



# **Census and Statistics Act 1905**

## **Act No. 15 of 1905 as amended**

This compilation was prepared on 3 May 2000  
taking into account amendments up to Act No. 30 of 2000

The text of any of those amendments not in force  
on that date is appended in the Notes section

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# Contents

<b>Part I—Preliminary</b>	1
1 Short title [see Note 1].....	1
2 Application to external Territories.....	1
3 Interpretation .....	1
6 Arrangements with State Governments as to execution of Act.....	2
7 Undertaking of fidelity and secrecy.....	2
<b>Part II—The Census</b>	3
8 Taking of Census.....	3
8A Transfer of 2001 Census information to the Archives.....	3
<b>Part III—Statistics</b>	4
9 Statistical information to be collected .....	4
<b>Part IV—Administration</b>	5
10 Forms to be filled up.....	5
11 Answering of questions .....	6
12 Publication etc. of statistics .....	6
13 Release of information .....	6
14 Refusal or failure to answer questions etc. ....	7
15 False or misleading statements etc.....	7
16 Authorized officers.....	8
17 Delegation .....	8
18 Powers of entry.....	8
19 Secrecy .....	9
19A Non-disclosure of 2001 Census information to a court or tribunal .....	9
20 Prosecution of offences .....	9
21 Continuing offences.....	10
22 Joinder of charges and penalties for certain offences .....	10
27 Regulations.....	10
<b>Notes</b>	11



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# An Act relating to the Census and Statistics of the Commonwealth

## Part I—Preliminary

### 1 Short title [see Note 1]

This Act may be cited as the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

### 2 Application to external Territories

This Act, other than Part III, extends to such external Territories as are prescribed.

### 3 Interpretation

In this Act, unless the contrary intention appears:

**Archives** means the National Archives of Australia mentioned in subsection 5(1) of the *Archives Act 1983*.

**authorized officer** means an officer who, by virtue of an appointment under section 16, is an authorized officer for the purposes of this Act.

**Bureau** means the Australian Bureau of Statistics established by the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*.

**determination** means a determination made under section 13.

**form** means a form prepared by the Statistician under subsection 10(1).

**officer** means:

- (a) a member of the staff of the Bureau referred to in subsection 16(1) of the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*;
- (b) a person engaged in accordance with the regulations to assist in the carrying out of the functions of the Statistician.

Section 6

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*Statistician* means the Australian Statistician referred to in subsection 5(2) of the *Australian Bureau of Statistics Act 1975*.

**6 Arrangements with State Governments as to execution of Act**

- (1) The Governor-General may enter into any arrangement with the Governor of any State providing for any matter necessary or convenient for the purpose of carrying out or giving effect to this Act and in particular for all or any of the following matters:
  - (a) the execution by State Officers of any power or duty conferred or imposed on any officer under this Act or the regulations;
  - (b) the collection by any State Department or officer of any statistical or other information required for the purpose of carrying out this Act; and
  - (c) the supplying of statistical information by any State Department or officer to the Statistician.
- (2) All State Officers executing any power or duty conferred or imposed on any officer under this Act or the regulations, in pursuance of any arrangement entered into under this section, shall for the purposes of the execution of that power or duty be deemed to be officers under this Act.

**7 Undertaking of fidelity and secrecy**

Every officer executing any power or duty conferred or imposed on any officer under this Act or the regulations, shall, before entering upon his or her duties or exercising any power under this Act, sign, in the presence of a witness, an undertaking of fidelity and secrecy in accordance with the prescribed form.

## **Part II—The Census**

### **8 Taking of Census**

- (1) The Census shall be taken in the year 1981 and in every fifth year thereafter, and at such other times as are prescribed.
- (2) The Census day shall be a day appointed for that purpose by proclamation.
- (3) For the purposes of the taking of the Census, the Statistician shall collect statistical information in relation to the matters prescribed for the purposes of this section.

### **8A Transfer of 2001 Census information to the Archives**

If:

- (a) a form is given to the Statistician or an authorised officer under section 10 in relation to the Census taken in the year 2001; and
- (b) a person has consented, in accordance with the form, to the information contained in the form being transferred to the custody of the Archives under this section;

the Statistician must transfer the information to the custody of the Archives in a form and manner agreed by the Statistician and the Director-General of the Archives.

## Part III—Statistics

### 9 Statistical information to be collected

- (1) The Statistician:
  - (a) may from time to time collect such statistical information in relation to the matters prescribed for the purposes of this section as he or she considers appropriate; and
  - (b) shall, if the Minister so directs by notice in writing, collect such statistical information in relation to the matters so prescribed as is specified in the notice.
- (2) The Statistician shall collect such statistical information as is necessary for the purposes of the compilation and analysis, under section 12, of statistics of the number of the people of each State as on the last day of March, June, September and December in each year, but nothing in this subsection shall be taken to limit the generality of subsection (1).



