



Census

2026 Census topic review

Public consultation – Phase one

28 February – 28 April 2023

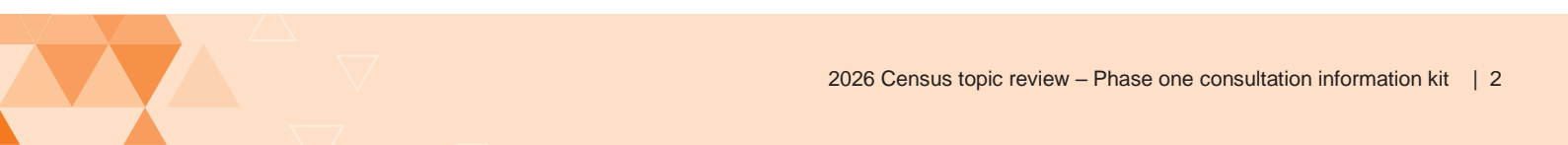
→ Key messages and resources to share with your community.





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Introduction

A successful Census relies on strong community support, and this support is achieved through collecting data of national importance while also ensuring the Census is easy to complete and not seen as being too intrusive.

This information kit provides an overview of the 2026 Census topic review process and resources to share with your community during phase one of public consultation.

2026 Census topic review

About the 2026 Census topic review

- The Census of Population and Housing provides a snapshot of Australia. It shows how our nation changes over time and informs critical decisions that guide our future.
- The next Census will take place in 2026. As part of each Census, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) undertakes a review to inform our recommendation to the Australian Government on the topics that could be included in the Census.
- The review is undertaken to ensure information collected in the Census remains relevant as Australia changes. The review of topics includes extensive public consultation and testing.
- The ABS is undertaking a two-phase public consultation process to inform our recommendations on topics for the 2026 Census.
 - Phase one: understanding what information the public would like the ABS to collect on the Census.
 - Phase two: consultation on topics being considered for inclusion, change or removal – this will consider public input from phase one.

Public consultation – Phase one

- Phase one of the 2026 Census topic consultation is **open from 28 February to 28 April 2023**.
- The purpose of phase one is to help the ABS understand what information is needed, but not currently collected.
- Requests for new topics or changes to existing Census topics can be submitted through the [ABS Consultation Hub](#).
- Individuals and organisations can prepare submissions by:

- Gathering evidence to explain why the information needs to be collected. For example, will it inform government policies, research, grant allocations, business or community decisions?
- Connecting with other individuals or organisations who may want to collaborate on a submission.
- The ABS will also consider the following submissions and feedback as part of the phase one consultation:
 - The submissions received for the six topics shortlisted for further consideration in the 2021 Census, but not included on the form (*These are gender identity, household and family relationships, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural identity, journey to education, smoking status and sexual orientation*).
 - Correspondence received by the Australian Statistician and Ministers since the 2021 Census consultation process closed in June 2018.
 - Feedback and outcomes of recent ABS consultations and reviews.
- An additional submission is not needed if people have contacted the ABS since July 2018, or if they made a submission for the 2021 Census on one of the six shortlisted topics listed above. The ABS encourages a submission if additional evidence is available that hasn't been provided previously.

Key dates for the 2026 Census topic review process

- **28 February – 28 April 2023:** Phase one public consultation on information needs.
- **June - July 2023:** Phase two public consultation on topics being considered for inclusion, change or removal in the 2026 Census.
- **Late 2023:** The ABS will advise the public on outcomes from the consultations. Proposed topics and questions will be tested using focus groups, interviews and a large-scale test.
- **Mid 2024:** The ABS will make a recommendation to the Australian Government on the topics that could be included in the 2026 Census.
- **Early 2025:** Census Regulation tabled in the Australian Parliament.
- **Late 2025:** Final Census topics are published.

2026 Census topics assessment criteria

- The ABS has developed a set of criteria to help assess which topics should be recommended to the Australian Government. These are based on guidance from the [United Nations](#).
- In phase one, the ABS will assess the public value of collecting data on the topic. The criteria that will be used are:
 1. The topic is of current national importance.
 2. There is a need for the data at the national level and either the local level or for small population groups.
 3. There is likely to be a continuing need for data on the topic following the Census.
- The ABS will further assess topics that rate strongly against the public value criteria. This assessment will help determine if the Census is the most appropriate way to provide data on the topic. The ABS will consider whether:
 4. There are suitable alternative data sources or solutions that could meet the topic need.
 5. Data on the topic can be collected efficiently.
 6. A representative of a household would be willing and able to answer questions on the topic for each member of the household.
- In addition to assessing the topics individually, the ABS will consider if the combination of topics will maintain a high level of public support for the Census. This includes the overall size and complexity of the Census form, and if collecting data on a topic will impact how the public answers questions on other topics.
- Further detail on considerations for each [criterion](#) are provided on the ABS website.

