



Census

'Our Story. Our Future.' was created by proud Wiradjuri, Wotjobaluk, Yuin and Gumbaynggirr artist Luke Penrith and Maluililgal people, Badu Island artist Naseli Tamwoy.

Indigenous youth advocate for greater participation in the Census

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people are leading the conversation about the importance of Indigenous Australians participating in the next Census.

The Census tells the story of who we are as a nation, asking questions about our communities, who we are and where we live. It's an opportunity for everyone to play a part in helping to plan for the future of their families and communities. Information from the Census helps organisations like local health and education providers to plan the right services in your area.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Australia has historically been undercounted. This is because some people have not been counted in a household Census form or some households have not been counted at all.

Chenile Chandler, a young Wurundjeri woman of the Kulin Nations and Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census Community Engagement Officer is helping to change this. Chenile's role is to help make sure that more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians understand the benefits of completing the Census and are counted.

"There's plenty of help for our mob to complete the Census, so that everyone participates," said Chenile.

"We're here to help make sure that the whole community understands the importance of being counted in the Census."

There will be Census pop up hubs in shopping malls and other high-traffic areas where anyone can have a chat with Census staff to answer questions and help complete the Census form. Census staff will also work closely with stakeholders and communities to make sure everyone can take part and be counted.

For many younger Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, this will be the first time they complete the Census.

Garigarra Riley-Mundine, a proud Wiradjuri woman from Dubbo, completed the Census for the first time by herself in 2016 while staying on a university campus away from her family home and Country.

Garigarra has since graduated and now works in the Australian Public Service. She has seen first-hand how Census data has made a difference in her community.

"I see the Census benefit my community through different programs and policies that have helped us with our health centre and community programs for kids," said Garigarra.

“Primary schools and universities in regional New South Wales where I grew up used data to help understand where they needed to provide support for Aboriginal students, whether that was with after-school care tutoring or providing specific programs in the local TAFE and university.”

Garigarra is making sure her family back home in Dubbo understands the importance and benefits of completing the Census too.

“It’s important for our mob to complete the Census because our information feeds into policy which really helps us in the long-term.”

Other young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are involved with supporting and educating their local community about the Census and how it benefits their local community.

Kamilaroi and Kunja man, Braedyn Edwards, helped support and educate his local community about the Census by applying to join the Census field staff team in 2016. Braedyn was in his first year of university and wanted to earn some extra money for a few weeks while supporting his community to understand why the Census was important.

Braedyn’s role with Census was to visit households in his local community to answer questions and help people complete their Census. A common question he encountered was if everyone in the house needed to be included in the Census form.

“Even if it was a house of 12 people, you have to include every single person on the Census including visitors and babies. For some this might need two or three paper forms to complete it, although everyone can be included in the one form if they complete online,” says Braedyn.

The Census can show community where services are needed, from housing and employment services through to transport and community infrastructure.

Chenile has a simple message for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

“Your participation in the Census means having the right services for our mob. Make sure you and your family are counted.”