessary in their view). Might just be the language they've used, of course.
- The use of contractors onsite who have signed confidentiality authorisations seems fine – saying if they're not authorised then materials will be covered/ removed sounds weak and pretty unworkable. If we received a complaint or undertook a CII/ assessment, we'd have to consider whether this is a reasonable step for ABS to take under APP 11 for census security re. onsite contractors who haven't signed confidentiality undertakings/ not ABS authorised. The issue of CSPs and s95B is also a relevant consideration for ABS, separate to whether or not they have signed a confidentiality undertaking.

Regards – D'Arcy S.22

**From:** Sarah Ghali  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 26 July 2016 11:19 AM  
**To:** D'Arcy Jackson S.22

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**Subject:** FW: Census and lessons from Singapore [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi D'Arcy

As discussed, the approach below seems sensible and I don't have any concerns.

Let me know your thoughts

Thanks

Sarah.

---

**From:** Angelene Falk

**Sent:** Tuesday, 26 July 2016 10:56 AM

**To:** Sarah Ghali [S.22]

**Cc:** Melanie Drayton [S.22]

**Subject:** FW: Census and lessons from Singapore [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Sarah

In the course of speaking with Gemma yesterday I asked about the mail out process for the census, as in Singapore last week I was advised that there were potentially some issues with the AEC postal voting.

Gemma has provided some information below, which looks satisfactory on a quick read.

Can you please consider and let me know if you have any concerns?

Thank you

Angelene

---

**From:** Gemma Van Halderen [S.22]

**Sent:** Tuesday, 26 July 2016 10:26 AM

**To:** Angelene Falk [S.22]

**Cc:** Duncan Young [S.22], Soula Macfarlane

[S.22]

**Subject:** Census and lessons from Singapore

Angelene

In relation to our conversation yesterday about some operational aspects of the Census, and in particular the potential for privacy risks around the handling of completed forms and postal operations.

The head of our Census program advises the following

- The mail back of Census forms to the ABS does not pose a privacy risk.

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- Unlike previous Censuses, all paper forms will be accompanied by a C4 reply paid envelope (copy attached). This allows the household to seal their response in the envelope rather than handing it back to the collector as was done in previous Censuses.
- There is a small display window in the envelope to make the form barcode number visible. There are clear instructions on how to insert the form correctly in the envelope. This approach is based on method successfully used in UK by ONS with Royal Mail.
- If the form is inserted in the envelope in the the wrong way, it will either display the back of the form which is blank or part of the suburb name of where the form is from - which is not sensitive information.
- Envelopes are only opened by ABS employees, employed under the Census & Statistics Act, in a secure ABS environment. These employees include warehouse staff at they need to process the forms through the capture process and data operators editing the completed forms
- Where contractors are onsite, they will either be authorised and have signed a confidentiality undertaking OR, if not authorised, materials will be removed/covered.

I hope this helps. Please feel free to give me a call or contact Soula Macfarlane if you want to follow up. Soula is managing the ABS' main data capture centre site where postage activities are taking place.

Kind regards, Gemma

**Gemma Van Halderen**

*General Manager*

Strategy and Partnerships Division | Australian Bureau of Statistics

S.22

S.22

(W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

*(See attached file: 20160725\_175119.pdf)*



**From:** [Reshma Bargon](#)  
**To:** [Amanda Nowland](#)  
**Subject:** FW: 37 Census 2016 - Name and Address detail [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
**Date:** Tuesday, 22 November 2016 10:48:36 AM

---

**From:** D'Arcy Jackson  
**Sent:** Monday, 1 August 2016 3:26 PM  
**To:** Paula Cheng S.22; Alun Thomas S.22  
**Cc:** Sarah Ghali S.22  
**Subject:** FW: Census 2016 - Name and Address detail [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Paula and Alun

I've just spoken to Phillip Gould, who works with Duncan Young at the ABS re. this briefing. They're happy to have a teleconference this Thursday morning (time to be confirmed, but around 10-11am) with their relevant census and security people to talk over the issues we're seeking further information on.

