



Census

2026 Census topic consultation

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Background



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The Census of Population and Housing provides a snapshot of Australia. It is one of the many ways that the ABS produces statistics.

The Census provides data for small areas and small populations.

Every Census, the ABS makes a recommendation to the Australian Government on the topics that could be included in the Census.

The next Census will take place in 2026.



2026 Census topic review timeline



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**Phase one
consultation**

28 Feb – 28 Apr 2023



**Phase two
consultation**

27 Jul – 8 Sept 2023



**Consultation
outcomes
published**

Late 2023



**Proposed
topics tested**

Late 2023 – 2024



**Recommendation
to the Australian
Government**

Mid 2024



**2026 Census
topics finalised**

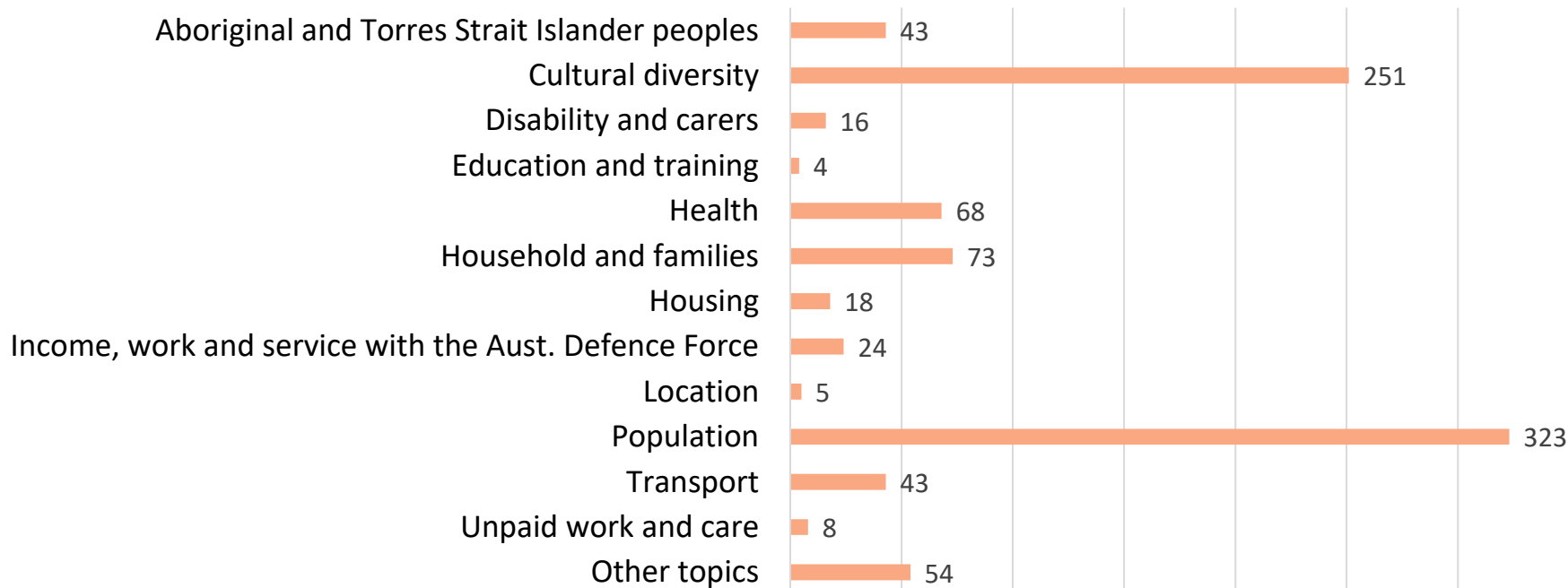
Late 2025

Phase one consultation



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930 data requests across topic themes:



Assessment criteria



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Topics were assessed for public value:

1	The topic is of current national importance.
2	There is a need for 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.

Topics that rated the highest against the public value criteria were rated against criterion 4:

4	There are no other suitable alternative data sources or solutions that could meet the topic need.
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Summary of outcomes – New topics



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Theme	Topic
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural identity
Cultural diversity	Ethnic identity
Disability and carers	Additional measure of disability
Household and families	Shared care of children
Housing	Dwelling occupancy status
Location	Main reason for moving in last 12 months
Population	Gender
	Sexual orientation
	Variations of sex characteristics
Transport	Journey to education (Mode of travel to education institution and Name and address of education institution)
Other topics	Household energy use
	Impact of natural disasters

Topic flags

- Complexity across topics
- Sensitivity
- Previous evidence



2021 Census topics



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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status

Housing

- Housing costs
- Landlord type for rented dwellings
- Number of bedrooms
- Other private dwelling information (structure, location and residential status topics)
- Other non-private dwelling information (name, address, type, number of persons resident and residential status topics)
- Type of tenure (ownership and rental topics)




Disability and carers

- Need for assistance in self-care, body movement or communication
- Unpaid assistance to a person with a disability, health condition or due to old age

Health

-  **Long-term health conditions**


Household and families

-  **Household/family relationships**
-  **Marital status**
-  **Persons temporarily absent on Census night**






Location

- Address on Census night
- Internal migration (Address one year ago)
- Internal migration (Address five years ago)
- Usual residence at Census time

Unpaid work and care

- Unpaid care of children
-  **Unpaid work - domestic activities**
- Unpaid work - volunteer work for an organisation or group



