

Paper delivered at the 10<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference of the  
*Australian Population Association*  
POPULATION AND GLOBALISATION:  
AUSTRALIA IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY  
Melbourne 28<sup>th</sup> November to 1<sup>st</sup> December 2000  
Melbourne Australia

## THE NEW ABS HOUSEHOLD SURVEY PROGRAM



Marion McEwin  
Australian Bureau of Statistics

**Abstract**

Household surveys form a crucial part of the ABS social, labour and population statistics program. In 1998/99 ABS undertook a review of its program of household surveys to reassess existing and continuing demands for data against emerging new demands and known gaps in the statistical program. From 2001 ABS will introduce an expanded program of household surveys which addresses the highest priority demands of users. Surveys of the Indigenous population are an important element of this program. A general social survey is one of the new survey vehicles to be included. This paper describes the evolution of this new program and outlines the essential features of some of the new vehicles.

*Marion McEwin, The new ABS household survey program*

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **History of the ABS household survey program**

- 1 The ABS household survey program commenced in November 1960 with the conduct of the first labour force survey. The aim of this survey was to provide comprehensive work force estimates at quarterly intervals during intercensal periods. Prior to that comprehensive official statistics of the workforce were available only from periodic population censuses. The survey estimates also supplemented the existing statistical series of employment (derived from employer surveys) and unemployment (derived from administrative data). First release of figures for the period 1960 - 1963 was in February 1964.
- 2 Initially the labour force survey was confined to the six state capital cities. The first national survey was conducted in February 1964. First release of national time series for the period August 1966 - February 1969 was in July 1969. The potential for obtaining supplementary information on various topics was recognised early in the life of the survey and by the mid 1960s, supplementary surveys were a regular feature of what became known as the quarterly population survey. Over the years supplementary survey topics have included internal migration, school leavers, interstate travel, multiple job holders, backyard egg production, shift work, alcohol consumption and fatherless families.
- 3 Following the economic downturn of the early 70s, government policy makers and other analysts expressed a need for more frequent measures of labour market activity (particularly unemployment levels), with a range of explanatory variables and population characteristics. After independent reviews, the Government concluded that the ABS should introduce a monthly labour force survey as the official source of unemployment and labour market data from February 1978 onwards.
- 4 During the 1970s growing interest in data to inform social policy analysis led the ABS to conduct a poverty survey, health survey and household expenditure survey. The need to produce results from the monthly labour force survey quickly, constrained the topics that could be included as supplements within the monthly population survey and led in 1979 to the establishment of a parallel program of annual special social surveys to meet the needs for more detailed, complex and in depth data on specific topics.
- 5 In 1994 the ABS introduced an additional (primarily user funded) household survey vehicle, the population survey monitor (PSM). This was a small quarterly omnibus survey (3,000 households) with personal interview of one person aged 18 years and over per household in February, May, August and November. Sample could be

aggregated across quarters to an annual sample of 12,000 persons. Each quarterly survey included a range of topics. The emphasis was on straightforward topics with short development and processing time frames.

- 6 Over the last twenty five years the scope and range of household surveys conducted by the ABS has grown enormously and a wide range of survey methodologies have been employed. The first survey to be conducted using computer assisted interview (CAI) techniques was the longitudinal survey of employment and unemployment patterns (SEUP) conducted from 1995 to 1997. From 2002 all ABS special social surveys will use CAI methodology. From August 1996 to February 1997 telephone interviewing was introduced progressively into the monthly population survey.
- 7 The complexity of survey questionnaires has also increased greatly. The early labour force survey questionnaire was limited to 22 questions on a single side of the survey form. The current survey questionnaire has 88 questions. The 1969 income survey conducted as a supplement to the labour force survey involved 8 questions. The current survey contains over 150 questions.

### **Role of the ABS household survey program**

- 8 The aims of the ABS population statistics program are:
  - to provide a range of statistics required to monitor the well-being of Australians with particular reference to important sub-groups of the population; and
  - to support the development, implementation and evaluation of policies and programs of key Commonwealth and State government agencies.
- 9 This program includes the population census, a range of administrative statistics (eg vitals registrations, causes of death, overseas movement, educational enrolments and course completions, crime, courts and prison statistics) and a program of household surveys. While all elements are important, the household survey program plays a crucial role in providing the information needed to assess the social development of the nation. Household surveys also provide much of the personal/household data that is needed to assess impacts, outcomes and effectiveness. Indeed, a country without a substantial household survey capability almost invariably has an impoverished social statistics program.
- 10 Because household surveys document the actions and attributes of people and households who are active in the economy of the nation, they also inform economic debate as well as social policy. This includes information on transport and travel, communication and information technology, energy and environment as well as the labour market. A major component of the ABS household survey budget is directed towards the labour force survey which produces monthly economic indicators on employment and unemployment. Of course this survey is also a rich source of information on people's working life and its various inter-relationships about which

social policy is concerned. Almost invariably, social and economic consequences are intertwined.

