

1. CENSUS METHODOLOGY

1.1 SCOPE AND COVERAGE

The scope of the early Cook Islands censuses was limited, in fact they consisted of head counts only. With the passage of time the census has expanded. Gradually, questions on sex, age, marital status, religion, education, employment, etc have been included. Questions on unpaid work and income earned were included for the first time in the 1996 Census. In the 2001 Census, questions on disability and waste management was included.

A personal questionnaire is completed for every man, woman and child alive at midnight on census night within the geographical boundaries of the Cook Islands. The Census excludes those persons on foreign vessels, yachts and aircraft flying through or stopping temporarily (transit). A dwelling questionnaire is completed for every occupied dwelling as at midnight on census night.

1.2 CENSUS QUESTIONNAIRE

The format of the questionnaires for the 2001 Census of Population and Dwellings was similar to that of the 1996 Census.

The dwelling questionnaire contained 26 questions, requesting information on the number of persons in the dwelling, type of dwelling, year dwelling was constructed, appliances and amenities, subsistence agricultural and fishing activities, etc.

The personal questionnaire was split into several parts:

Questions 1 to 6 - relates to every person in the Cook Islands on census night.

Questions 7 to 11(ii) - relates to every person in the Cook Islands on census night excluding visitors and those that were currently serving a sentence in jail.

Questions 11(iii) - relates to every person over the age of 1 year.

Questions 11(iv) to 12(d) - relates to every person over the age of 5 years.

Questions 12(e) to Q21 - relates to every person over the age of 15 years.

Questions 22 - relates only to females 15 years and over.

1.3 FIELD WORK

The Cook Islands are geographically divided into a number of Census Districts coinciding with the electoral boundaries, and these were further divided into enumeration areas. An enumerator is then assigned to collect the census forms for each enumeration area.

The three phases to the census fieldwork are as follows:

1.3.1 Update of Household listing and Maps

The enumerator is responsible for the updating of field maps and household listings. The main purpose of this phase was to check and update the pre-listed information for every household in the enumerators' area. During this tour, the enumerators are familiarised with the location of each dwelling and an estimate of the number of people in each household is made. The update was carried out on Thursday 22 November and Friday 23 November 2001.

1.3.2 Pre-Census Enumeration

During this stage of the census, the enumerator visited each dwelling in the enumeration area and completed the household's dwelling questionnaire and personal questionnaire(s) upon consent from the head of household or any other responsible adult. This was carried out in the week of Monday 26 November to Friday 30 November 2001.

1.3.3 Post Census night Enumeration

The post census night enumeration was carried out on Monday 3rd December and Tuesday 4th December 2001. The enumerator visited the households in his/her enumeration area to check on any additional person's e.g., babies born during the census night, that were not counted in the original visit. They also noted anyone who passed away prior to the census night.

1.4 DATA PROCESSING

The processing of the 2001 Census consisted of two procedures, manual and electronic processing.

1.4.1 Manual Processing

Manual data processing included editing and coding of the questionnaire. Upon receipt of the completed census questionnaire, initial checks were made for completeness and general acceptability of the answers. Maps were also updated in the computer system. Office editing of the completed questionnaires was done using the enumerator's field book to check the completeness, accuracy and consistency of the data. Inconsistencies, omissions, or doubtful entries in the questionnaires, which could not be corrected in the office, were referred back to the census supervisors for verification and /or correction.

A coding scheme was formulated, assigning numeric codes to as many questionnaire variables as possible in order to make data entry easier and quicker. A significant number of questions were pre-coded to help reduce office-coding time.

1.4.2 Electronic Processing

The availability of a network computer system has added a new dimension to data processing for the office. With new database software (Microsoft Access) also being introduced, we were able to complete the data processing on time. Four temporary data entry personnel were employed to assist with the data processing while other statistical activities of the office continued.

The data was entered on an enumeration area (batch) basis. Two tables were set up to capture the information, one for the household details and the other for the personal details. The computer system carried out range checks and logical checks during the data entry stage to minimise punching errors and detect obvious inconsistencies in the data. The system was also used to detect unreasonable relationships between one variable and another.

1.5 TABULATION

A similar tabulation plan as used for the 1996 census was followed for the 2001 census. Lists of priority tables were first tabulated, such as the population distribution for all islands and the number of private occupied dwellings and non-private dwellings. These priority tables were released as part of the preliminary Census Report in early January 2002.

A full set of tables for the Cook Islands was produced and a selection of these tables was used for the production of this report.

1.6 CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

A full list of definitions and terms used for the Census of Population and Dwellings 2001 is contained in the instruction manual, but the following should be emphasised.

1. Census night is the night between the 30th November and the 1st December 2001. The census time-point is midnight of that night.
2. Dwelling is a building or group of buildings or part of a building occupied by at least one household on census night.
3. Household is a group of persons, related or unrelated, living together under the same kitchen or contributing to a common budget. One member of the group is regarded as the head. The term family is synonymous in this respect. (Note: a household can consist of one person)