## **Part IV—Administration**

### **10 Forms to be filled up**

- (1) The Statistician may prepare forms relating to the collection of statistical information in relation to any matter referred to in section 8 or 9.
- (2) For the purposes of section 8, the Statistician may, by notice published in the *Gazette*, require persons included in a specified class of persons to fill up and supply, in accordance with instructions contained in or accompanying a specified form, the particulars specified in that form and to cause the form so filled up to be furnished to the Statistician, or to an authorized officer, in accordance with those instructions.
- (3) For the purposes of section 8 or 9, the Statistician or an authorized officer may, either orally or in writing, request a person:
  - (a) to fill up and supply, in accordance with instructions contained in or accompanying a form, the particulars specified in that form; and
  - (b) to cause the form so filled up to be furnished to the Statistician, or to an authorized officer, in accordance with those instructions.
- (4) For the purposes of section 8 or 9, the Statistician may, by notice in writing served either personally or by post on a person, direct the person:
  - (a) to fill up and supply, in accordance with instructions contained in or accompanying a form accompanying the notice, within such period after the service of the notice, being not less than 14 days, as is specified in the notice, the particulars specified in that form; and
  - (b) to cause the form so filled up to be furnished to the Statistician, or to an authorized officer, in accordance with those instructions.
- (5) A notice referred to in subsection (4) shall set out the effect of the provisions of section 14.

Section 11

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**11 Answering of questions**

- (1) For the purposes of section 8 or 9, the Statistician or an authorized officer may, either orally or in writing, request a person to answer a question that is necessary to obtain any statistical information in relation to any matter referred to in section 8 or 9.
- (2) For the purposes of section 8 or 9, the Statistician may, by notice in writing served either personally or by post on a person, direct the person to answer, within such period after service of the notice, being not less than 14 days, as is specified in the notice, a specified question that is necessary to obtain any statistical information in relation to any matter referred to in section 8 or 9.
- (3) A notice referred to in subsection (2) shall set out the effect of the provisions of section 14.

**12 Publication etc. of statistics**

- (1) The Statistician shall compile and analyse the statistical information collected under this Act and shall publish and disseminate the results of any such compilation and analysis, or abstracts of those results.
- (2) The results or abstracts referred to in subsection (1) shall not be published or disseminated in a manner that is likely to enable the identification of a particular person or organization.
- (3) The Statistician may make charges for results and abstracts published and disseminated under this section.

**13 Release of information**

- (1) Notwithstanding anything in this Act (other than this section), the Minister may, by instrument in writing, make determinations providing for and in relation to the disclosure, with the approval in writing of the Statistician, of information included in a specified class of information furnished in pursuance of this Act.
- (2) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1), determinations may make provision:
  - (a) as to the persons to whom the information may be disclosed;

- (b) as to the persons, being the persons from whom the information has been obtained, whose consent is required for the disclosure of the information; and
  - (c) specifying terms and conditions subject to which the information may be disclosed, including, but without limiting the generality of the foregoing, terms and conditions as to the requiring of a person to whom the information is, or is to be, disclosed to give an undertaking, in writing with respect to the disclosure of the information by that person, including an undertaking not to disclose any of the information to any person.
- (3) Information of a personal or domestic nature relating to a person shall not be disclosed in accordance with a determination in a manner that is likely to enable the identification of that person.
  - (4) Subject to subsection (5), a determination under subsection (1) is a disallowable instrument for the purposes of section 46A of the *Acts Interpretation Act 1901*.
  - (5) Determinations shall be deemed to be statutory rules within the meaning of the *Statutory Rules Publication Act 1903*.

#### **14 Refusal or failure to answer questions etc.**

- (1) A person who, without reasonable excuse, refuses or fails to comply with a direction served on the person under subsection 10(4) or 11(2) is, in respect of each day during which the person so refuses or fails to comply with the direction (including the day of a conviction under this section or any subsequent day), guilty of an offence punishable on conviction by a fine not exceeding \$100.
- (2) Subsection (1) does not apply in relation to a refusal or failure by a person to answer a question, or to supply particulars, relating to the person's religious beliefs.

#### **15 False or misleading statements etc.**

A person shall not, in connection with:

- (a) a requirement made of the person under subsection 10(2);

Section 16

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- (b) a request made of the person under subsection 10(3) or 11(1);  
or
- (c) a direction served on the person under subsection 10(4) or 11(2); make a statement, either orally or in writing, or furnish a document containing information, that is to his or her knowledge false or misleading in a material particular.

Penalty: \$1,000.

**16 Authorized officers**

The Statistician may, by instrument in writing, appoint a specified officer, or officers included in a specified class of officers, to be an authorized officer or authorized officers, as the case may be, for the purposes of this Act.