### **Review of the ABS program of household surveys**

- 11 In 1998-1999 ABS undertook a review of the program of household surveys to assess its continued relevance. In the process ABS had extensive user consultation, circulated working papers and draft proposals, and received many responses and submissions from users. In addition proposals were discussed with the Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC).
- 12 Impetus for this review came from a recognition that the level of demand for information from ABS household surveys exceeded the capacity of ABS survey vehicles and resources - as a consequence there were some important gaps in the statistics available. The review involved reassessing existing and continuing demands against emerging new demands, including the known gaps in the statistical program. It also included an examination of options for improving the capacity and flexibility of the survey vehicles.

### **Information requirements of ABS household surveys**

- 13 To meet the objectives listed in paragraph 8, the social statistics program must address contemporary social issues and policy questions which span all aspects of people's lives and all areas of concern. Across this breadth of activity it must provide both specific and general data which forms the basic 'intelligence' or 'information platform' to support discussion, debate, development and evaluation, as well as the context within which decisions are made. It must also provide data at regular intervals so that social progress can be monitored over time, and the impacts and consequences of various policies assessed.
- 14 While the broad goals of the population statistics program drive some segments of the household survey program it is important that the program also focus on priority areas and on continuing and emerging issues. For this reason, during the review, ABS sought advice from key users as to why they considered various survey topics to be important and how the data had been or would be used to inform decision making. In addition, we sought broad input on continuing and emerging information needs, policy priorities, etc which could inform decisions on a future program of surveys.
- 15 Information requirements of ABS household surveys were then specified in terms of the key issues and policy questions that need to be addressed. Priorities for survey topics were determined on the basis of these information requirements as well as ABS deliberations of what is required of a national statistics program in the various subject fields, based on user contact and consultation over the years.

### **Criteria for determining survey priorities**

- 16 While the future program reflects the wide range of comments and advice received by the ABS over the course of the review, users presented ABS with a diversity of views reflecting their different needs and their differing views on how the objectives of the ABS household survey program could best be achieved. In determining priorities for topics to be included in the survey program, competing demands have been assessed using the criteria listed below. This is of necessity a subjective process and while endeavours have been made to address the issues and comments raised by users, in some cases it has been difficult to reconcile conflicting interests. The criteria for determining survey priorities are:
- (a) The extent to which data supports a core set of social statistics/indicators to be developed with key Commonwealth and State government users for each broad area of social concern.
  - (b) The extent to which the topic provides data required to support the development of public policy, to evaluate the outcomes and effectiveness of government programs, or to inform important current and emerging issues of social concern. In particular:
    - the use made of previous data;
    - the policies, issues or analyses being addressed;
    - the level of public expenditure affected by availability of the data; and
    - the level of priority assigned by key Government agencies to collection of the data.
  - (c) The availability of similar or complementary data from other sources.
  - (d) For data previously collected, how long ago the survey was run and the rationale for a particular frequency.
  - (e) The breadth of the client base for the topic and the relative importance of the range of users.

### **Finalising and updating the survey program**

- 17 The household survey review was strategic in nature and aimed to set the future structure and broad content of the ABS program of household surveys. Assessed relative priorities were indicated by suggesting what topics should be included and with what frequency. However, it is neither possible nor sensible, to completely define the household survey program for the next 10 years or so. Some flexibility is needed to respond to emerging demands and changing priorities. The approach taken therefore has been to broadly indicate to users the topics to be covered and the sets of data they might expect to be available.

- 18 Within the context of the final structure and broad content of the program the ABS, with the assistance of ASAC, reviews the forward survey program each year as part of its annual planning processes. This allows new demands and contemporary priorities to be taken into account. In that way the survey program is determined giving sufficient time for each survey to be developed (at present that generally means one year in advance for surveys which are supplements to the labour force survey or topics on a multi-purpose household survey, and about two years in advance for major household surveys).
- 19 To assist in maintaining relevance of the household survey program the ABS will work with users to ensure that lists of key issues and policy questions within each subject field are updated and extended on an ongoing basis in order to provide a contemporary view of the information needs that should be met by ABS household surveys and other collection vehicles. These will be supported by data on government expenditures within the various subject fields to give a perspective on the size and importance of the program areas.