Phillip will pop through an email with list of ABS attendees and confirming the time/ number for us to call

Alun – you'll be back from Canberra, so I'm assuming you're Ok to be a starter for this

Paula – are you interested in coming along FYI?

Sarah - FYI (and if interested in sitting in, all OK as well)

Regards – D'Arcy S.22

---

**From:** D'Arcy Jackson  
**Sent:** Monday, 1 August 2016 2:58 PM  
**To:** S.22  
**Cc:** Alun Thomas S.22; Paula Cheng S.22  
**Subject:** RE: Census 2016 - Name and Address detail [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Duncan

I'm just following up on our last discussion re. a briefing for the OAIC on the upcoming census as per below – are you able to give me a call on S.22 or return email in relation to when and where this briefing could take place.

Thanks and kind regards

D'Arcy

**D'Arcy Jackson** | Assistant Director | Assessments and Data Matching  
**Regulation and Strategy Branch**

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GPO Box 5218 SYDNEY NSW 2001 | [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)

S.22

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**From:** D'Arcy Jackson  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 13 July 2016 1:55 PM  
**To:** S.22  
**Cc:** Alun Thomas S.22 Sarah Ghali S.22 Paula Cheng S.22  
**Subject:** Census 2016 - Name and Address detail [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Duncan

Thanks for your time the other day. As we discussed, the OAIC is interested in obtaining some further, high level information (additional to that contained in the PIA) in relation to the retention of names and addresses in the next Census.

From looking over the PIA and media release, the broad areas we are particularly interested in include:

- further information on the governance/ assurance mechanisms the ABS has put in place for this retention, such as the rolling annual audit program and any other general governance/ assurance activities (which could include staff training, data segregation, data retention, DBN response plans etc)
- further general and contextual information on the IT security measures in place (specifically in relation to names and address detail) as set out in Section 2.6 of the PIA.

As indicated, we're really just looking for further background and contextual information help us understand the measures put in place by the ABS in relation to this.

Could you let us know who is best placed to provide this type of information and their possible availability over the next two weeks, and we'll work from there.

Thanks and kind regards – D'Arcy

**D'Arcy Jackson** | Assistant Director  
**Regulation and Strategy Branch**  
**Office of the Australian Information Commissioner**  
GPO Box 5218 SYDNEY NSW 2001 | [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)

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**From:** Duncan Young S.22  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 28 June 2016 5:44 PM  
**To:** Angelene Falk S.22  
**Cc:** Craig Lindenmayer S.22 Gemma Van Halderen  
S.22  
**Subject:** Preparations for Census 2016

Hi Angelene,

I am the Program Manager for the 2016 Census of Population and Housing.

My colleague, Gemma Van Halderen, advised me that you were interested in understanding some information on our security infrastructure for the next Census. Can you provide any more detail about what you are keen to see and we will be happy to see what we can do to assist? Some of the details of our security approaches and infrastructure are confidential, however keen to help where possible.

I have copied in Craig Lindenmayer, ABS' IT Security Advisor, who may be best placed to respond to your questions.

kind regards,  
Duncan

Duncan Young  
Program Manager  
Census of Population & Housing | Australian Bureau of Statistics  
S.22 W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

**From:** Reshma Bargon  
**To:** Amanda Nowland  
**Subject:** FW: 38 Draft Agenda - Discussion with ABS scheduled 4 August 2016 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
**Date:** Tuesday, 22 November 2016 10:49:11 AM  
**Attachments:** OAIC - ABS meeting draft agenda.docx

---

**From:** Bindi Kindermann S.22  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 2 August 2016 4:04 PM  
**To:** D'Arcy Jackson S.22  
**Cc:** Alun Thomas S.22 Sarah Ghali S.22 Patula  
Cheng S.22 Myies Burleigh S.22  
**Subject:** Draft Agenda - Discussion with ABS scheduled 4 August 2016

Dear D'Arcy

We are look forward to meeting with you later this week. Please find attached a proposed draft agenda for your consideration.

*(See attached file: OAIC - ABS meeting draft agenda.docx)*

Please let me know if you would like anything added or subtracted from the Agenda.

