Issues Management: From Census challenges to Marriage Law Postal Survey Success

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2016 Census of Population and Housing

IT’S AUGUST 9 SO GET ONLINE! TONIGHT IS CENSUS NIGHT.

OUR MOMENT TO PAUSE
Context

- Changed Census approach, digital first, $100m saving agreed in 2013
- Discussion about Census/no Census in 2015
- Many process aspects well managed, some not
- Same $ for communication 2011 as 2016
- Smaller communication team with more channels
- Entirely different political environment
Census fears: Greens senators join Nick Xenophon in withholding names

Sarah Hanson-Young and Scott Ludlam add voice to protest over privacy as Xenophon says he will seek amendments to act

The independent senator Nick Xenophon says he will refuse to include his name on his census form, knowing he could be prosecuted for it, because he is not convinced the national census does not present a huge privacy risk.

As millions of Australians prepare to enter their household details on Tuesday, Xenophon will be joined by Greens senators Sarah Hanson-Young and Scott Ludlam in refusing to put their names to the national headcount.
On the night - DDoS attack.....

- Gaps in DDoS protections
- Router failed when restarted
- False alert for data exfiltration
- ABS shut the site to investigate and avoid any loss of data
- Site closed for 40 hours

“DDoS - Like parking a truck across your website driveway”
Census outcomes – good quality despite outage

Overall response rate: 95.1%

Online response rate: 63.3%

Net undercount: 1.0%
Census shows move away from religion

Numbers add up despite the glitches
Losing our religion but Hinduism on a high

Census data reveals South Australia leads the states on volunteer percentage
Multicultural success shown in Census

Couples with kids no longer the majority

2016 Census: Who we are

Census 2016: what’s changed for Indigenous Australians?
Learnings: trust, stakeholders, issues management

- Recognise the context & adjust
- Use experts to assure
- Real issues management & contingency plans
- More communication & service delivery focus
- Engage effectively with Government
- Demonstrate Privacy & Public Benefit
- Be prepared, practiced and responsive
PM to go postal

AUSTRALIANS will have their say on same-sex marriage by the end of November in a $122 million postal vote, if the Senate again rejects a compulsory plebiscite.

Liberal and Nationals MPs yesterday endorsed a plan to have the Australian Bureau of Statistics—which is still reeling from last year’s bungled census—conduct a postal ballot should, as expected, the plebiscite legislation fail to pass. 

If the plebiscite Bill is unexpectedly passed, a $170 million compulsory vote would be held on November 25. A postal vote would see ballot papers in mailboxes from September 12 and a result declared on November 15. But there would be no publicly funded “yes” and “no” campaigns.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said if there was a 2016 election, with Labor arguing for parliament to decide rather than waste taxpayers’ money.

"Strong leaders carry out their promises, weak leaders break them," Mr Turnbull said. "I’m a strong leader." Labor Leader Bill Shorten asked the PM in Question Time if he endorsed the "vile rubbish" of anti-gay marriage campaigners such as former Tasmanian Liberal MP Chris Miles. Mr Miles circulated a pamphlet last year"
Census bunglers make a comeback with hopeless bureau of statistics to run plebiscite

And Matthew Guy’s lobbyist-eating companion turns out be an old foe of The Age...

Finance Minister Matthias Cormann speaks about the postal plebiscite on same-sex marriage in Canberra, yesterday...

The Treasurer will be directing the Australian Statistician to ask to request on a voluntary basis information, statistical information, from all Australians on the electoral law as to their views on whether or not the law in relation to same-sex marriage should be changed to allow same-sex couples to marry.

It has been a while since the Australian Bureau of Statistics did this type of poll. Prime minister Gough Whitlam, October 34, 1957.

The Bureau of Census and Statistics is plugging a nationwide opinion poll to establish preferences for a new national anthem.

What’s the ABS’s track record again? The Australian, October 26 last year:

CUT&PASTE

last night admitted the bundle that shut the census website and delayed millions of people from completing the survey will cost taxpayers up to $500 million.

This should all work out swell. The Australian, October 9, 2016.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics has dumped the say in which it reports jobs figures after conceding its most recent numbers were wrong.

We have an electoral commission for polls such as this. The Australian Electoral Commission website.

The AEC is responsible for conducting federal elections and referendums and maintaining the Commonwealth’s electoral roll.

At least they’ll be using good paper this time instead of computer.

