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# A Census of purpose

SAVVY small businesses should be tapping into Census information to see where they can exploit opportunities to grow their companies, industry advisers say.

The Census, which showed Australia's population had surged by 8 per cent to 21.5 million, has mostly free data about growing areas and trends in ageing and employment.

"I think a lot of small businesses already use a lot of the data, but for a lot of others it is an untapped resource," said Jerry Kleeman, chairman of business networking group The Executive Connection.

"Small businesses do not have the expertise or funds to do their own market research or to do public relations, but they can drill down into this information."

Mr Kleeman said the Census identified where people were moving and being born, and what languages they were speaking.

He said it also identified how long people lived in their homes.

"This is important information for people running renovation businesses or selling furniture," he said.

He said home owners might be keen to stay and



could be looking to revitalise their homes.

In areas where the population is growing, with expanding families, the homeowners might be looking to add bedrooms.

"It is tough times for the retail game and you have to make sure your marketing dollar is targeting the appropriate market," he said.

He said using the Census research meant that small businesses did not have to take a "shotgun" approach to marketing.

"The information takes a bit of sorting through but it is all there online," Mr Kleeman said.

The Census information is vital for the Federal Government to decide where schools, hospitals and other services need to be built.

Mr Kleeman said the current Census had more information than in the past.

Population areas have been more precisely defined and there is more information on where people spend their time during the day, and income levels.