Regards

Bindi

**Bindi Kindermann**

Program Manager, Data Integration and Microdata Futures  
Strategic Projects and Partnerships Division | Australian Bureau of Statistics

S.22

W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)



## Australian Government

### Agenda - Census Name Retention Processes Meeting

<b>Date and time</b>	4:00pm - 4:45pm, Thursday 4 August 2016	
<b>Location</b>	<p>Canberra:          Australian Bureau of Statistics          45 Benjamin Way, Belconnen          5A 104 Medium VC Room/VC_ABS@ABS</p> <p>Sydney:          Australian Bureau of Statistics          44 Market Street, Sydney          NSW R7306 ORANGE Large VC Room/VC_ABS@ABS</p> <p>Internal dial in number: S.22          External dial in number: [REDACTED]</p>	
<b>Chair</b>	Bindi Kindermann (ABS)	
<b>Invitees</b>	Myles Burleigh (ABS), Jennifer Bell (ABS), Brendan Kelly (ABS), Adam Rumbold (ABS), Craig Lindenmayer (ABS), Alun Thomas (OAIC), D'Arcy Jackson (OAIC), Paula Cheng (OAIC), Sarah Ghali (OAIC)	
<b>#</b>	<b>Agenda item</b>	
1	Introduction and Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA)	Chair
2	IT security environment	Craig Lindenmayer
3	Census processing security	Adam Rumbold
4	Integrating Authority accreditation	Myles Burleigh
5	Functional separation	Brendan Kelly
6	Business process and custodianship	Myles Burleigh
7	Supporting materials and contacts (FAQs etc.)	Chair

**From:** [Timothy Pilgrim](#)  
**To:** [D'Arcy Jackson](#)  
**Cc:** [Angelene Falk](#); [Paula Cheng](#); [Sarah Ghali](#); [Alun Thomas](#); [Richard O'Neill](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Draft Agenda - Discussion with ABS scheduled 4 August 2016 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
**Date:** Tuesday, 2 August 2016 4:56:10 PM

---

That's great thanks for all of that.

TP

Sent from my iPhone

On 2 Aug 2016, at 4:54 PM, D'Arcy Jackson [S.22](#) wrote:

Hi Timothy

We have received a draft agenda for the ABS meeting on Thursday as per below, FYI. We can certainly ask some questions around the levels of encryption used and ABS views on the claims made on Twitter and in the Crikey article regarding the use of SHA-1, under Items 2 and/or 3.

#	Agenda item	
1	Introduction and Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA)	Chair
2	IT security environment	Craig Lindenmayer
3	Census processing security	Adam Rumbold
4	Integrating Authority accreditation	Myles Burleigh
5	Functional separation	Brendan Kelly
6	Business process and custodianship	Myles Burleigh
7	Supporting materials and contacts (FAQs etc.)	Chair

I'll respond to Bindi tomorrow flagging that we're interested in their response to

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this specifically as we go through Items 2 or 3. If there's anything else specifically you'd like covered we can also let them know tomorrow.

BTW a twitter user (Allie Coyne, News editor at IT news) claimed on July 29 that the ABS advised they were '...only supporting SHA-1 for those with older browsers + OS'. Most will be secured by SHA-2'. We'll see what the ABS says. Some other Twitter comments FYI are at <https://twitter.com/search?q=abs%20sha-1&src=typd>

You've probably also seen the 'Fears of Chaos' SMH article this afternoon, including comments from Kat Lane [here](#) – relevantly an ABS spokesperson says "...the transition to online has driven a move to the "strongest encryption technology that current internet browsers will support".

Regards – D'Arcy S.22

---

**From:** Bindi Kindermann S.22  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 2 August 2016 4:04 PM  
**To:** D'Arcy Jackson S.22  
**Cc:** Alun Thomas S.22 Sarah Ghali  
 S.22 Paula Cheng S.22 Myles  
 Burleigh S.22  
**Subject:** Draft Agenda - Discussion with ABS scheduled 4 August 2016

Dear D'Arcy

We are look forward to meeting with you later this week. Please find attached a proposed draft agenda for your consideration.