The Australian, October 25 last year.

Australia’s census might debacle could have been avoided had technicans turned a roster off and back on again, according to IBM Australia’s chief engineer.

The ABS will just make this plebiscite more troublesome than it already is. Troy Bramston, The Australian online, Tuesday:

A postal vote plebiscite to determine whether same-sex couples can be married is an 18th-century solution to a 21st-century challenge. It is not a viable middle way through a divided parliament for Malcolm Turnbull and will only create further problems for his embattled leadership down the track.

Talking of troubles, Victorian Opposition Leader Matthew Guy is up to his neck in it. The Age online, scoop, yesterday...

Secretly recorded phone calls directly contradict claims by Opposition Leader Matthew Guy that he had no idea he was meeting Melbourne’s alleged Mafia boss at a lobbyist restaurant earlier this year.

Who was this gentleman eating lobsters with Melbourne’s Liberal leader? The Age, continued...

Tony Madafferi, a wealthy market gardener... has repeatedly been accused by police in court of being a high-ranking member of Melbourne’s Mafia.

It appears Madafferi and The Age have quite a long relationship. An apology issued by The Age on May 3 last year:

Since March 2009, the Age and Fairfax Media Pty Ltd have published a series of articles... concerning Mr Antonio (Tony) Madafferi. The Age acknowledges that Mr Madafferi is a hardworking family man who has never been charged by the police with any criminal offence and has no criminal convictions... The Age accepts that such suggestions are false and apologises to Mr Madafferi.
“trust in government and politicians are now at their lowest levels since 1993.”

- Professor Mark Evans from How Australians Imagine Their Democracy: “The Power Of Us”
## A complex exercise with 27 partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>64 million letters and envelopes</th>
<th>Australia’s largest ever mail out</th>
<th>200 remote and regional locations</th>
<th>Three TV, radio, print and digital campaigns</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMLPS special website</td>
<td>Call centre</td>
<td>ExxonMobil</td>
<td>Online survey form</td>
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<tr>
<td>Materials in 38 languages</td>
<td>Online survey form</td>
<td>ExxonMobil</td>
<td>Automated phone survey system</td>
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<tr>
<td>Translation phone services</td>
<td>Automated phone survey system</td>
<td>Stakeholder engagement</td>
<td>Stakeholder engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overseas elector mailout &amp; IVR</td>
<td>Stakeholder engagement</td>
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<td>Corrective services mailout</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office shopfronts</td>
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<td>Automated online service requests</td>
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99 days to deliver..
Our equation for success

Public Trust = \( \frac{\text{easy} + \text{inclusive} + \text{responsive}}{\text{negative public views}} \)
Applying Census learnings in Marriage Law Survey

- Create a smooth user experience
- Support community participation
- Being agile and responsive
- Manage risk and issues effectively
- Meet stakeholders expectations
- Keep data safe
- Communicate effectively
Campaign challenge

First phase:

- enrol to have your say
- Done in fewer than 3 days
- Flat, factual, action oriented
- Work with partners
- Leverage others
Phase 2 and 3 campaign

Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey

13–25 SEP
Look out for your survey and do it today

25 SEP–20 OCT
Requests for replacement forms

27 OCT
Post your survey back – time’s running out

Should the law be changed to allow same-sex couples to marry?

The Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey is your chance to have your say on whether Australian law should be changed to allow same-sex couples to marry.

From September, eligible Australians will receive a survey form in the mail. Visit marriagesurvey.abs.gov.au to find out if you are eligible to receive a survey form. If you have not received your survey form, you can request a replacement.

If you would like to take part in the survey, drop the completed survey form into the Australian Post mail box. Alternatively, visit marriagesurvey.abs.gov.au to complete your survey online.

The Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey 2017 closes 7 November.

Have your say.

For more information:

mariagesurvey.abs.gov.au
1800 572 113

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Should the law be changed to allow same-sex couples to marry?

This is your chance to have your say on whether Australian law should be changed to allow same-sex couples to marry.

Just simply put your completed survey form in the mail. Post it in the Australian Post mail box. A Tasmanian dusk to 2017.

Survey responses must be received by 7 November. Your response will be kept strictly confidential.

Have your say.