Cultural Diversity

-  **Ancestry**
 - Australian citizenship
 - County of birth
-  **Country of birth of parents**
-  **Main language other than English used at home**
-  **Proficiency in spoken English**
-  **Religious affiliation**
 - Year of arrival in Australia



Income, work and service with the Australian Defence Force

-  **Hours worked**
-  **Income**
 - Industry of employment
-  **Labour force status**
 - Main tasks in occupation
-  **Number of employees (employed by owner managers)**
 - Occupation
 - Service with the Australian Defence Force
-  **Status in employment**


Population

- Date of birth or age
- Name
-  **Number of children ever born**
-  **Sex**

Transport

-  **Mode of travel to work**
 - Name and address of workplace attended
-  **Number of motor vehicles**

Education and training

-  **Attendance at an educational institution**
 - Highest level of schooling
 - Highest non-school qualifications

Legend:

 **Considering removal**

 **Considering change**

No proposed change

Phase two consultation

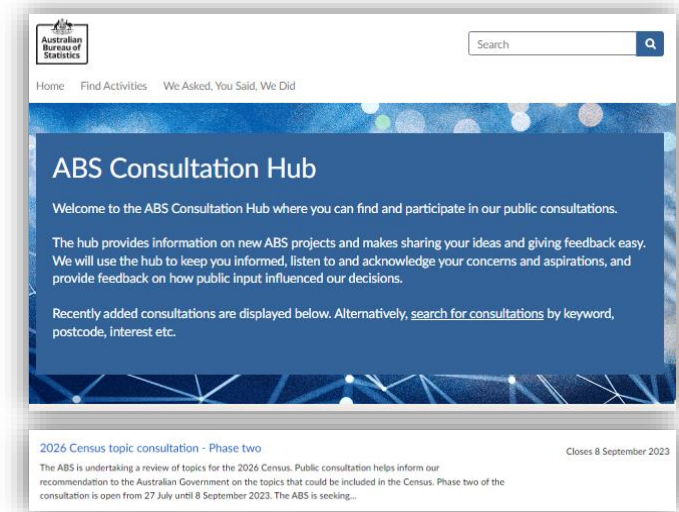


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You can provide feedback through the ABS Consultation Hub **consult.abs.gov.au**

- Remember the assessment criteria
- Quality over quantity
- Collaboration
- We have listened



Phase two consultation



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We are seeking feedback where further information is needed to progress our assessment.

- Potential removal:
 - Number of children ever born
 - Number of motor vehicles
 - Unpaid work – domestic activities
- Potential removal and potential changes:
 - Work topics
- Potential Changes:
 - Ancestry and Ethnic identity
 - Language
 - Religious affiliation

Australian Bureau of Statistics

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2026 Census topic consultation - Phase two

Closes 8 September 2023

The ABS is undertaking a review of topics for the 2026 Census. Public consultation helps inform our recommendation to the Australian Government on the topics that could be included in the Census. Phase two of the consultation is open from 27 July until 8 September 2023. The ABS is seeking...

Existing topics being considered for removal



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Topic	Rationale
Number of children ever born	Propose moving to decennial collection.
Number of employees (employed by owner managers)	Alternative data sources may be able to meet data needs.
Number of motor vehicles	Alternative data sources may be able to meet data needs.
Unpaid work (domestic activities)	Alternative data sources may be able to meet data needs.

Topics for potential changes



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Topic	Further feedback sought
Ancestry and Ethnic identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What we heard in phase one<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Benefits in collecting four ancestries○ Benefits in collecting data on ethnic identity• What we need to understand<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Implications of collecting four ancestries○ Use cases for collecting information on ethnic identity in addition to ancestry○ The impact if data on ancestry was replaced with ethnic identity
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What we heard in phase one<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Removing 'at home' may allow people to accurately reflect the language they use the most○ Collecting only one language used reduces data benefits○ Collecting multiple languages can improve English language proficiency data• What we need to understand<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Impacts on removing the 'at home' context, including a break in time series○ Impacts on collecting multiple languages and the benefit in knowing the main language used

Topics for potential changes



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Topic	Further feedback sought
Religious affiliation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What we heard in phase one<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Current question wording suggests someone has a religion• What we need to understand<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The potential impact to you if data was collected through a two-part question○ The impact on not having a time-series if the question was changed
Work - Joblessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What we heard in phase one<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Benefits in obtaining a broader view of the potential labour force• What we need to understand<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What aspects would be of use to you and why?
Work - Employment arrangements / Job security	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What we heard in phase one<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Benefits in collecting data on Employment arrangements/Job security• What we need to understand<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What aspects would be of use to you and why?

Phase two assessment



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Information provided in phase two of the consultation will support us to finalise our assessment of public value.

We will assess shortlisted topics further on the feasibility of collecting the data in the Census. The criteria are:

5	Data on the topic can be collected efficiently.
6	A representative of the household would be willing and able to answer questions on the topic for each member of the household.

Not all topics considered during phase two consultation and review will proceed to testing.

Administrative data - Income



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- Administrative data on income has been identified as a potential candidate to replace the existing income question on the 2026 Census form.
- On 15 August 2023, the ABS will release the Administrative Data Snapshot of Population and Housing (ADS) and open a four-month public consultation on the value of this type of data.
- Feedback on the use of administrative income data can be provided through the ADS consultation process.
- Feedback provided through the ADS consultation will be considered prior to making a recommendation to Government on the 2026 Census topics.

Further information



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



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Thank you