*(See attached file: OAIC - ABS meeting draft agenda.docx)*

Please let me know if you would like anything added or subtracted from the Agenda.

Regards

Bindi

**Bindi Kindermann**

Program Manager, Data Integration and Microdata Futures  
 Strategic Projects and Partnerships Division | Australian Bureau of Statistics

S.22 (W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

<OAIC - ABS meeting draft agenda.docx>

**From:** [Bindi Kindermann](#)  
**To:** [D'Arcy Jackson](#)  
**Cc:** [Alun Thomas](#); [Myles Burleigh](#); [Paula Cheng](#); [Sarah Ghali](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Draft Agenda - Discussion with ABS scheduled 4 August 2016  
**Date:** Wednesday, 3 August 2016 3:26:51 PM  
**Attachments:** [graycol.gif](#)  
[1C357011.jpg](#)

---

Thanks D'Arcy - that's very helpful.

Bindi  
**Bindi Kindermann**

Program Manager, Data Integration and Microdata Futures  
 Strategic Projects and Partnerships Division | Australian Bureau of Statistics

S.22

S.22 (W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

"D'Arcy Jackson" ---03/08/2016 03:12:15 PM---Hi Bindi Thanks for the proposed draft agenda - there's a lot to cover, but it's certainly all target

From: "D'Arcy Jackson" S.22  
 To: "Bindi Kindermann" S.22  
 Cc: "Alun Thomas" S.22; "Sarah Ghali" S.22; "Paula Cheng" S.22; "Myles Burleigh" S.22  
 Date: 03/08/2016 03:12 PM  
 Subject: RE: Draft Agenda - Discussion with ABS scheduled 4 August 2016 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

---

Hi Bindi

Thanks for the proposed draft agenda – there's a lot to cover, but it's certainly all targeted at the areas we're interested in, which is great.

I'm also hoping (under either Item 2 or 3) that we could also touch on the ABS response to the recent Twitter/ Crikey claims around the levels of encryption being used, and specifically the use of SHA-1. Our Commissioner is aware of the media reporting around this, but would obviously appreciate hearing directly from the ABS around the concerns raised and any validity these may have, if any.

Otherwise we're also looking forward to meeting with you and your colleagues tomorrow

Kind regards – D'Arcy

**D'Arcy Jackson** | Assistant Director | Assessments and Data Matching

**Regulation and Strategy Branch**

**Office of the Australian Information Commissioner**

GPO Box 5218 SYDNEY NSW 2001 | [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)

+61 2 9284 9848 | [darcy.jackson@oaic.gov.au](mailto:darcy.jackson@oaic.gov.au)

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**From:** Bindi Kindermann S.22  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 2 August 2016 4:04 PM  
**To:** D'Arcy Jackson S.22  
**Cc:** Alun Thomas S.22 Sarah Ghali S.22 Paula Cheng  
S.22 Myles Burleigh S.22  
**Subject:** Draft Agenda - Discussion with ABS scheduled 4 August 2016

Dear D'Arcy

We are look forward to meeting with you later this week. Please find attached a proposed draft agenda for your consideration.

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Please let me know if you would like anything added or subtracted from the Agenda.

Regards

Bindi

**Bindi Kindermann**

Program Manager, Data Integration and Microdata Futures  
Strategic Projects and Partnerships Division | Australian Bureau of Statistics  
S.22  
S.22 (W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

\*\*\*\*\*  
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If you are not the intended recipient, any use or copying of any part  
of this information is unauthorised. If you have received this email in  
error, we apologise for any inconvenience and request that you notify  
the sender immediately and delete all copies of this email, together  
with any attachments.  
\*\*\*\*\*

**From:** Sarah Ghali  
**To:** Reshma Bargon  
**Subject:** FW: Draft Agenda - Discussion with ABS scheduled 4 August 2016 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
**Date:** Thursday, 4 August 2016 9:31:56 AM  
**Attachments:** OAIC - ABS meeting draft agenda.docx

---

**From:** D'Arcy Jackson  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 2 August 2016 4:54 PM  
**To:** Timothy Pilgrim S.22  
**Cc:** Angelene Falk S.22 Paula Cheng S.22 Sarah Ghali S.22 Alun Thomas S.22 Richard O'Neill S.22  
**Subject:** FW: Draft Agenda - Discussion with ABS scheduled 4 August 2016 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi Timothy

We have received a draft agenda for the ABS meeting on Thursday as per below, FYI. We can certainly ask some questions around the levels of encryption used and ABS views on the claims made on Twitter and in the Crikey article regarding the use of SHA-1, under Items 2 and/or 3.