## **FUTURE PROGRAM**

- 20 From 2001 ABS will introduce an expanded program of household surveys, which addresses the highest priority demands of users including those not met by the previous program. This program includes a partnership with the Department of Health and Aged Care for funding support for an expanded program of health surveys. This new program has the following elements:
- (i) Monthly labour force and supplementary surveys
  - (ii) Special social surveys (SSS)
  - (iii) General social survey (GSS)
  - (iv) Indigenous social survey( ISS)
  - (v) Multi-purpose household survey (MPHS)
- 21 The Population Survey Monitor (PSM) will be discontinued at the end of 2000. ABS considers the opportunity costs (both skilled staff resources and the interviewer panel) would be better deployed on higher priority national statistical work, and that much of the data obtained by the PSM can be effectively collected by the private sector. ABS also had concerns about the quality of some of the data collected in the PSM and about the substance of a number of the topics proposed. However, ABS is conscious of continuing user requirements for data currently collected by the PSM and will look to assist users transfer their work to the private sector. Some topics included in the PSM may become part of the ABS household survey program in a future multi-purpose household survey.

### **Monthly supplementary surveys**

- 22 These involve short interviews (in the main about 3 mins per household) conducted in conjunction with the main monthly labour force survey interview. Information is collected from a responsible adult in the household and most interviews are conducted over the phone. This survey vehicle is, therefore, most suitable for relatively simple topics, particularly those related to the labour market. These surveys are to be run in 10 months of the year with one survey per year designated a state survey. Sample sizes may vary by topic, with constraints on throughput and the distribution of response load. The proposed frequency of topics is set out in attachment 1.

### Special social surveys

- 23 Special social surveys aim to provide detailed in depth information about a specific subject area or group within the population. They may be of varying length although a standard survey usually involves a 45 minute interview per household. They may employ a range of methodologies (eg personal interview, diaries, mail back questionnaires) or include special features depending on survey objectives and the nature of the data to be collected. It is intended that these surveys be conducted with the following frequency.

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Next</u>
Disability, ageing and carers	6 yearly	2003
Health	3 yearly	2001
Indigenous health	6 yearly	2001
Education and training	4 yearly	2001
Income and housing costs	3 yearly	2000/01
Household expenditure	6 yearly	2003/04
Retirement and superannuation	6 yearly	2005
Time use	12 yearly	2005/06
Crime and safety	3 yearly	2002
Violence against persons	12 yearly	2006

### Health surveys

- 24 The new survey program includes 3 yearly national health surveys supported by a funding partnership with the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care. These replace the former program of five yearly national health surveys which is no longer adequate to meet all the demands for priority health information. The program aims to provide: - information for monitoring and surveillance across a range of key health issues; health indicators for national health priority areas and important sub-groups in the population; information to explore relationships between health and population characteristics. The possibility of linking (with respondent consent) survey data with external data such as from the administrative systems of the Health Insurance Commission is also under consideration from 2004/5.

- 25 It is intended that the range of health topics covered in household surveys be expanded by identifying core topics to be included in every survey and others which will be included every second or third survey. Core topics are most likely to be those which correlate with ill health more generally such as health risk factors and assist in the interpretation and analysis of specific health status measures. Every second survey will include a supplementation to the Indigenous sample sufficient for the production of state/NT level estimates.

### **General social survey**

- 26 A General Social Survey (GSS) will be conducted every three years and will collect data from a range of areas of social concern to allow information to be connected in ways not generally available, for use in developing broad-based social policy. The content of each survey will be largely fixed (although it can be expected to evolve over time) but with some spare capacity in each survey to include items relating to contemporary or emerging issues. This will facilitate monitoring social change over time.
- 27 A GSS will provide insight into the living standards that families achieve from the range of human and economic resources at their disposal and allow for an assessment of the various dimensions of social advantage and disadvantage. It would also allow for the relationship between health status and health outcomes, and various social and economic determinants to be explored. A GSS with such broad content cannot provide in depth information about a particular field to support detailed policy analysis - that would be the function of special social surveys (SSSs). However, the aim will be to have some overlap and consistency between question sets in the GSS and the more detailed SSSs to enable statistical links to be made. A list of data items under consideration for testing for the first survey in 2002 is contained in attachment 2.

