

## **EXPLANATORY NOTES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1 This product contains estimates of the resident populations (ERPs) of 2006 Census Collection Districts (CDs) or CD-derived areas of Australia, produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). These estimates correspond with final 30 June 2006 ERP by Statistical Local Area as released on 19 August 2008 in **Regional Population Growth, Australia, 1996 to 2006** (cat. no. 3218.0) and **Population by Age and Sex, Australia, 2006** (cat. no. 3235.0).

2 The CD and CD-based ERPs are not standard ABS output, but rather are customised data available for purchase as an information consultancy. Thus, these estimates are not published on the ABS web site.

### **AUSTRALIAN STATISTICAL AREAS**

#### **Collection District (CD)**

3 The Census Collection District (CD) is the second smallest geographic area defined in the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC), the smallest being the Mesh Block. The CD has been designed for use in the Census of Population and Housing as the smallest unit for collection and processing. For the 2006 Census, CDs were the basis of output for most data. In census years, CDs serve as the basic building block in the ASGC and are used for the aggregation of statistics to larger geographic areas. For the 2006 Census there were 38,704 CDs throughout Australia.

#### **Statistical Local Area (SLA)**

4 The Statistical Local Area (SLA) is an ASGC defined area which, in a census year, consists of one or more CDs. In non-census years, the SLA is the smallest unit defined in the ASGC. SLAs are Local Government Areas (LGAs), or parts thereof. Where there is no incorporated body of local government, SLAs are defined to cover the unincorporated areas. SLAs cover, in aggregate, the whole of Australia without gaps or overlaps. For more information and a list of the Statistical Local Areas in each state/territory, refer to **Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC)** (cat. no. 1216.0) on the ABS web site at <[www.abs.gov.au](http://www.abs.gov.au)>. All of the publications mentioned in these Explanatory Notes are freely available on the ABS web site.

5 The SLA is the base spatial unit for which annual (as at 30 June) population estimates are prepared and disseminated on the ABS web site.

#### **Postal Area (POA)**

6 Postal Areas are ABS approximations of Australia Post postcodes, created by allocating whole Collection Districts (CDs) on a 'best fit' basis to postcodes.

7 Postal Areas exclude non-mappable Australia Post postcodes such as:

- post office box postcodes;
- some delivery route postcodes, which are also covered by other postcodes (a situation which often occurs in rural areas); and
- some postcodes which, because of the application of the 'best fit' principle, do not get a CD allocated to them.

8 This means that there are more Australia Post postcodes than Postal Areas.

#### **Other geographical areas**

9 Other geographical areas for which estimates of resident populations may be produced include:

- State Suburbs
- Commonwealth Electoral Divisions
- State Electoral Divisions
- Remoteness Areas

10 Further information about these geographies may be obtained from **Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC)** (cat. no. 1216.0) and **Statistical Geography: Volume 2 - Census Geographic Areas, Australia, 2006** (ABS cat. no. 2905.0).

### **ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION (ERP)**

11 The official measure of Australia's population is the estimated resident population (ERP). The ERP is based on the concept of a person's 'usual residence' for a period of 12 months or more within Australia, regardless of nationality or citizenship, with the exception of foreign diplomatic personnel and their families. The concept includes Australian

residents who are overseas for less than 12 months. It excludes overseas visitors who are in Australia for less than 12 months. More information about ERP and other population concepts is available in **Information Paper: Population Concepts, Australia, 2008** (cat. no. 3107.0.55.006).

## **ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION - AUSTRALIA, STATES AND TERRITORIES**

**12** Estimates of the resident populations of Australia and its states and territories are prepared quarterly. The estimates and information about the estimation methodology are available in **Australian Demographic Statistics** (cat. no. 3101.0). Annually, the estimates as at 30 June are broken down by age and sex and published in **Population by Age and Sex, Australian States and Territories** (cat. no. 3201.0).

## **ESTIMATION OF SLA-BASED POPULATIONS**

**13** Estimates of the resident populations of SLAs as at 30 June are prepared annually. The estimation uses a modelling process incorporating census data and a number of administrative data sources. The estimates and information about the estimation methodology are available in **Regional Population Growth, Australia** (cat. no. 3218.0). In the months after the release of estimates of the total populations of SLAs, estimates of the age and sex distribution of each SLA are prepared and these are published in **Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia** (cat. no. 3235.0).

## **ESTIMATION OF CD AND OTHER CD-BASED POPULATIONS**

**14** CD ERPs are prepared by starting with the usual residence population counts, by age and sex, from the most recent census; updating each CD total with an estimate of growth in post-censal years implied by changes in electoral roll counts at the CD level; prorating the updated CD totals to the SLA ERP totals for the reference date; then using an Iterative Proportional Fit process to force the CD age/sex distribution to add to the CD totals and the SLA age/sex ERPs for the reference date.

**15** A procedure is then applied to avoid the release of cells which are likely to enable the identification of a particular person while maintaining closeness to the unconfidentialised ERPs.

**16** ERPs for Postal Areas and other CD-based geographies, such as those listed in paragraph 9, are then created by aggregating CD ERPs.

## **ACCURACY**

**17** All ERP data sources are subject to non-sampling error. Non-sampling error can arise from inaccuracies in collecting, recording and processing the data. In the case of Census and Census Post Enumeration Survey data every effort is made to minimise reporting error by the careful design of questionnaires, intensive training and supervision of interviewers, and efficient data processing procedures. The ABS does not have control over any non-sampling error associated with Medicare and Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) data nor, to a large extent, dwelling approvals, births, deaths and overseas migration data. The accuracy of Medicare data and AEC data is largely dependant on the length of time taken for migrants to update their address details. However, there are methods in place that attempt to account for delayed birth and death registrations.

**18** The accuracy of SLA ERPs is partly dependent on the accuracy of state and territory population estimates, to which they are constrained. The accuracy of state and territory ERPs is described in the Quality Declaration for **Australian Demographic Statistics** (cat. no. 3101.0). In turn, the accuracy of CD ERPs is partly dependent on the accuracy of SLA ERPs.

**19** After deriving initial estimates of populations in CDs, these estimates are subjected to confidentialisation and randomisation processes. Thus, all small estimates should be regarded as derived numbers rather than actual counts of the population.

**20** Caution should be exercised when using the population estimates, especially for areas with very small populations. In recognition of the inherent inaccuracy involved in population estimation, population figures in text and accompanying summary tables published by the ABS are rounded. While unrounded figures are provided in spreadsheets in order to facilitate calculations of sums, rates and percentages, accuracy to the last digit is not claimed and should not be assumed.

## **INQUIRIES**

**21** For further information about these and related statistics, contact the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070 or email the ABS Regional Population Unit at [regional.population@abs.gov.au](mailto:regional.population@abs.gov.au).