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2	IT security environment	Craig Lindenmayer
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7	Supporting materials and contacts (FAQs etc.)	Chair

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I'll respond to Bindi tomorrow flagging that we're interested in their response to this specifically as we go through Items 2 or 3. If there's anything else specifically you'd like covered we can also let them know tomorrow.

BTW a twitter user (Allie Coyne, News editor at IT news) claimed on July 29 that the ABS advised they were '...only supporting SHA-1 for those with older browsers + OS'. Most will be secured by SHA-2'. We'll see what the ABS says. Some other Twitter comments FYI are at <https://twitter.com/search?q=abs%20sha-1&src=typd>

You've probably also seen the 'Fears of Chaos' SMH article this afternoon, including comments from Kat Lane [here](#) – relevantly an ABS spokesperson says "...the transition to online has driven a move to the "strongest encryption technology that current internet browsers will support".

Regards – D'Arcy S.22

**From:** Bindi Kindermann S.22  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 2 August 2016 4:04 PM  
**To:** D'Arcy Jackson S.22  
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**Subject:** Draft Agenda - Discussion with ABS scheduled 4 August 2016

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*(See attached file: OAIC - ABS meeting draft agenda.docx)*

Please let me know if you would like anything added or subtracted from the Agenda.

Regards

Bindi

**Bindi Kindermann**

Program Manager, Data Integration and Microdata Futures  
 Strategic Projects and Partnerships Division | Australian Bureau of Statistics

S.22

S.22

(W) [www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)

**From:** [Reshma Bargon](#)  
**To:** [Angelene Falk](#); [Brenton Attard](#)  
**Cc:** [Sarah Ghali](#); [Melanie Drayton](#); [Alun Thomas](#); [D'Arcy Jackson](#); [Paula Cheng](#); [Annan Boag](#)  
**Subject:** FYI Timeline of contact with the ABS [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
**Date:** Thursday, 4 August 2016 2:02:00 PM

---

Hi Angelene,

Here is a record of our contact with the ABS, please let me know if you would like more detail on any of these issues, or anything ahead of our meeting this afternoon?

[D2016/005870](#)

Thankyou

Reshma



Australian Government

Office of the Australian Information Commissioner

## Back pocket brief

<b>Prepared by:</b>	Sarah Ghali, Reshma Bargon
<b>To:</b>	Angelene Falk
<b>Copies:</b>	Alun Thomas; D'Arcy Jackson; Annan Boag; Paula Cheng
<b>File ref:</b>	<u>D2016/005870</u>
<b>Date:</b>	4 August 2016
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Timeline of contact with ABS re PIA for the 2016 Census</b>

## Background Information

The principle advice the OAIC provided in our initial meetings with the ABS was to encourage transparency, including to publish the PIA (which they did) and to include more detail in the PIA, (they indicated that they would do this, I am cross checking the different versions to confirm this).

## Timeline of contact with ABS re PIA for the 2016 Census

### 10 November 2015 - evening phone call

The chief statistician telephoned Timothy Pilgrim on the evening of 10 November 2015, to advise that on the following day, the ABS intended to issue a media release about its intention to conduct a PIA on a proposal to retain names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census of Population and Housing.

### 11 November 2015 – Media release provided to OAIC

The OAIC receives a letter dated 10 November 2015 from the Australian Statistician advising that the ABS intends to conduct a PIA on the proposed retention of names and addresses from responses to the 2016 Census of Population and Housing (D2015/009534). The OAIC was advised that ABS will also publicise its intention to conduct the PIA by publishing a Statement of Intent on the ABS website, supported by a media release on 11 November 2015.

