



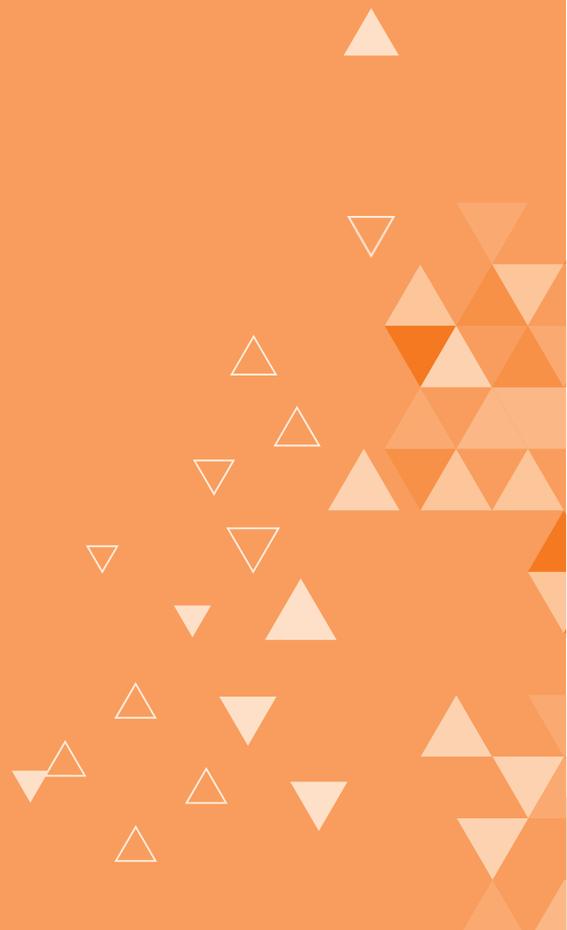
Census

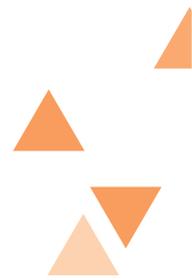
2026 Census topic review

Public consultation – Phase two

27 July – 8 September 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 two 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 has adopted a two-phase consultation approach to maximise the opportunities the Australian public has to engage with and provide feedback during the topic review process.

Phase one consultation outcomes

- Phase one of the consultation was open between 28 February – 28 April 2023 and was aimed at understanding what information the public would like the ABS to collect on the 2026 Census.
- The ABS received 260 submissions and considered more than 500 other pieces of feedback during phase one of the consultation.
- The ABS has evaluated the value to the public of collecting each new and existing topic and developed a shortlist of topics being considered further for the 2026 Census.
- Topics that rated highly against the public value criteria have progressed for further assessment to determine the feasibility of collecting the data in the Census. Not all shortlisted topics will proceed to testing or be included in the 2026 Census.
- There are more requests for new topics than can be accommodated in the Census, so new topics need to be prioritised and existing topics need to be considered for removal.
- Outcomes from phase one, including a detailed overview of topics shortlisted for inclusion, change and removal from the 2026 Census will be published on the ABS website at 11:30am AEST, 27 July 2023. See [2026 Census topic review: Phase one directions](#).

Phase two public consultation

- Phase two of the 2026 Census topic consultation is open 27 July until 8 September 2023.
- The ABS is seeking public feedback to understand the impacts of potential changes to the topics that were collected in 2021.
- The topics that the ABS is specifically seeking feedback on are:
 - Ancestry
 - Ethnic identity
 - Language
 - Number of children ever born
 - Number of motor vehicles
 - Religious affiliation
 - Work
 - Unpaid work – domestic activities
- Members of the public, community groups and other organisations are invited to participate in this consultation through the [ABS Consultation Hub](#).
- Although the ABS is not requesting specific feedback on all other topics proposed for inclusion, change or removal, there is the opportunity to provide additional feedback through the ABS Consultation Hub.
- During phase two of the consultation the ABS will continue to engage with key stakeholders to clarify information and seek advice, to ensure that recommendations on topics are well-informed.

Key dates for the 2026 Census topic review process

2026 Census topic review timeline



Phase one consultation

28 Feb – 28 Apr 2023

The ABS will ask about information needs not currently met by the ABS. You can have your say at consult.abs.gov.au



Phase two consultation

27 Jul – 8 Sept 2023

The ABS will prioritise information needs. We will ask for feedback on proposed changes to Census topics.



Consultation outcomes published

Late 2023

Outcomes from the consultation will be shared on the ABS website, including the Census topics progressing to testing.



Proposed topics tested

Late 2023 – 2024

Proposed new Census topics and questions will be tested through focus groups, interviews and a large scale test.



Recommendation to the Australian Government

Mid 2024

The ABS will recommend 2026 Census topics to the Australian Government for decision.