Information line: 1800 572 113 | Visit: www.mariagesurvey.abs.gov.au
Behavioural insights – comms designed materials

- Clear, simplified, effective
- Due date ‘hidden’
- Drive highest response rate
- Tested despite timeframe
- Make any clear mark
- Printing & time frame challenges
More detail in Conduct report on ABS website
Media and stakeholders – handling issues

- Be prepared and then transparent
- 7 days to design process & appear at Senate Inquiry
- Considered impacts of engaging
  - Quickly for assistance (s’holders)
  - Waited until ready (media)
- Crisis management preparation
- Practiced responding to issues
Consistent authority & voice

- Single spokesperson (J Palmer)
- Issued recordings to manage volume
- Syndicated use, worked with national broadcasters
- Media very helpful
- 750 media inquiries, 105 interviews
- 30 MRs + 30 localised media alerts
Issues m’m’ent: Case study – fake postie

- Strong connection with partners
- Didn’t own issues that weren’t ours
- Fast response by correct party

'Fake postie' who claimed he was throwing out same-sex marriage 'no' votes now dealing with death threats

- Sydney man said he's received death threats after joking about marriage survey
- Dan Nolan claimed he worked for Australia Post and was throwing out 'no' forms
- He reposted image of same-sex marriage vote exposed with light posted online
- Image was shared by a concerned voter who saw the photo pop up on Facebook
- Voting in the same-sex marriage postal vote will close on November 7
Unfortunate code (2,000,000,000,000,000,000 combinations)

Code recipient tweets

Media question Sat afternoon

40 min turnaround

Acknowledge, apologise, action

Story lands softly following Wed

ABS ‘sorry’ as same-sex postal survey hits bum note
ABS considers paperless option in gay marriage postal survey

SSM: More than half of same-sex marriage surveys returned, ABS says

Politics live as ABS prepares to send out same-sex marriage postal survey papers

If you haven't received your marriage equality ballot yet, don't panic

Australian marriage equality vote explainer - the answer's in the post

Same-sex marriage: Federal police asked to investigate sale of survey forms

Same-sex marriage: ABS warns Australians to avoid posting photos of survey on social media

'No guarantee against theft': Shortcomings of postal survey revealed as ABS fronts inquiry
No service delivery on social

- Emotionally charged issue
- Easily breach privacy on social
- Website info was the focus
- People interested in helping so they answered Qs with our web material (see photo)
- Campaigns also posted
- Social ads & pinned posts focus
Release of results: huge potential for issues

- On site live media conference
- Managed risks for disruption (ie roped off street access, closed doors, alternative location if bomb threat etc)
- Practiced speech with interpreter
- Results 5 mins into speech
- Huge traffic on ABS website at 10.07am
- 2166 media clips 15-16/11 (total 15574)
Results – success based on those learnings

Overall participation 79.5%

81.6% [6,644,192] [Females]
77.3% [5,980,168] [Males]

"..Australians could be assured of the integrity of the survey."
– Senator the Hon Matthew Canavan, Chair of the No Committee

$40m under budget
Results – success based on those learnings

Views on Postal Survey – Overall
(% Strongly Agree/Agree)

94%
The ABS is making it easy for the public to participate in the Postal Survey

90%
The ABS can be trusted to manage the Postal Survey
Results – success based on those learnings

**Easy**

Behavioural economics principles applied to communication and design of envelope, letter and survey form:

- 76% of responses received within the first 10 days of the survey
- 79.9% participation
- 99.84% surveys had a clear response because form was easy for all to use

**Responsive**

User-centred design of website and information line (IVR and call centre scripts) and service automation:

- 96% of all requests for replacement materials (more than 125,000 requests) processed automatically
- 25% of calls answered by IVR (people got what they needed)
- average call wait time only 12 seconds

**Inclusive**

Tailored strategies included online and telephone survey response options, remote community visits, regional and capital city ‘shop fronts’, and in-language and disability support services:

> FFCCA would like to commend the ABS for their role in ensuring that Australians from CALD backgrounds were able to fully participate meaningfully in what has been a historic process.

Director, Federation of Ethnic Communities' Council of Australia

> In my view, this set the Bureau apart as a leader in implementing accessible alternatives on a national scale.

Alastair McEwin, Disability Discrimination Commissioner

> The approach adopted by the ABS was innovative, thorough and comprehensive and has supported the transparent and rigorous management of risks to the Survey.

Protiviti
Transparency and Learnings

- Search “conduct postal survey”
- Publication 1800.0
Questions?