### 11 November 2015 – OAIC requested draft PIA

An OAIC officer contacted Gemma Van Halderen, General Manager Strategic Partnerships and Projects Division, for further information about the PIA process and to offer assistance. Gemma Van Halderen informed the OAIC officer that a copy of the draft PIA would be provided to the OAIC within the next two weeks.

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### **18 November 2015 – Draft PIA provided**

ABS provided draft PIA to OAIC for consideration ([D2015/007820](#)).

### **24 November 2015 – Officer level meeting**

Officer level meeting between OAIC and ABS to discuss the draft PIA and provide initial impressions.

#### ***OAIC Feedback provided***

The OAIC highlighted the following as issues of importance:

*Transparency* – The OAIC suggested the ABS also consider publishing the PIA, in addition to the steps they were already taking (The ABS informed the OAIC that they had issued a media release, they had a census specific APP 1 Policy, and they were drafting an APP 5 notification in relation to the issue of retention of names and address).

*Community expectations* – the OAIC highlighted the policy consideration of whether the proposal would meet community expectations as a key issue. The ABS suggested that focus group testing that had been conducted on this issue had found that if these changes were explained in an accessible and transparent manner – including coverage of both benefits and how increased privacy risks would be managed – they believed such a change would be acceptable to the broader community. The OAIC requested that the ABS provide us with a copy of the report on the focus group testing.

*Timeframe of retention* - The OAIC asked about what steps would be taken to ensure that the data would be deleted once it was no longer required. The ABS informed us:

- that no specific timeframe has been proposed for the retention and subsequent destruction of the information, but that a Data Futures Steering Committee be responsible for monitoring whether there is an ongoing need for the information.
- a key factor affecting the length of time the information is retained could include the collection of information for the 2021 Census potentially which could make the retention of the information collected in 2016 redundant.

*Function Creep* - in relation to future uses of retained name and address information. The ABS suggested that management of this risk would be via internal approval processes and periodic reviews of policies including the policy on the retention of personal information, as well as restrictions on the use of census information set out in the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

*Security* - The PIA outlined security measures which would be implemented, in particular, the separation principle was discussed.

### **1 December 2015 – Focus Group Report Provided**

ABS provided further information, including an executive summary from the Focus Group testing they undertook [D2015/009533](#).

### 3 December 2015 – Executive level meeting

Timothy Pilgrim and Gemma Van Halderen met to discuss the draft PIA. (Attached is a copy of the executive brief for this meeting - [D2015/009285](#))

The focus of the meeting was on security, including external and internal threats. The OAIC flagged that there was a heightened risk as the information was being kept for a longer period of time.

The ABS indicated that security measures to be taken included:

- The use of the separation principle when handling and using information
- Yearly independent audits (the OAIC suggested that the ABS publicise these audits)
- Internal threats were
  - to be managed by clear messaging to staff that breaches would result in serious consequences, including jail time,
  - messaging to be re-enforced during the annual signing of secrecy and fidelity agreement
  - staff to be made cognisant of the potential for approaches to be made to them by criminal groups.

### 17 December 2015 – PIA conclusion

Gemma Van Halderen writes to Timothy Pilgrim to advise that after consideration of the PIA, focus group testing and feedback from the public and the Australian Privacy Commissioner, as well as State and Territory Privacy and Information Commissioners, the ABS has made the decision to retain names and addresses from the 2016 Census. Further, the ABS intends to announce its decision to the public via the ABS Website on 18th December 2015.

[D2015/009800](#)

### January – March 2016 - ABS kept OAIC informed of media attention

**27 January 2016** – The ABS drew our attention to a media article on the issue of retention of names and addresses

<http://www.crikey.com.au/2016/01/27/govt-to-store-a-trove-of-highly-personal-data-putting-you-at-risk/>

**10 March 2016**

ABS forwarded the OAIC a link to their response to an article in the AFR critical of the retention of names and addresses.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/ABS+responds+to+%E2%80%9CCe+nsus+no+longer+anonymous%E2%80%9D,+%28Australian+Financial+Review,+10+March+2016%29>

**22 – 29 July 2016 - FOI request from journalist**

22 July

- The OAIC received an enquiry from a journalist about data breach notifications received by the OAIC from ABS. The OAIC liaised with the ABS on this enquiry.

