

Maximum Size: 4

Data Domain: NOVAL Valid codes from ABS Australian Standard Classification of Languages, 1997 (ABS Cat. no. 1267.0)

Guide For Use: The Australian Standard Classification of Languages (ASCL) has a three- level hierarchical structure. The most detailed level of the classification consists of base units (languages) which are represented by four-digit codes. The second level of the classification comprises narrow groups of languages (the Narrow Group level), identified by the first two digits. The most general level of the classification consists of broad groups of languages (the Broad Group level) and is identified by the first digit. The classification includes Indigenous Australian languages and sign languages.

For example, the Lithuanian language has a code of 3102. In this case 3 denotes that it is an Eastern European language, while 31 denotes that it is a Baltic language.

The Pintupi Aboriginal language has a code of 8217. In this case 8 denotes that it is an Australian Indigenous language and 82 denotes that the language is Central Aboriginal.

Language data may be output at the Broad Group level, Narrow Group level or base level of the classification. If necessary significant Languages within a Narrow Group can be presented separately while the remaining Languages in the Narrow Group are aggregated. The same principle can be adopted to highlight significant Narrow Groups within a Broad Group.

Note that the code 9900 should be used where language is Not stated/inadequately described. Code 9900 is not for use on primary collection forms. It is primarily for use in administrative collections when transferring data from data sets where the item has not been collected.

Persons not in private residential settings should respond for 'at home' as the most recent private residential setting in which that person has resided.

The reference in the title to 'at home' may cause offence to homeless persons and should be shortened to 'Main language other than English spoken' where applicable.

Verification Rules:

Collection Methods: Data collected at the 4 digit level (specific language) will provide more detailed information than that collected at the 2 digit level. It is recommended that data be collected at the 4 digit level however where this is not possible data should be collected at the 2 digit level.

Recommended question:

Do you/Does the person/Does (name) speak a language other than English at home?

(If more than one language, indicate the one that is spoken most often.)

No (English only) ____

Yes, Italian ____

Yes, Greek ____

Yes, Cantonese ____

Yes, Mandarin ____

Yes, Arabic ____

Yes, Vietnamese ____

Yes, German ____

Yes, Spanish

Yes, Tagalog (Filipino) ____

Yes, Other (please specify) _____

This list reflects the 9 most common languages spoken in Australia. Languages may be added or deleted from the above short list to reflect characteristics of the population of interest.

Alternatively a tick box for 'English' and an 'Other - please specify' response category could be used.

Related metadata: supersedes the NHDD data element Main language other than English spoken at home version 1
supersedes the NCSDD data element Main language other than English spoken at home version 2

Administrative Attributes

Source Document: Australian Bureau of Statistics 1997. Australian Standard Classification of Language (ASCL), 1997. Cat. no. 1267.0. Canberra: ABS. Reference through: <http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/StatsLibrary>

Australian Bureau of Statistics 1999. Standards for Statistics on Cultural and Language Diversity 1999. Cat. no. 1289.0. Canberra: ABS. Reference through: <http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/StatsLibrary> select Other ABS Statistical Standards

Source Organisation: Australian Bureau of Statistics
National Health Data Committee and National Community Services Data Committee

Comments: This data element is consistent with that used in the Australian Census of Population and Housing and is recommended for use whenever there is a requirement for comparison with Census data.

Data Element Links

Information Model Entities linked to this Data Element

NCSIM Social-cultural characteristic

Data Agreements which include this Data Element
