

Australia 1989: Survey Information*

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

Official name of the survey: *1990 Survey of Income and Housing Costs and Amenities*

This survey was conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics as a special supplementary survey (SSS14) to its monthly labour force survey program. The survey collected a wide range of information on incomes, working arrangements, housing costs and housing amenities.

The main users of data from the survey are the social policy departments of the Australian government and researchers in academic and private research centres. A public use file of selected data from the survey is available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). This file has been used to generate the LIS data file. Users are restricted to using this data for statistical purposes only, and may not use it to identify individuals. In addition, certain copyright restrictions apply. Further information on the survey generally, and the conditions of use of the unit record file in particular, can be obtained from:

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The bulk of the survey was conducted during the period October to December 1990, with annual income information collected for the 1989-90 financial year (July-June). A second phase of fieldwork was conducted in February to April 1991 to collect further information from self-employed people. The demographic data in the LIS dataset refers to the October to December period, whilst the income data used is that for the 1989-90 financial year. In general, the survey methodology was very similar to that used for the surveys used in creating the LIS AS81 and AS85 datasets. Important differences from the AS85 dataset are noted below. A bibliography of the main official publications from this survey is provided in Section N.

B. POPULATION AND SAMPLE SIZE, SAMPLING METHODS.

1. The Sample Design and Sampling Frames

The survey was conducted throughout Australia on a multi-stage area sample of private dwellings (houses, flats, etc.) and a list sample of non-private dwellings (hotels, motels, etc.), and covered about one third of one per cent of the population of Australia. Sampling probabilities were based on population estimates from the census and other data sources. The sampling fraction varied across the different states and territories of Australia to permit useful estimates for the smaller states.

Information was obtained by trained interviewers in a personal interview conducted with each person aged 15 years and over in the selected dwelling.

The following people were excluded from the scope of the survey:

1. certain diplomatic personnel of overseas governments customarily excluded from census and estimated populations,
2. overseas residents in Australia,
3. members of non-Australian defence forces (and their dependents) stationed in Australia.
[Australian military???
4. residents of institutions such as hospitals and sanatoria, and inmates of gaols, reformatories, boarding schools etc.
5. people migrating to Australia after 30 June 1990.

No income information was collected from people aged 15-20 and at school full-time at the time of interview (LIS income variables are set to zero). This is different from the survey treatment in AS81 and AS85. Almost all these people will be included in the LIS definition of 'dependent child', as there are very few school children aged 19 or 20 ('school' does not include higher education). If these people were the head or spouse of a family (very rare), that family is excluded from the LIS data file.

The LIS data file also excludes families where either the head or spouse were overseas for more than 12 weeks during 1989-90 (foreign incomes are not recorded in the survey). Also, where the family containing the household head was excluded on this basis, the whole household was excluded. Note that the LIS AS85 file also excluded women who changed marital status since the beginning of the financial year (this excluded many sole parents). The population for the AS90 file is thus closer to that for AS81 than AS85.

C. MEASURES OF DATA QUALITY

1. Response Rates

The survey was conducted under the Census and Statistics Act, which mandates participation. [to complete]

2. Reporting and Under-Reporting and Income Data Quality

[to complete]

3. Data Corrections and Adjustments

Households containing individuals with a large number of 'don't knows' or 'refusal' responses to monetary questions were treated as 'disguised refusals', and the whole household excluded from the analysis. This meant the exclusion of 1,058 person records. In addition, a further 637 people were dropped where one or more people were excluded on scope or coverage grounds. [what exactly does 'out on coverage' mean?]

With the exception of amount outstanding on housing mortgages and loans, all missing information on monetary questions was imputed on the basis of answers provided by other respondents (cold-decking).

All income amounts have been perturbed to preserve confidentiality. The precise method used is not public, but is believed to involve the replacing of income amounts near the tail of the distribution with the average amount for that demographic cell.

4. General Assessment of Income Data Quality

[to complete]

D. DATA COLLECTION AND ADMINISTRATION

The data were collected via personal interviews with all persons aged 15 and over in the selected household. On the initial call the interviewer completed a household schedule, and then made arrangements (if necessary) to return to interview each person in the scope and coverage of the survey.

For each individual a detailed personal questionnaire was administered. Respondents were asked to refer to personal records such as taxation assessment or return forms, group certificates, pay slips, etc. where available. Persons with income from their own business who did not know their annual income were asked if the interviewers could call back when their records were available. Call-backs were made in February to April 1991.

E. WEIGHTING PROCEDURES

Each person record in the file has a weight assigned which takes account of probability of selection in the sample from their region, with an adjustment to account for under-enumeration at the age, sex and metropolitan/rest of state level. The weights were derived from the monthly population benchmarks showing the number of persons in each part-of-state, cross classified by age and sex. In addition, the weights also compensate for a higher level of 'disguised refusals' from self-employed people. Because of a requirement to obtain stable estimates for the smaller states, probabilities of selection vary significantly from state to state. Hence the use of weights to obtain Australian estimates is essential.