25 July

- A response was provided to the journalist.
- The journalist made an FOI request.

29 July

- FOI request was transferred in part to the ABS, with the remainder of the request still being processed.

**4 August 2016 – ABS briefed OAIC on security aspects of the census**

- OAIC attended ABS offices for a security briefing, covering IT security and census processing security, among other issues. Meeting agenda is attached - [D2016/005980](#)
- ABS stated that ASIO had informed them that to the best of their knowledge, no foreign states were looking to attack the Census.
- ABS expressed the view that the network had sufficient capacity to deal with the expected volume of traffic on Census night, and stated that the system was able to deal with 1 million visits per hour.
- The issue of a denial of service attack was not canvassed in this meeting.



From: Alison Wares  
 To: S.22  
 Subject: Census media statement by OAIC [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
 Date: Wednesday, 10 August 2016 9:29:00 AM

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Hi Mark,

For information, we have just released this [media statement](#).

My Assistant Commissioner, Angelene Falk, had spoken with Gemma this morning and Gemma requested that we send it through to you.

Feel free to give me a call if you'd like to discuss on S.22

Kind regards,  
 Alison

**Australian Privacy Commissioner opens investigation into Census 2016 cyber attack**

I am aware of the denial of service attacks on the Census 2016 website last night and my staff have been in contact with ABS this morning.

Based on these reports I am commencing an investigation of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in regards to these cyber attacks, under the Australian *Privacy Act 1988*. My first priority is to ensure that no personal information has been compromised as a result of these attacks.

ABS have confirmed that a decision was taken last night to shut down the website in order to protect personal data.

Yesterday I noted that the OAIC has been briefed by the ABS on the privacy protections put in place for the Census. My office will continue to work with the ABS to ensure they are taking appropriate steps to protect the personal information collected through the Census.

**Timothy Pilgrim PSM**

Australian Privacy Commissioner  
 Acting Australian Information Commissioner

.....

**Alison Wares** | Assistant Director | Strategic Communications and Coordination  
**Regulation and Strategy Branch**

**Office of the Australian Information Commissioner** |

GPO Box 5218 SYDNEY 2001 | [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au) |

S.22

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**From:** Reshma Bargon  
**To:** [Angelene Falk](#); [Paula Cheng](#); [Alun Thomas](#); [D'Arcy Jackson](#)  
**Cc:** [Annan Boag](#); [Ben Gollan](#)  
**Subject:** FYI: Contact report for the security briefing on 2016 Census from the ABS on 4 August 2016 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]  
**Date:** Tuesday, 16 August 2016 11:07:00 AM

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Dear All,

Please find attached a contact report for the security briefing from the ABS on 4 August. If you have anything further to add, please let me know,

[D2016/006080](#)

Kind Regards

Reshma Bargon

**Regulation and Strategy Branch**

**Office of the Australian Information Commissioner**

GPO Box 5218 SYDNEY NSW 2001 | [www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)

S.22

Please note that I work part time. I work on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. If your enquiry is urgent, please contact Sarah Ghali on S.22



**Australian Government**

**Office of the Australian Information Commissioner**

### Contact report

<b>Author:</b>	Reshma Bargon
<b>Copies:</b>	Angelene Falk, Paula Cheng, Alun Thomas, D'Arcy Jackson, Ben Gollan, Annan Boag
<b>Contact with:</b>	Bindi Kindermann, Myles Burleigh, Jennifer Bell, Brendan Kelly, Adam Rumbold, Craig Lindenmayer,
<b>Organisation:</b>	ABS
<b>Reference</b>	<u>D2016/006080</u>
<b>Date:</b>	4 August 2016
<b>Subject:</b>	ABS security briefing, covering IT security and census processing security

Angelene Falk made some introductory remarks, noting that the OAIC had received an increased number of complaints about the census. Angelene Falk also indicated that Timothy Pilgrim might refer publically to the fact that the OAIC had received this briefing.

