

**JOINT MEDIA RELEASE
WITH
THE HON KEVIN RUDD MP
PRIME MINISTER**

NATIONAL CENSUS 2011

The Prime Minister and the Assistant Treasurer, Senator Nick Sherry, today announced that the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has been approved to conduct the 16th national Census on 9 August 2011.

Census 2011 will be the largest data collection ever undertaken by the ABS which has been allocated a total of \$440 million over seven years to conduct the survey.

With the first national Census having taken place in 1911, Census 2011 will also mark 100 years of national census-taking in Australia.

Involving every household in the nation, the conduct of the Census is logistically the single largest peacetime operation conducted by the Australian Government.

Importantly, the national Census will also have a positive impact on jobs and the economy. A temporary workforce of 40,000 will be employed at its peak, across Australia in a range of roles including Census field operations. For example, the processing of Census forms in Melbourne will involve about 900 temporary staff from August 2011.

Recruitment of field staff will commence from early 2011 and positions will run until the completion of data processing late in 2012.

The Census provides a statistical snapshot of the nation and in doing so delivers a comprehensive picture of the society in which we live. Census information is used by all sections of the community, from the Federal Government and State and Territory Governments to local governments, town planners, community groups, students and business.

The Census provides a wealth of information for informed decision-making throughout the community. Information from the Census is critical in developing policy and in planning the delivery of services to the community, such as health and human services, and facilitates a better understanding of vulnerable sections of the population.

Census data are used to:

- estimate the population of each State, Territory and local government area;

- determine electoral boundaries and calculate the number of members to be elected to the House of Representatives from each State and Territory;
- determine the distribution of Federal Government funds to the States;
- show characteristics of Australia's people and their housing within small geographic areas and for small population groups;
- help plan basic services such as housing, social security, transport, education, industry, shops and hospitals;
- give governments and others information they can use to support planning, administration, policy development and evaluation activities;
- assist the private sector in key business planning decisions.

Census 2011 will build on the successful deployment of internet technologies to assist in the completion of Census forms with householders able to complete their Census form easily and securely online via the use of eCensus, in addition to the traditional paper Census form.

The ABS has also developed a wide range of strategies to considerably improve the engagement and involvement of remote, rural, regional and Indigenous communities in the Census. Importantly this will assist in ensuring all such communities are properly counted, which will in turn ensure accurate resourcing and funding decisions are made into the future.

Primary and secondary students will also have the opportunity to boost their understanding of the Census process and to prepare for Census 2011 by taking part in the innovative *CensusAtSchool*, a world-leading student and teacher engagement, data collection, numerical literacy and statistics analysis project also run by the ABS.

A detailed Information Paper on Census 2011, including topics to be included in the Census, will also be tabled in Parliament today and will be available at www.abs.gov.au.

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