

The Age

# Expats get their own census

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An unofficial census of the "forgotten" one million Australians living overseas is being undertaken to compensate for their absence from the official census.

As Australians prepare to fill out their census forms tomorrow, about five per cent of all Australians - those living abroad - will not be included.

Southern Cross and Advance - expatriate associations in Britain and the United States respectively - have teamed up to try to track down Australians abroad.

The answers to the 50-question survey will then be forwarded to Professor Graeme Hugo of the University of Adelaide, a specialist in the Australian diaspora.

"We thought this would be a step towards making sure that at least some of the approximately one million Australians who live outside Australia are not forgotten," Southern Cross founder Anna McGregor said.

There have been past inquiries into whether expats could be included in the official census, but it had proved too difficult.

"The word census implies it's comprehensive, and when it comes to expats, you just can't find them all," Ms McGregor said.

"Some people don't want the Australian government to know where they are - maybe they think they'll have to pay tax back in Australia."

Southern Cross is hoping to find 10,000 Australians to make the survey sample representative.

**AAP**