Angelene Falk asked if there had been any consultation between the ABS and the disability community. Bindi Kindermann indicated that Vision Australia had certified all census contact, and offered to provide further information after the meeting, if required.

### IT security environment

Craig Lindenmayer gave a presentation on the IT security environment.

He outlined:

- steps that were taken to enhance the security culture, including ongoing education and awareness, penalties, induction and signage.
- technical IT controls that were taken, including engaging early to ensure security was built in to the project.
- an ANA Audit was conducted in 2014, and found that ABS were compliant with the top four measures, however, the ABS was not rated fully effective, due to legacy programs.

s.7 - exemptions of certain bodies

### *Online Census*

Issues raised with the online census included

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- IBM was providing the network capacity and security
- Servers are to be hosted in Australia only
- The only people who had access were IBM staff who were Australian citizens with security clearances
- They have been independently audited
- The online census implements Australian Signals Directorate guidance
- It is compliant with the Australian Government Protective Security Policy Framework
- The information held by IMB is encrypted with only ABS holding the encryption key.

### ***Encryption technology***

s.47E(d) - certain operations of agencies (3)



### **Census processing security**

Adam Rumbold outlined issues related to census processing security.

The ABS has two secure sites – a data capture centre, where forms are scanned, and a data processing centre. Only ABS staff have access to these sites. The desktop environment is limited – computers do not have email, smart phones are not permitted, and cameras are not permitted. While most processes are automated, some clerical staff are required. Generally staff only see snippets of a form, not the whole form. Staff only see data on ‘need to know’ basis and access to data is confined to responsible role only.

There are very strict controls over the use of name information, this only gets used in essential processes.

The process with papers forms is that a staff member gets the form out of the envelope, and scans the form. This staff member does see the whole form. Supervisors of these staff would also see the whole form, for quality control. However, there is no ability to allow staff to search for a particular form. All staff processing paper forms underwent training and are under supervision during work time.

For online forms, there is generally improved data quality, so less need for staff to see the whole form.

Annan Boag asked a question about witness protection. ABS indicated that they had special arrangements in place, and offered to provide further information after the meeting.

### **Integrating Authority accreditation**

Myles Burleigh gave a presentation on Integration Principles agreed for Commonwealth data.

- 1) Any project will have a very structured risk assessment, which would look at various factors including whether consent had been provided, and the sensitivity of the information.
- 2) The project must be conducted by an approved data integration authority, with the demonstrated ability to conduct the integration. The raw information must not be disclosed.
- 3) To become accredited, an entity undergoes a self-assessment against set criteria, and then is audited by an independent third party. This information then goes to an oversight board.

ABS was first accredited in 2012.

### **Functional separation**

Brendan Kelly gave a presentation on the ABS use of functional separation to protect name and address data using power point.

Functional separation means that name and address information would be separated from other information on the Census dataset, and stored separately from each other and other data.

Under the separation principle, ABS officers would only have access to the information they needed to do their job. This means that only a limited number of ABS staff would have access to the information. Generally, only E1 and E2 staff would have any access to the information.

Functional separation would involve:

- names, anonymised names and addresses would be stored securely and separately to each other and to other Census data
- access to name, anonymised name and addresses is restricted and approved on a need-to-know basis
- names would be used to generate anonymised versions of names to use as linkage keys in statistical and research projects that have been approved

- neither names nor anonymised names would be part of a Census analytical file, nor would they ever be disclosed by the ABS

This is supported by staff training + support materials

- Ongoing activity monitoring
  - Secure data destruction
- Annual review of ongoing benefits and risks

### **Business process and custodianship**

Myles Burleigh gave a presentation on Business process and custodianship.

Custodianship means that separate areas have access to names vs address data. The location where the files are stored are subject to monitoring.

The four year time frame means that there is no possibility of simply updating the data as it would be destroyed before the next Census is conducted.