2026 Census topics finalised

Late 2025

Changes to the Census are tabled in Parliament. The final decision on topics will be published on the ABS website.

2026 Census topic 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](#).
- The assessment criteria inform our recommendation to the Government on topics for inclusion, change or removal from the 2026 Census.
- In phase one, the ABS reviewed new and existing topics against the assessment criteria on public value (criteria 1-3). Topics with high public value were then assessed against criterion 4.
- During phase two, the ABS is seeking specific information on some of the topics being proposed for change or removal to finalise our assessment against criteria 1-4.

Criteria	For example
1. The topic is of current national importance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data is required for an electoral or legislative purpose. • data is needed to support policy development, planning or program monitoring. • data is used for research purposes.
2. There is a need for data at the national level, and either the local level or for small population groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data is needed at the national level and/or is required for international comparability. • data is needed for small population groups. • data is needed for small geographic areas. • the value of the topic is enhanced through combining with other characteristics collected in the Census or with administrative data.
3. There is likely to be a continuing need for data on the topic following the Census.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is a need for time series data on the topic. • the topic is likely to remain relevant in the future. • data collected on the topic will have enduring value.
4. There are no other suitable alternative data sources or solutions that could meet the topic need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the topic need is not met or likely to be met in the near future by an ABS survey or from administrative sources. • data to meet the topic need cannot be produced through integration of existing data sources. • there are extensive barriers to accessing alternate data sources.

- The ABS will continue to assess all shortlisted topics to determine if the Census is the most appropriate way to provide data on the topic (criteria 5-6).

Criteria	For example
5. Data on the topic can be collected efficiently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the topic will not require multiple questions or a large number of response categories. • data collected on the topic will not require extensive processing or coding. • the collection of the topic will not significantly add to the overall cost of the Census.

<p>6. A representative of the household would be willing and able to answer questions on the topic for each member of the household.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the topic can be collected in a simple question or questions using a form that the household completes themselves. • the question(s) will not require lengthy or complex explanation or instruction. • the question(s) is likely to be easily understood. • respondents will easily know the answer to the question(s). • the question(s) is easy and quick to answer. • the topic is not an unreasonable intrusion in the right to privacy • respondents will be willing to answer accurately.
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- 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.

Webinar

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

This webinar will provide an overview of what information the ABS is requesting on the shortlisted topics and guidance on how to prepare a high-quality submission in phase two of the consultation.

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](#).

Email footer

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



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

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has opened the second phase of public consultation on topics for the 2026 Census of Population and Housing.

Earlier this year the ABS asked the Australian community about the information they wanted to see collected in the next Census. An overview of the topics shortlisted for inclusion, change or removal from the 2026 Census is available on the [ABS website](#).

The ABS is now seeking further information on the impacts of topics being considered for change or removal from the 2026 Census. Consultation is open until 8 September 2023. You can provide feedback via the [ABS Consultation Hub](#).

[Register](#) now for the 2026 Census topic consultation webinar

The ABS will be hosting a live webinar on Thursday 3 August 2023 at 2pm – 3pm AEST. The webinar will provide an update on the 2026 Census topic review, including information on how to prepare a high-quality submission in phase two of the consultation. 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

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 two open</p> <p>Publish: 27 July – 8 September 2023</p>	<p>Earlier this year the ABS asked the Australian community what they wanted to see collected in the next Census. An overview of the topics shortlisted for the 2026 Census is available on the ABS website.</p> <p>The ABS is now seeking information on the impacts of topics being considered for change or removal from the 2026 Census. Consultation is open until 8 September 2023.</p> <p>Learn more at https://www.abs.gov.au/census/2026-census-topic-review</p> <p>#2026CensusAU</p>	<p>Download from Census media hub.</p>  <p>The tile features the ABS logo, the text 'Census 2026 Census Topic Consultation Phase two open 27 July – 8 September 2023', and an illustration of a house and trees. A link 'abs.gov.au/census' is at the bottom.</p>
<p>Webinar – 2026 Census topic consultation phase two</p> <p>Publish: 27 July – 3 August 2023</p>	<p>Register now for the 2026 Census topic consultation webinar – Thursday 3 August, 2:00pm – 3:00pm AEST.</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. This webinar will provide an overview of what information the ABS is requesting on the shortlisted topics and guidance on how to prepare a high-quality submission in phase two of the consultation. The webinar will include an audience question and answer session.</p> <p>Learn more at https://www.abs.gov.au/census/2026-census-topic-review</p>	<p>Download from Census media hub.</p>  <p>The tile features the ABS logo, the text 'Census 2026 Census Topic Consultation Q&A session', and details: 'Date: 3 August 2023', 'Time: 2:00pm – 3:00pm AEST', 'Location: online', and a 'Register now' button.</p>



Census

For more information or assistance

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



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Email Census.content@abs.gov.au

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