

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS ACT 1975: sub-section 6(3)

**PROPOSAL NO. 20 OF 2019
BY THE AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS**

PERSONAL SAFETY SURVEY 2020

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) proposes to collect information for the purpose of building the evidence base on the nature, extent and characteristics of violence in Australia. This information also monitors and evaluates governments' success in achieving priority actions and strategic outcomes in relation to reducing the prevalence of family and domestic violence, and sexual assault. The Personal Safety Survey is conducted under the auspices of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022.

The information will be collected:

- from March 2020 to October 2020;
- from a sample of approximately 23,000 adults (aged 18 years or over) nationally (excluding very remote areas of Australia), including approximately 17,000 female and 6,000 male respondents;
- via a web form, telephone or face to face interview for household information; and
- via a face-to-face interview for the selected respondent information, with the option for the voluntary components to be self-completed.

Information will be collected on a range of characteristics including:

- Socio-demographic characteristics of household members, the respondent and their current partner;
- Lifestyle indicators such as self-assessed health status, disability, life satisfaction, social connectedness, and financial stressors;
- Feelings of safety in selected situations;
- Experience of selected types of sexual harassment in the last 12 months (voluntary);
- Experience of violence, such as sexual assault/threat and physical assault/threat, since age 15 (voluntary);
- Details of the most recent incident of sexual assault/threat and physical assault/threat (voluntary);
- Experience of physical abuse and sexual abuse before age 15 (voluntary);
- Witnessing violence between a parent and their partner before age 15 (voluntary);
- Experience of violence by current partner and (most recently violent) previous partner (voluntary);
- Experience of emotional abuse by current partner and (most recently emotionally abusive) previous partners since age 15 (voluntary); and
- Experience of stalking since age 15 (voluntary).

While this collection will be conducted under the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, the content regarding experiences such as violence or abuse will be voluntary, as identified above. All information obtained by the Australian Bureau of Statistics will be covered by the secrecy provisions of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

The information collected will be used by the ABS in the compilation and analysis of aspects of personal safety including violence against both men and women, by men and women, at a level of detail that is not available from any other source. The data will be used to support analysis of the circumstances of people experiencing violence, and to measure changes over time.

The ABS expects to make statistical and related information from the collection available from mid-2021.

The principal users of the information the ABS produces will be relevant state and federal government departments, research agencies and peak bodies within the field. The data collected will assist and inform decision making, research and discussion around the development, implementation and evaluation of social and economic policies and services.

This collection has been developed in consultation with:

- the Commonwealth Department of Social Services;
- Commonwealth Department of the Prime Minister & Cabinet: Office for Women;
- Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety;
- Women's Services Network;
- the National Association of Services Against Sexual Violence;
- the Australian Centre for the Study of Sexual Assault; and
- other relevant State/Territory Government Departments and academic researchers working in the field.

To assist in determining the feasibility of the collection and to understand and manage respondent burden consistent with the Government's Regulator Performance Framework, the ABS has:

- considered what existing information is available;
- consulted with key stakeholders (identified above); and
- conducted cognitive testing and field tested the survey to ensure that the required data are readily available and that the respondent load has been minimised. No significant adverse respondent reaction is expected as a result of the sensitive content.

The ABS will use a different, confidential, survey name in the field. The use of a different survey name in the field will mean that the details of the questions asked will be known only to the selected respondents. This will, in turn, improve the quality of the data collected by reducing the risk that potential respondents could be prevented from participating in the survey by other members of their household.

This is the fourth iteration of the survey. It was last conducted in 2016 and was previously tabled in Parliament as Proposal No. 11 of 2016.

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