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Indigenous) surveys**

- 28 The ABS is aware of the priority for information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across all areas of social statistics. The enhanced household survey program addresses the highest priority areas. The following list outlines current ABS activity and plans for Indigenous data collections over the next 5 years. In addition, as ABS firms up plans for its program beyond that time, as part of its annual planning process, it will assess user priority for Indigenous data on other topics and possibly incorporate them into this program.

<u>Collection</u>	<u>Output level</u>	<u>Timing</u>
Housing survey (a)	National	1999
CHINs (b)	Community	1999
Health Survey	National	2001

Population Census	CD	2001
CHINs (b)	Community	2001
Social Survey	State/NT	2002
Health	State/NT	2004/5

(a)With funding from the Department of Family and Community Services  
(b)With funding from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission

- 29 The collection of data from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population living in remote and sparsely settled areas of the country poses particular difficulties beyond the obvious logistical problems associated with distance. Experience with previous ABS surveys of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people indicates that standard household survey approaches do not work as well as we would wish in these areas and standard survey concepts and questions are not always appropriate. As ABS is in the business of providing high quality and relevant data, the Indigenous survey strategy, in the first instance, will collect data from people in these areas using methodologies and a limited set of data items that are known to provide data of acceptable quality. ABS is researching better collection methods to improve data quality and allow the data set to be extended over time.
- 30 ABS also recognises the high demand placed on Indigenous people for information (particularly by government) and the need to manage the load on respondents to its Indigenous surveys. To facilitate this, ABS will be further developing the Indigenous community frame used in the Community Housing and Infrastructure Needs Survey (CHINS) for use in sample selection of future Indigenous surveys. Every attempt will be made to manage respondent load so it is maintained at a reasonable level and then spread, as far as possible, amongst communities or households. In parallel with this work, ABS will examine the areas where tailored procedures are required to collect data of acceptable quality.

### **Indigenous Social Survey**

- 31 The focus of the Indigenous Social Survey (ISS) is to collect information about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Australia across a range of areas of social concern, including health, housing, work, education and A list of prospective data items is contained in attachment 3. The survey budget provides for a sample of up to 11,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across urban, rural and remote areas and will be designed to produce estimates at the national, state and territory NT levels. The last survey of this kind on a national scale was the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey (NATSIS) conducted in 1994.
- 32 The ISS is planned to be conducted in 2002 and then on a 6-yearly basis. It is intended that the data content will largely overlap with that of the GSS to provide comparative social indicators between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and to allow for comparison of items with the 1994 NATSIS. The GSS will

produce results for the total population and the non-Indigenous population for comparison with results from the ISS. The content of the ISS for sparsely settled (remote) areas will be a subset of the data collected for non-sparsely settled (non-remote) areas, taking into account collection difficulties and the appropriateness of concepts.

### **Multi-purpose household survey**

- 33 The multi-purpose household survey (MPHS) is a multi-topic personal interview survey using relatively simple questions and straightforward concepts. It will collect, by personal interview, a small amount of data in a number of subject fields rather than a large amount of data about a single topic. The MPHS will run two years in three, in those years when the GSS is not in the field.
- 34 A sample size of up to 17,000 persons is envisaged. It is expected that the survey program will include a large number of topics that will be repeated to allow for comparisons over time but also saving on development time and costs. It will also provide capacity to respond to emerging demand and contemporary priorities in a timely way.
- 35 Priorities for topics to be included will be determined one year in advance so that ABS retains the flexibility to address the more important contemporary issues. The first MPHS is planned for 2003. While priorities for topics to be included in this and future surveys have yet to be determined, based on the criteria set out in paragraph 16, it is envisaged that topics such as voluntary work, household transitions, IT access and use, sports participation, police & justice could be included.

### **Longitudinal Surveys**

- 36 Many key users have emphasised the need for longitudinal surveys to provide insight into the dynamics of an increasingly diverse society, including why and how often change occurs. Increasingly, they report, social policy is being used to influence behaviour and social policy analysis requires answers about changes in behaviour and personal circumstances over time (eg is poverty a transient or recurring state for those who experience it?). Information is sought not only for a point in time but for transitions from one state to another (eg from employed to unemployed, from married to divorced, from parental home to independent living).
- 37 ABS accepts the value of longitudinal data but is concerned about the difficulties of collecting (including maintaining adequate response rates) and analysing longitudinal survey data and the high associated cost. ABS will continue to support the projects being undertaken by the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) which has been funded to conduct a longitudinal survey of family, income and labour dynamics and a longitudinal survey of children. In the short term, the expanded program of household surveys, will leave no capacity to take

on the conduct of such surveys. However ABS will keep the situation under review.

