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Kat Lane
Vice-Chair, Australian Privacy Foundation
(Dr) David Lindsay
Vice-Chair, Australian Privacy Foundation
David Vaile
Vice-Chair, Australian Privacy Foundation

Dear Ms Lane, Dr Lindsay and Mr Vaile,

Further to ABS' response on 19th February 2016 and subsequent discussion on 14th March 2016 to your letter received on 15 February 2016, please find attached additional information for each the three issues raised: consultation processes; the benefits of retaining name and address; and privacy protections preventing re-identification.

Firstly, I wanted to reiterate that the effective security of personal information is part of the DNA of the ABS. Our exemplary record in this area reflects our culture, attitudes, capability and practices as much as our legislation and methodologies.

The decision in 2005 to not retain names and addresses was the right decision for the circumstances.

However, ten years on, circumstances have changed and we are confident that significant benefits will be realised without compromising privacy. Technology has advanced, privacy preserving practices for data integration are now well established, and there is growing evidence of the benefits that result from better quality data. There has also been a shift in public perception and expectations about the use of their data.

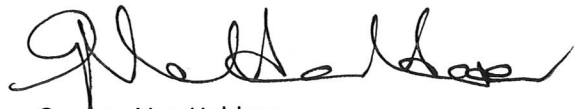
I would like to specifically confirm that the ABS is not willing to, or legally permitted to, publically release data in a manner that is likely to enable the identification of a person or household. The ABS never has and never will make identifiable Census data or microdata publically available through our statistical or microdata releases. Re-identification protections are inherent in this commitment.

Names and addresses will only be retained while they hold significant value. Consistent with the Australian Privacy Principles, the case for retention will be periodically reviewed and names and addresses will be destroyed if there is not a compelling case for retention.

The success of the Census relies on the participation of all Australians to make it a complete and accurate snapshot of our Nation. We would appreciate your support in this regard.

Finally, the Foundation's suggestion to establish an engagement forum is being considered by the ABS.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gemma Van Halderen', with a stylized, flowing script.

Gemma Van Halderen

General Manager

Strategic Partnerships and Projects

Australian Bureau of Statistics

31 March 2016

1. Consultation processes associated with retaining name and address

Consultation processes associated with the Census of Population and Housing and the decision to retain name and address from the 2016 Census are outlined on the ABS website at [www.abs.gov.au/census/about the census/privacy and confidentiality](http://www.abs.gov.au/census/about%20the%20census/privacy%20and%20confidentiality).

2. The benefits of retaining names and addresses

The benefits of retaining names and addresses from the 2016 Census of Population and Housing can be found on the ABS website at [www.abs.gov.au/census/about the census/privacy and confidentiality](http://www.abs.gov.au/census/about%20the%20census/privacy%20and%20confidentiality).

The benefits of enhancing the value of Census data by combining it with other national datasets to better inform government decisions in important areas such as health, education, infrastructure and the economy can be found on the ABS website at [www.abs.gov.au/about us/data integration](http://www.abs.gov.au/about%20us/data%20integration)

3. Privacy protections preventing re-identification

Privacy protection is of paramount importance to the ABS as a trusted public institution. ABS is committed to upholding the privacy, confidentiality and security of the personal information it collects. Not only does the ABS have strong legislative protections which safeguard the privacy of an individual's information, it has a proud 100-year history of maintaining community trust in the way it collects, uses, discloses and stores personal information collected in the Census.

Details of ABS privacy protections and the Census can be found at [www.abs.gov.au/census/about the census/privacy and confidentiality](http://www.abs.gov.au/census/about%20the%20census/privacy%20and%20confidentiality).

Details of ABS privacy protections and data Integration can be found at [www.abs.gov.au/about us/data integration](http://www.abs.gov.au/about%20us/data%20integration)

Details of ABS privacy protections and ABS survey operations can be found at [www.abs.gov.au/complete your survey/frequently asked questions and legislation](http://www.abs.gov.au/complete%20your%20survey/frequently%20asked%20questions%20and%20legislation)

