Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) cluster

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Identifying and definitional attributes

Metadata item type:	Data Set Specification
METEOR identifier:	388904
Registration status:	Health, Recorded 28/04/2010
	Community Services (retired), Superseded 07/06/2011
	Early Childhood, Superseded 07/06/2011
DSS type:	Data Element Cluster
Scope:	The person level geographical location data elements in this cluster refer to the person's usual residence. This is defined below.
	When collecting the geographical location of a person's usual place of residence, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) recommends that 'usual' be defined as: 'the place where the person has or intends to live for 6 months or more, or the place that the person regards as their main residence, or where the person has no other residence, the place they currently reside.' Apart from collecting a person's usual place of residence there is also a need in some collections to collect area of residence immediately prior to or after assistance is provided, or at some other point in time.

Collection and usage attributes

Guide for use: SEIFA is a suite of four summary measures that have been created from 2006 Census information. The indexes can be used to explore different aspects of socio-economic conditions by geographic areas. For each index, every geographic area in Australia is given a SEIFA number which shows how disadvantaged that area is compared with other areas in Australia.

Each index summarises a different aspect of the socio-economic conditions of people living in an area. They each summarise a different set of social and economic information. The indexes provide more general measures of socio-economic status than is given by measuring income or unemployment alone, for example.

The four indexes in SEIFA 2006 are:

- Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage: is derived from Census variables related to disadvantage, such as low income, low educational attainment, unemployment, and dwellings without motor vehicles.
- Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage: a continuum of advantage (high values) to disadvantage (low values) which is derived from Census variables related to both advantage and disadvantage, like household with low income and people with a tertiary education.
- Index of Economic Resources: focuses on Census variables like the income, housing expenditure and assets of households.
- Index of Education and Occupation: includes Census variables relating to the educational and occupational characteristics of communities, like the proportion of people with a higher qualification or those employed in a skilled occupation.

The concept of relative socio-economic disadvantage is neither simple, nor well defined. SEIFA uses a broad definition of relative socio-economic disadvantage in terms of people's access to material and social resources, and their ability to participate in society. While SEIFA represents an average of all people living in an area, SEIFA does not represent the individual situation of each person. Larger areas are more likely to have greater diversity of people and households.

SEIFA 2006 is released for the following geographic levels:

- Census Collection District (CD);
- Postal Area (POA);
- Statistical Local Area (SLA); and
- Local Government Area (LGA).

The basic geographic level used to create SEIFA is the CD. The CD is the smallest spatial unit in the Australian Standard Geographic Classification (ASGC) (ABS cat no 1216.0). SLAs and LGAs are larger units in the ASGC. POAs are a CD-based approximation of Australia Post postcodes, and are part of the Census Geographic Areas classification (ABS cat no 2905.0).

Collection methods:

The data elements listed below do not lead directly to the four SEIFA measures. Rather, they are used to determine the geographic location which can be examined on the SEIFA indexes. As SEIFA is collected at the Collection District level, the collection of information about a person's or service provider organisation's locality and postcode enables the user to ascertain the Collection District or larger geographical entity which can then be found in the relevant SEIFA index.

A number of tools have been designed to assist users to assign geographic area codes on the basis of localities and postcodes. Chief amongst these has been the National Localities Index (NLI).The NLI consists of two parts - a Localities Index and a Streets Sub-Index. The Localities Index contains a list of all Localities in Australia. In broad terms, a Locality is a place where people live or work - or say they live or work. Localities are assigned their full ASGC Main Structure code (i.e. S/T, SD, SSD and SLA codes). The majority of Localities lie wholly within one SLA but where they are split between two or more SLAs, street information is recorded in the Streets Sub-Index.

The NLI is not available beyond the Australian Standard Geographical Classification (ASGC) 2007. The final edition of the NLI was released in July 2007; it was current up until 30 June 2008. The NLI has been replaced by the 'Locality to SLA Concordance' which is a list of State, Locality and Postcode combinations that can be used to determine an ASGC Statistical Local Area (SLA) code. This list has been derived from various geographic information sources. Currently the 'Locality to SLA Concordance' is revised and released each year.

Similar concordances may be made available for the forthcoming Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS).

SEIFA indexes are assigned to areas, not to individuals. They indicate the collective socio-economic status of the people living in an area. A relatively disadvantaged area is likely to have a high proportion of relatively disadvantaged people. However, such an area is also likely to contain people who are not disadvantaged, as well as people who are relatively advantaged.

Source and reference attributes

Submitting organisation: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

Reference documents: [Information Paper: An Introduction to Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), 2006 (ABS cat no 2039.0)](#)

[Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) - Technical Paper 2006 (ABS cat no 2039.0.55.001)](#)

[National Localities Index, Australia, Jul 2007 Final (ABS cat no 1252.0.55.001)](#)

Relational attributes

Related metadata references:
Has been superseded by [Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) cluster 2010](#)
[Community Services (retired),](#) Superseded 09/03/2012
[Early Childhood,](#) Superseded 09/03/2012

Implementation in Data Set Specifications:
[Early Childhood Education and Care: Aggregate NMDS 2010](#)
[Early Childhood,](#) Superseded 07/06/2011
Implementation start date: 01/07/2010

[Early Childhood Education and Care: Unit Record Level NMDS 2010](#)
[Early Childhood,](#) Superseded 07/06/2011
Implementation start date: 01/07/2010

Metadata items in this Data Set Specification

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	Person (address)—Australian postcode, code (Postcode datafile) {NNNN}	Conditional	1

Conditional obligation:

Only collected for unit record level collection for Early Childhood Education and Care

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	Person—area of usual residence, geographical location CD code, (ASGC 2009) NNNNNNN	Conditional	1

Conditional obligation:

Only collected for unit record level collection for Early Childhood Education and Care

Seq No.	Metadata item	Obligation	Max occurs
-	Service provider organisation (address)—Australian postcode, code (Postcode datafile) {NNNN}	Optional	1
-	Service provider organisation—geographic location (CD), code (ASGC 2009) NNNNNNN	Optional	1