**17 Delegation**

- (1) The Statistician may, by signed instrument, delegate to an officer all or any of his or her powers under this Act or any other law.
- (2) A power so delegated, when exercised by the delegate, shall, for the purposes of this Act or that other law, as the case may be, be deemed to have been exercised by the Statistician.

**18 Powers of entry**

- (1) The Statistician or an authorized officer may, at all reasonable times, enter any premises included in a prescribed class of premises for the purpose of:
  - (a) supplying persons with forms;
  - (b) collecting forms that have been supplied to persons; and
  - (c) making inquiries for the purposes of this Act.
- (2) In subsection (1), *premises* means premises other than:
  - (a) a dwelling-house (including a flat or home unit); or
  - (b) a part of any other premises that is separately occupied or used for the purposes of the residence or sleeping accommodation of a person or persons.

**19 Secrecy**

- (1) A person who is, or has been, the Statistician or an officer shall not, except:
  - (a) in accordance with a determination; or
  - (b) for the purposes of this Act; either directly or indirectly, divulge or communicate any information furnished in pursuance of this Act to any person (other than the person from whom the information was obtained).
- (2) A person who contravenes subsection (1) or fails to comply with an undertaking of the kind referred to in paragraph 13(2)(c) given by the person in relation to information disclosed to the person in accordance with a determination is guilty of an indictable offence punishable on conviction by a fine not exceeding \$5,000 or imprisonment for a period not exceeding 2 years, or both.

**19A Non-disclosure of 2001 Census information to a court or tribunal**

- (1) A person who is or has been the Statistician or an officer must not, at any time during the period of 99 years beginning on the 2001 Census day:
  - (a) be required to divulge or communicate to a court or tribunal any information contained in a form that is given to the Statistician or an authorised officer under section 10 in relation to the Census taken in the year 2001; or
  - (b) voluntarily give any of that information in evidence in proceedings before a court or tribunal.
- (2) In this section:

*2001 Census day* means the day appointed, under subsection 8(2), as the Census day in the year 2001.

**20 Prosecution of offences**

- (1) An offence against this Act, other than an offence against subsection 19(2), shall be prosecuted summarily.
- (2) Notwithstanding that an offence against subsection 19(2) is expressed by this Act to be an indictable offence, a court of

Section 21

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summary jurisdiction may hear and determine proceedings in respect of such an offence if the court is satisfied that it is proper to do so and the defendant and the prosecutor consent.

- (3) Where, in accordance with subsection (2), a court of summary jurisdiction convicts a person of an offence against subsection 19(2), the penalty that the court may impose is a fine not exceeding \$2,000 or imprisonment for a period not exceeding 12 months, or both.

## **21 Continuing offences**

Where under subsection 10(4) or 11(2) an act or thing is required to be done within a particular period or before a particular time, the obligation to do that act or thing continues, notwithstanding that that period has expired or that time has passed, until that act or thing is done.

## **22 Joinder of charges and penalties for certain offences**

- (1) Charges against the same person for any number of offences against section 14 may be joined in the same information or complaint if those offences relate to a failure to do the same act or thing.
- (2) If a person is convicted of 2 or more offences referred to in subsection (1), being offences related to a failure to do the same act or thing, the court may impose one penalty in respect of both or all of those offences, but that penalty shall not exceed the sum of the maximum penalties that could be imposed if a penalty were imposed in respect of each offence separately.

## **27 Regulations**

The Governor-General may make regulations, not inconsistent with this Act, prescribing all matters and things which, by this Act, are required or permitted to be prescribed, or which are necessary or convenient to be prescribed for carrying out or giving effect to this Act and in particular for prescribing penalties not exceeding \$500 for offences against the regulations.

**Table of Acts****Notes to the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*****Note 1**

The *Census and Statistics Act 1905* as shown in this compilation comprises Act No. 15, 1905 amended as indicated in the Tables below.