### **Gaps in the program**

- 38 Even with an expanded program of household surveys, ABS is aware that some important gaps will remain in the information that users need to address issues of concern and monitor change over time. Some of these gaps relate to the proposed frequency of surveys. Others to methodological difficulties and/or costs of collecting certain types of data. The gaps in the proposed program include:
- ii) *literacy* - a survey on aspects of adult literacy was run by ABS in 1996. There is currently a major policy focus on literacy, principally directed towards schooling. While it is anticipated that there will be a range of actions and data to monitor outcomes of these policies for children, a national survey of adult literacy would be desirable from time to time, say 10-12 yearly.
  - iii) *nutrition* - a national nutrition survey was run by ABS in 1995 with funding from the then Commonwealth Department of Health and Community Services. There is some scope in the program of health surveys to include nutrition and dietary indicators but not for a stand alone survey which obtains a detailed inventory of all food and beverages consumed over a given time period.
  - iv) *illicit drug use* - this is a major government policy concern affecting a range of different sectors (eg health, crime and justice, etc). It is also an issue about which data is difficult and problematic to collect. ABS proposes for the time being to leave this to the regular surveys of illicit drug use commissioned by the Department of Health and Aged Care.
  - v) *mental health* - a survey of mental health and well-being was run by ABS in 1997, with funding from the then Commonwealth Department of Health and Community Services. While some modules from this survey could be included in a future program of health surveys to provide information on particular mental conditions such as depression, a survey incorporating the Composite International Diagnostic Instrument (CIDI), which was the centrepiece of the previous survey, would need to be run separately.
  - vi) *biomedical risk factors* - these surveys involve the collection of data on physical and biological measurements including the taking of blood samples. They provide biological evidence on the distribution of health risk factors and disease precursors to complement self-reported health risk and disease status information. As such they have an important place within a program of national health surveys. A proposal for the conduct of a national biomedical risk factor survey was endorsed by the National Public Health Partnership in February 1999. ABS role in this survey is still being determined.

- vii) *assets and wealth* - given the sensitive nature of such data, this is not easy information to collect. It is anticipated that some information on assets and wealth will be available from the MPHS and some special social surveys, including the proposed survey of retirement planning and superannuation, but is likely to be at a fairly broad level. A purpose-specific survey would be required to satisfy the full extent of detail sought, but some serious methodological problems concerning response rates and data quality would have to be resolved.

**Attachment 1**  
**MONTHLY SUPPLEMENTARY SURVEYS**

<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Next planned</b>
<b>Family and community</b>		
Family characteristics	5 yearly	2003
Child care	3 yearly	2002
<b>Education</b>		
Transition to work (a)	Annual	ongoing
<b>Work</b>		
Labour force experience	2 yearly	2001
Labour mobility	2 yearly	2002
Characteristics of small business owners	3 yearly	2001
Persons employed at home	5 yearly	?
Working arrangements	3 yearly	2000
Persons not in the labour force	Annual	ongoing
Underemployed workers	Annual	ongoing
Job search experience of unemployed persons	Annual	ongoing
	5 yearly	2002
Multiple jobholders (b)	3 yearly	2002
Characteristics of migrants	4 yearly	2001
Retrenchment and redundancy	2 yearly	2002
Successful & unsuccessful job search experience	3 yearly	2001
	4 yearly	2002
Forms of employment	Annual	ongoing
Retirement & retirement intentions	5 yearly	?
Weekly earnings of employees (c)		
Employment benefits		
<b>Housing</b>		
Rental investors (d)	6 yearly	?
<b>Culture/Leisure</b>		
Attendance at culture/leisure venues	4 yearly	2003
Work in culture/leisure activities	4 yearly	2001
<b>Environment</b>		
Environmental practices	Annual	ongoing

- (a) includes items on participation in education  
(b) limited set of items collected annually and more detailed information 5 yearly  
(c) not collected in census years.  
(d) subject to development of satisfactory mail back methodology

**Note:** The frequency of some of these topics may change in the future. They were not examined in great detail in the household survey review and will be undergoing more detailed examination during 2001.