Webinar

The ABS will be hosting a live webinar on **Tuesday 7 March 2023 at 2:00pm – 3:00pm AEDT**. [Registrations are now open.](#)

The webinar will provide an overview of the consultation process, assessment criteria and how to prepare a high-quality submission. The webinar will include an audience question and answer session.

Resources

A range of resources are available for you to share with your community. Social media tiles, infographics and content for newsletters are available to download from the [Census media hub](#).

2026 Census topic review timeline

Download the topic review timeline from the [Census media hub](#).



Email footer

Download the email footer from the [Census media hub](#).



Census 2026 Census Topic Consultation



Phase one open 28 Feb – 28 Apr 2023

abs.gov.au/census



Social media tiles

We encourage you to share posts about the 2026 Census topic consultation from the [Census Facebook page](#). You can also download content to share from the [Census media hub](#).

Topic	Post copy	Social media tile
<p>2026 Census topic consultation phase one open</p> <p>Publish: 28 February – 28 April 2023</p>	<p>What information does your community need to inform important decisions?</p> <p>The next Census will take place in 2026. Prior to each Census, the Australian Bureau of Statistics consults on what could be collected on the Census.</p> <p>Phase one of the public consultation is open until 28 April 2023.</p> <p>Learn more at https://www.abs.gov.au/census/2026-census-topic-consultation</p> <p>#2026CensusAU</p>	<p>Download from Census media hub.</p>  <p>The tile features the Australian Bureau of Statistics logo, the word 'Census', and the text: '2026 Census Topic Consultation Phase one open 28 February – 28 April 2023'. It includes a graphic of a house and trees.</p>
<p>Webinar – 2026 Census topic consultation phase one.</p> <p>Publish: Now – 6 March 2023</p>	<p><u>Register now</u> for the 2026 Census topic consultation live webinar – Tuesday 7 March, 2:00pm – 3:00pm AEDT.</p> <p>The next Census will take place in 2026. Prior to each Census, the Australian Bureau of Statistics consults on what could be collected on the Census.</p> <p>The webinar will provide an overview of the consultation process, assessment criteria and how to prepare a high-quality submission.</p> <p>Learn more at https://www.abs.gov.au/census/2026-census-topic-consultation</p>	<p>Download from Census media hub.</p>  <p>The tile features the Australian Bureau of Statistics logo, the word 'Census', and the text: '2026 Census Topic Consultation Q&A session'. It includes details: 'Date: 7 March 2023', 'Time: 2:00pm – 3:00pm AEDT', and 'Location: online'. A 'Register now' button is visible at the bottom.</p>

Newsletter article

An example of a newsletter article is provided below that you can share with your networks. Newsletter content and images are available from the [Census media hub](#).

Subject: 2026 Census topic consultation

What information does your community need to inform important decisions?

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has begun public consultation on topics for the 2026 Census of Population and Housing. You are invited to make a submission about information needed to inform Australia's important decisions.

Phase one of the 2026 Census topic consultation is open until 28 April 2023. Requests for new topics or changes to existing Census topics can be submitted through the [ABS Consultation Hub](#).

You can start preparing submissions now by:

- Gathering evidence to explain why the information needs to be collected. For example, will it inform government policies, research, grant allocations, business or community decisions?
- Connecting with other individuals or organisations who may want to collaborate on a submission.

Register now for the 2026 Census topic consultation webinar

The ABS will be hosting a live webinar on Tuesday 7 March 2023 at 2:00pm – 3:00pm AEDT.

The webinar will provide an overview of the consultation process, assessment criteria and how to prepare a high-quality submission. The webinar will include an audience question and answer session.

More information about the 2026 Census topic review process is available on the [ABS website](#). You can subscribe for updates at www.subscribe.abs.gov.au/2026Census

Easy Read Guide to the 2026 Census topic consultation process

Download the Easy Read Guide to the 2026 Census topic review process from the [Census media hub](#).



What should the 2026 Census ask people?

We want to know what you think

February to April 2023

Easy Read version





Census

For more information or assistance

Visit www.abs.gov.au/census/2026-census-topic-consultation



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Email Census.content@abs.gov.au

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