**Table of Acts**

Act	Number and year	Date of Assent	Date of commencement	Application, saving or transitional provisions
<i>Census and Statistics Act 1905</i>	15, 1905	8 Dec 1905	8 Dec 1905	
<i>Census and Statistics Act 1920</i>	33, 1920	11 Oct 1920	11 Oct 1920	—
<i>Census and Statistics Act 1930</i>	18, 1930	21 July 1930	21 July 1930	—
<i>Census and Statistics Act 1938</i>	17, 1938	5 July 1938	5 July 1938	—
<i>Census and Statistics Act 1946</i>	74, 1946	14 Dec 1946	11 Jan 1947	—
<i>Census and Statistics Act 1949</i>	34, 1949	12 July 1949	12 July 1949	—
<i>Statute Law Revision (Decimal Currency) Act 1966</i>	93, 1966	29 Oct 1966	1 Dec 1966	—
<i>Statute Law Revision Act 1973</i>	216, 1973	19 Dec 1973	31 Dec 1973	Ss. 9(1) and 10
<i>Census and Statistics Amendment Act 1977</i>	15, 1977	28 Feb 1977	28 Feb 1977 (see s. 2)	S. 9
<i>Census and Statistics Amendment Act 1981</i>	48, 1981	25 May 1981	Part I (ss. 1, 2) and s. 4: Royal Assent Remainder: 30 June 1981	—
<i>Census and Statistics Amendment Act (No. 2) 1981</i>	177, 1981	8 Dec 1981	1 Mar 1983 (see <i>Gazette</i> 1983, No. S36)	S. 12
<i>Census and Statistics Amendment Act 1985</i>	195, 1985	16 Dec 1985	13 Jan 1986	—
<i>Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1988</i>	38, 1988	3 June 1988	S. 3: Royal Assent (a)	S. 5(1)
<i>Census Information Legislation Amendment Act 2000</i>	30, 2000	19 Apr 2000	19 Apr 2000	—

## Act Notes

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- (a) The *Census and Statistics Act 1905* was amended by section 3 only of the *Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1988*, subsection 2(1) of which provides as follows:
- (1) Subject to this section, this Act commences on the day on which it receives the Royal Assent.



**Table of Amendments****Table of Amendments**

ad. = added or inserted    am. = amended    rep. = repealed    rs. = repealed and substituted	
Provision affected	How affected
Heading to Part I .....	rs. No. 177, 1981
S. 2.....	rep. No. 216, 1973 ad. No. 195, 1985
S. 3.....	am. No. 33, 1920; No. 15, 1977; Nos. 48 and 177, 1981; No. 30, 2000
Heading to Part II .....	rep. No. 177, 1981
S. 4.....	rep. No. 15, 1977
S. 5.....	am. No. 216, 1973 rep. No. 177, 1981
S. 6.....	am. No. 38, 1988
S. 7.....	am. No. 33, 1920; No. 38, 1988
Heading to Part III .....	rep. No. 177, 1981
Heading to Part II .....	ad. No. 177, 1981
S. 8.....	am. No. 18, 1930; No. 15, 1977; No. 177, 1981
S. 8A .....	ad. No. 30, 2000
Part III (s. 9) .....	ad. No. 177, 1981
S. 9.....	rs. No. 177, 1981 am. No. 38, 1988
Heading to Part IV .....	ad. No. 177, 1981
S. 10.....	am. No. 33, 1920 rs. No. 177, 1981
S. 11.....	am. No. 93, 1966; No. 48, 1981 rs. No. 177, 1981
S. 12.....	am. No. 74, 1946 rs. No. 177, 1981 am. No. 38, 1988
S. 13.....	am. No. 33, 1920; No. 48, 1981 rs. No. 177, 1981 am. No. 38, 1988
S. 14.....	am. No. 93, 1966; No. 48, 1981 rs. No. 177, 1981 am. No. 195, 1985; No. 38, 1988
S. 15.....	am. No. 33, 1920; No. 93, 1966; No. 48, 1981 rs. No. 177, 1981 am. No. 38, 1988
S. 15A .....	ad. No. 33, 1920 rep. No. 177, 1981
Part IV (ss. 16-20) .....	rep. No. 177, 1981
S. 16.....	am. No. 17, 1938; No. 15, 1977 rs. No. 177, 1981

**Table of Amendments**

ad. = added or inserted    am. = amended    rep. = repealed    rs. = repealed and substituted

Provision affected	How affected
S. 17 .....	am. No. 17, 1938 rs. No. 34, 1949 am. No. 93, 1966; No. 48, 1981 rs. No. 177, 1981; No. 38, 1988
S. 18 .....	am. No. 93, 1966 rs. No. 216, 1973 am. No. 48, 1981 rs. No. 177, 1981
S. 19 .....	am. No. 93, 1966; No. 48, 1981 rs. No. 177, 1981 am. No. 38, 1988
S. 19A .....	ad. No. 30, 2000
S. 20 .....	am. No. 34, 1949; No. 15, 1977 rs. No. 177, 1981
Heading to Part V .....	rep. No. 177, 1981
S. 21 .....	rs. No. 177, 1981
S. 22 .....	am. No. 33, 1920; No. 93, 1966; No. 48, 1981 rs. No. 177, 1981
S. 23 .....	am. No. 93, 1966 rep. No. 48, 1981
S. 24 .....	am. No. 33, 1920 rs. No. 34, 1949 am. No. 93, 1966; No. 48, 1981 rep. No. 177, 1981
S. 25 .....	rep. No. 48, 1981
S. 26 .....	am. No. 93, 1966; No. 48, 1981 rep. No. 177, 1981
S. 27 .....	am. No. 33, 1920; No. 93, 1966; No. 177, 1981