**Attachment 2****CONTENT UNDER CONSIDERATION AND TESTING FOR 2002 GSS**

<p><b>Demographic/core</b>  Age/sex  Social/registered marital status  Family type  Household type  Relationship in household  Number and age of people in household  State or Territory of usual residence  Capital city/rest of State  ARIA/SEIFA  Indigenous status  Country of birth  Year of arrival  Proficiency in spoken English  Main language spoken at home</p> <p><b>Health</b>  SF12 (physical and mental summary score)  Disability status  Smoking  Exercise</p> <p><b>Housing</b>  Tenure and landlord type  Rent/mortgage payments  Housing affordability</p> <p><b>Education</b>  Educational attainment  Full-time/Part-time study for qualification  Type of educational institution</p> <p><b>Work</b>  Labour force status  Retirement status  Duration of unemployment  Occupation  Hours usually worked  Full time/part time status  Status in employment  Permanent/casual status  Job security  Job permanency</p>	<p><b>Financial stress</b>  Financial situation 2 years ago  Usual saving pattern  Unable to borrow in an emergency  Difficulty paying bills  Running down assets/increasing debts</p> <p><b>Assets and liabilities</b>  Value of home  Value of mortgage against home  Equity in home  Investments  Consumer debt</p> <p><b>Time stress</b>  Rushed or pushed for time  Too much spare time</p> <p><b>Information technology</b>  Access to a computer at home  Frequency of internet access  Type of internet activity  Government/financial services accessed via internet  Access to financial services via ATM/EFTPOS/telephone</p> <p><b>Transport</b>  Driver's licence  Access to motor vehicles  Type of transport usually used  Perceived level of difficulty with transport  Travel time to work</p> <p><b>Family and community</b>  Household transitions  Family stressors  Support for children outside household  Contact with family/friends  Involvement in social activities  Ability to ask for small favours  Support in time of crisis  Voluntary work</p>
--	---

<p><b>Income</b>  Income (personal/income unit)  Type of government pension/allowance  Main source of income (personal/income unit)  Time on government support</p>	<p>Neighbourhood problems  Level of trust    <b>Crime</b>  Victim of violent crime (assault)  Victim of property crime  Fear of crime</p>
---	---

**Attachment 3****PROPOSED DATA ITEMS FOR THE 2002 INDIGENOUS SOCIAL SURVEY****Demographic/core**

Age/sex  
 Social/registered marital status  
 Family type  
 Household type  
 Relationship in household  
 Number and age of people in household  
 State or Territory of usual residence  
 Capital city/rest of State  
 ARIA/SEIFA  
 Indigenous status  
 Proficiency in spoken English  
 Main language spoken at home

**Health**

SF12 (physical and mental summary score)  
 (or alternative health outcome measure)  
 Disability status  
 Smoking  
 Alcohol  
 Exercise

**Housing**

Tenure and landlord type  
 Rent/mortgage payments  
 Housing affordability  
 Housing condition  
 Number of bedrooms

**Education**

Educational attainment  
 Current student status  
 Type of educational institution  
 Distance to nearest secondary school  
 Distance to nearest TAFE/University

**Work**

Labour force status (incl. CDEP program)  
 Duration of unemployment  
 Occupation  
 Hours usually worked  
 Full time/part time status

**Financial stress**

Financial situation 2 years ago  
 Difficulty paying bills  
 Usual saving pattern  
 Unable to borrow in an emergency  
 Source of emergency funds/assistance  
 Running down assets/increasing debts

**Assets and liabilities**

Value of home  
 Value of mortgage against home  
 Equity in home  
 Level of consumer debt——  
 ——

**Information technology**

Access to telephone at home  
 Access to a computer at home/community centre

**Transport**

Driver's licence  
 Access to motor vehicles  
 Type of transport usually used  
 Perceived level of difficulty with transport  
 Travel time to work

**Culture and language**

Whether identifies with clan, tribal or language group  
 Active in cultural activities  
 Recognition of homelands  
 Lived on or visited homelands in past 12 months

**Family and community**

Household transitions  
 Household stressors  
 Contact with family/friends  
 Ability to ask for small favours  
 Level of trust  
 Active in group/community services  
 Voluntary work  
 Support in time of crisis  
 Neighbourhood problems

Status in employment

Permanent/casual status

Job security

Job permanency

Employment Sector (eg. private/government sector)

### **Crime**

Victim of assault

Victim of property crime

Incarceration or police custody

Perception of police

Perceived discrimination

### **Income**

Income (personal/income unit)

Type of government pension/allowance

Main source of income (personal/income unit)

Time on government support

—