The family weight in the LIS file is defined as the harmonic mean of [??? - definition of family weight].

F. DETERMINATION OF SURVEY UNIT MEMBERSHIP

The basic criteria for persons to be included were that they satisfied the scope criteria of the survey (see Section B) and were usual residents of the dwelling. However, usual residents of the dwelling were excluded if they were away from the dwelling for the whole of the field-work period, whilst visitors were

included if they would be away from their usual dwelling for the whole of the fieldwork period. Other visitors were dropped from the survey (unlike AS85).

To determine family relationships, respondents were asked to nominate a person as head of the household, with relationships being recorded relative to that person. Within households, respondents were classified into families and "income units". Income units can be one of the following types: single adults, sole parents with dependent children, married couples or married couples with dependent children. Couples in "de-facto" (cohabiting) relationships are coded identically to those who are legally married.

Families comprise persons related by blood, marriage (legal or de-facto) or adoption with the proviso that there can only be one couple or sole parent per family. Thus a household comprising a married couple and their sole parent daughter is coded as two families, as is a household comprising a husband and wife together with the wife's mother and her husband.

The family head on the unit record file, however, is not necessarily the person nominated as household head by the initial respondent. The family head is defined as the head of the primary income unit of the family. If this income unit is a couple, the husband is the head. The primary income unit is defined according to a pre-defined hierarchy, with married couples, for example, coming before individuals. In the LIS database, information at both the family and household level can be accessed (see variable D5), as well as at the person level.

G. CHILDREN AND SPOUSES

Dependent children are defined as people aged under 15 years, or aged 15 to 20 years and a full-time student, who have a parent/guardian in the income unit and are neither a spouse nor parent of anyone in the income unit. Since all persons aged 15 and over are included in the unit record file, alternative definitions of children are possible. This information is used to calculate the LIS variable D27 (which follows the standard LIS definition).

As noted above, couples in de-facto (cohabiting) relationships were coded as if married. De-facto relationships were defined as existing where a married couple live together in a married situation, but are not legally married. For example, responses such as "fiancee" and "living with my girlfriend/ boyfriend" are coded as de-facto.

H. AVAILABILITY OF BASIC SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

A wide range of social and demographic information is available from the survey, and most of this is also made available on the unit record file. Some variables, however, have had categories collapsed to protect the confidentiality of respondents. A summary of available variables is shown in Table AS90.4. These variables are available for all persons interviewed. Information on dependents aged under 15, however, is much more limited, consisting only of the number of dependents in different age ranges, and the age of the youngest child.

Table AS85.4 Basic Social and Demographic Information

Variable	Available	Comments
Sex	yes	
Age	yes	15, 16, 17, 18-20, 21-24 then in 5 year ranges to age 75
Date of birth	no	
Relationship to unit head	yes	
Ethnicity/Nationality	yes	country of birth
Race	no	
Legal or cohabitation status	no	treated identically and not distinguished.
Highest level of education	yes	
Disability status	yes	available from labour force status question

I. AVAILABILITY OF LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION

A wide range of labour force information was collected for all persons included on the public use unit tape. These variables relate both to the persons' status at the time of interview, and their experience during the 1985-86 financial year. Table AS85.5 summarises the information available from the public use unit record file.

Table AS85.5 Labour Market Information

Variable	Available	Comments
Labour force status	yes	
Hours worked	yes	
Full-time or part-time	yes	
Type of occupational training	?	
Occupational group	yes	
Industry	yes	
Worker of professional status	no	
Weeks employed last year	yes	
Duration of unemployment last year	yes	
Wage or salary income	yes	
Self employment income	yes	

J. AVAILABILITY OF GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

State of residence and capital city/rest of state is identified (The Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory are combined).

K. SOURCES AND AMOUNTS OF CASH INCOME

Both current and 1989-90 financial year incomes were recorded from a wide range of cash income sources. The incomes recorded in the LIS database are for the 1989-90 fiscal year (except for wage rates). Negative incomes from own businesses and partnerships were recorded (but are not included in the LIS database).

L. TAXES

Personal income tax liability is imputed. In addition the survey recorded some information on payments for local government and utility taxes (as part of the housing cost component of the survey).

**M. BIBLIOGRAPHY OF MAIN PUBLICATIONS BASED ON THE 1990 INCOME
AND HOUSING COSTS AND AMENITIES SURVEY**

Australian Bureau of Statistics, *1990 Survey of Income and Housing Costs and Amenities, Unit Record File on Magnetic Tape and Floppy Disk*. Cat. No. 6543.0. * This document is a draft provided by Bruce Bradbury, even if it might not be complete it contains useful information that might help users when they compare different years of the Australian survey

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