

---

# Country of birth

---

**Important note: This is an archived metadata standard from the AIHW Knowledgebase. For current metadata standards and related information please access METeOR, the AIHW's Metadata Online Registry at <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au>**

## *Identifying and Definitional Attributes*

Data Dictionary: NHADD  
Knowledgebase ID: 000742                      Version number: 1  
Metadata type: DATA ELEMENT  
Registration Authority: NHDAMG                      Admin status: SUPERSEDED  
Effective date: 01-MAR-05  
Definition: The country in which the person was born.  
Context: Country of birth is required as one of the four core data as part of the ABS standard for cultural and Language Diversity. These combined data elements replace the previously used concept of non-English-speaking background (NESB).  
It is important in the study of access to services by different population sub-groups. The item provides a link between the ABS Census of Population and Housing, other ABS statistical collections and regional data collections. Country of birth may be used in conjunction with other data elements such as period of residence in Australia, etc., to derive more sophisticated measures of access to services by different population sub-groups.

---

## *Relational and Representational Attributes*

Datatype: Numeric  
Representational form: CODE  
Representation layout: NNNN  
Minimum Size: 4  
Maximum Size: 4  
Data Domain: NOVAL                      Standard Australian Classification of Countries 1998 (SACC), which replaces the Australian Standard Classification of Countries for Social Statistics (ASCCSS). ABS catalogue no. 1269.0. This is a 4-digit, three-level hierarchical structure (major group, minor group and country).  
Guide For Use: A country, even if it comprises other discrete political entities such as states, is treated as a single unit for all data domain

purposes. Parts of a political entity are not included in different groups. Thus, Hawaii is included in Northern America (as part of the identified country United States of America), despite being geographically close to and having similar social and cultural characteristics as the units classified to Polynesia.

Collection Methods: Agencies may collect Country of birth in a variety of ways. Some agencies may obtain the person's country of birth by using a question that contains a predetermined list of countries accompanied by an 'other (please specify)' category. Other agencies may use an open ended question asking the person to specify their country of birth. Regardless of the exact format used by the agency, Country of Birth should be collected in such a way as to allow the information to be coded using the SACC code list. A question that only asks the person to identify whether they were born in either an 'English-speaking' or 'non-English-speaking' country will not provide sufficient information to code the person's Country of Birth.

The standard question for obtaining detailed data for Country of Birth is as follows:

In which country were you born?

Australia ?

England ?

Italy ?

New Zealand ?

Scotland ?

Greece ?

Netherlands ?

Germany ?

Vietnam ?

Lebanon ?

Other - please specify:

Alternately, a shortened version can be used.

In which country were you born ?

Australia ?

Other - please specify:

Related metadata: relates to the data element First language spoken version 1  
relates to the data element Main language spoken at home version 1  
relates to the data element Proficiency in Spoken English version 1

---

## *Administrative Attributes*

Source Document: ABS: Standard Australian Classification of Countries, 1998, Cat. no. 1269.0  
ABS Standard for cultural and Language Diversity (ABS Cat no. 1289.0)

Source Organisation: Australian Bureau of Statistics  
Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

---

Comments: The Minimum Core Set of Cultural and Language Indicators as identified in the ABS standard for cultural and Language Diversity (ABS Cat no. 1289.0) are:  
Country of birth of person  
Main Language other than English Spoken at home  
Proficiency in Spoken English  
Indigenous Status

## *Data Element Links*

*Information Model Entities linked to this Data Element*

*Data Agreements which include this Data Element*

---