

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS ACT 1975: sub-section 6(3)

**PROPOSAL NO. 1 OF 2020
BY THE AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS**

Survey of Adult Skills in Australia

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) proposes to collect the Survey of Adult Skills in Australia as part of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). More than 30 countries are participating in the PIAAC survey, which is coordinated by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The primary purpose for collecting this information is to understand the literacy, numeracy and adaptive problem solving skills of people living in Australia. Policy makers and researchers will be able to make comparisons with similar information collected in earlier international literacy and skills surveys conducted in 2011-12, 2006 and 1996.

The ABS will collect information in a Field Trial scheduled to be conducted from July to September 2020 and a Main Study collection from August 2021 to March 2022. This information will be collected:

- from persons aged 16 to 65 years who usually live in private dwellings in Australia;
- by face-to-face interviews, followed by self-completed skills exercises on an ABS electronic device; and
- in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Brisbane in the Field Trial, and across Australia, excluding Very Remote areas, in the Main Study.

Both the Field Trial and the Main Study will be compulsory in order to meet international requirements regarding the responding sample size. The OECD have set a target of 1500 completed surveys for the Field Trial and 5000 completed surveys for the Main Study.

Information will be collected on a range of factors including:

- demographic information including age and country of birth;
- socio-economic information including employment, income, educational attainment, current study for a qualification and non-formal study;
- information on how frequently different skills are used at work and in everyday life, including literacy, numeracy and adaptive problem solving skills; and
- responses to literacy, numeracy and adaptive problem solving exercises.

The information collected from the Main Study will be used by the OECD to publish results in late 2023 comparing international averages of all countries participating in the survey. The ABS will follow the OECD release with more detailed data in the *Adult Skills in Australia, 2021-22* publication.

The principal users of the information from the survey will be:

- the Department of Education, Skills and Employment;
- industry associations, academic researchers and research agencies; and
- other Commonwealth, State and Territory government departments.

To assist in determining the feasibility of the collection and to understand and manage respondent burden consistent with the Government's Regulator Performance Framework, the ABS:

- has noted that this survey is the only source of nationally representative estimates of literacy, numeracy and adaptive problem solving skills of Australian adults;
- has consulted with the Department of Education, Skills and Employment , which has funded the ABS to undertake this survey; and
- has asked the OECD to ensure the length of the survey is kept to a minimum.

This collection was last conducted in October 2011 to March 2012 and was previously tabled in Parliament as Proposal No. 15 of 2011. In 2011 the collection was called the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies.



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26 February 2020