

# **ATTACHMENT 8: STANDARD AUSTRALIAN CLASSIFICATION OF COUNTRIES (SACC) CODING INDEX**

A coding index is required to link responses from the 'Country of Birth' questions to the *Standard Australian Classification of Countries (SACC)* (ABS cat. no.1269.0) classification categories. Information provided in administrative collections does not always comprise the exact words used as the official names of classification categories in the SACC. A coding index is therefore necessary to act as a link between individual responses and the classification categories, enabling data to be coded accurately and quickly to the appropriate category in the classification.

The coding index has been developed to assist in the implementation and use of the classification and should be used when coding responses to questions relating to 'Country of birth'. The coding index has been devised by reference to relevant documents such as atlases, gazetteers, guides to countries, and most importantly, by analysis of ABS data collected over many years. It contains a comprehensive list of the most probable responses to questions relating to country and their correct classification codes.

An electronic text file of the coding index can be obtained from the MCEETYA website (<http://www.mceetya.edu.au>).

## **Coding rules**

A range of coding rules is applied in the coding index to facilitate accurate coding of responses to the SACC classification. These rules include:

Responses which relate directly to a country category but which contain information additional to that included in the coding index are allocated the code of that country category. Such instances include responses consisting of a full or formal country name (for example, Syrian Arab Republic is coded to Syria), or responses containing a geographic qualifier such as east or west (for example, South of England is coded to England).

Responses which relate directly to a country category but which consist of alternative spellings (for example, Tadzhikistan for Tajikistan), abbreviations (for example, Aust. for Australia), acronyms (for example, FRY for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), or foreign language names (for example, Ceska Republika for the Czech Republic) are allocated the code of that country category. Similarly, slang or idiosyncratic responses (for example, Aussie or Oz for Australia) are allocated the code of the country category to which they directly relate.

If a response consists of an archaic or historical name (for example, Persia for Iran) it is necessary to determine the current country or geographic area to which the response relates and allocate the appropriate code: country, minor group, n.f.d. (not further defined); major group, n.f.d.; or inadequately described. It should be noted that special supplementary codes have been assigned to the recently defunct political entities of Eastern Europe (former USSR, former Czechoslovakia, etc.) and these codes are used rather than the standard supplementary codes.

Responses that cannot be identified as relating directly to a separately identified country in the classification are assigned a residual category code or a supplementary n.f.d. code. A

response should only be coded to a residual category if it is clear that it belongs in that category. For example, responses which cannot be identified as relating directly to a particular country category, but which is known to be within the range of countries relating to a particular Minor Group, are coded to that Minor group and allocated an 'n.f.d.' code (for example, Northern America n.f.d. 8100). Responses that do not contain sufficient information to be coded to any category of the classification are assigned the appropriate inadequately described code, for example, 'Inadequately described' (0000), 'Not elsewhere classified' (0002) or 'Not stated' (0003) code.

Changes in national boundaries create coding difficulties. In order to maintain consistency of coding in all applications it is preferable that each country response be coded according to national boundaries existing at the time of the data collection. Therefore, all responses relating to a country which currently exists, but which has undergone boundary changes at some time in the past, are coded to the named country. For example, all persons who give their 'Country of birth' as 'Poland' are coded to Poland, even though the boundaries of Poland may have changed since they were born and they may have in fact been born in a place that is now in Germany. Birthplace responses that relate to particular cities or regions which are now in one country, but which may have been in another country at the time of birth, should be coded to the country the city or region is in at the time of collection of the data. For example, the response 'Danzig' is coded to Poland not to Germany.

Responses relating to countries that have changed name, without changing boundaries, are coded to the name in the current classification. Thus, the response 'Upper Volta' is coded to 'Burkina Faso'.