2026 Census topic consultation: Submission form

This document can be used to help draft a collaborative submission or if you prefer you can email your response back to us.

On completion, please check and submit your form via:

Email: census.content@abs.gov.au

Post: **2026 Census Topic Consultation**
Locked Bag 10
Belconnen ACT 2616

Online: Please visit the [ABS Consultation Hub](#)

1. Do you give permission for the ABS to publish your submission after the consultation closes? (Select one) *(Required)*

By selecting 'Yes, publish without my name, contributors' names and email addresses':

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By selecting 'No':

No part of your submission will be published.

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☐ No

Contact details

2. Please provide details of the best contact for this submission. These details will be used if we have any follow-up questions.

The [ABS Privacy Policy](#) outlines how the ABS will handle any personal information that you provide to us.

Contact name

Angela Wicks

Organisation (if applicable)

Canteen

Email address

Angela.wicks@canteen.org.au

3. Do you wish to receive email updates on the outcomes of this consultation and at key points in the 2026 Census topic selection process?

☒ Yes

☐ No

4. Select the category that best describes you or the organisation you represent (Select one)

☐ Individual

☐ Academia/educational institution

☐ Australian government

☐ Business

☐ Community organisation

☐ Industry body/association

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☒ Non-government organisation

☐ State/territory government

☐ Other (please specify)

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☒ Yes – *please list name, organisation (if applicable) and email address in the section below.*

☐ No

Additional individual(s) or organisation(s)

Cancer Council

ACON

What information would you like the ABS to collect and produce statistics on?

If you have multiple topics and data needs, please complete a separate submission for each.

6. Please provide a brief summary of the information you would like the ABS to collect and produce statistics on.

We would like the ABS to collect and produce statistics on gender identity.

Including two questions may help help avoid confusion among people who are not aware of the difference between gender and sex, for example:

1. How does the person describe their gender?
   Man or male / Woman or female / Non-Binary / They use a different term [please specify]

2. At birth the person was recorded as:
   Male / Female / Another term [please specify]

The wording of these questions aligns with wording endorsed by ACON. A 'Prefer not to answer' option may be added for both questions if appropriate.

---

7. What topic does this information most relate to? (Select one)

You can find more information about Census topics in our Census dictionary.

☐ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

☐ Cultural diversity

☐ Health, disability, unpaid work and care

☐ Household and families

☐ Housing and homelessness

☐ Income, work, education and training

☐ Location and transport

☒ Population, including sex and gender

☐ Other (please specify)

---

8. To help us assess your submission, tell us why it is important that the ABS should collect and produce this information, including how you would use the data.

Please do not include any information which could identify you or another person.

Data on gender identity is of national importance because sex and gender are fundamental to how we view ourselves and others, how we relate to each other and function in society. (ABS, 2021) Gender shapes the way daily life is lived in the family, community and the workplace. (OECD, 2000) There is likely to be a continuing need for the data on this topic due to growing understanding of how gender identity can affect nearly every area of a person's life and experience, and due to increasing acceptance and appreciation of gender diversity in society.

Collecting data on gender identity can help identify patterns and disparities in determinants of health and health outcomes for different groups. The data could also enable identification of any geographic areas where there are high proportions of people who identify as non-binary or as a different gender to that recorded at birth. Identification of these patterns would inform policies and health and social services planning and delivery, to better meet the needs of gender diverse people and provide for a more equitable society.

9. For what purpose(s) will you use the data? (Select all that apply)

☒ Resource allocation for programs and policies

☒ Planning, development, monitoring and evaluation related to programs, policies and service delivery

☒ Research

☐ Journalism/media

☒ Other (please specify)

Advocacy

10. What is the smallest area or geography required to effectively use this data? (Select one)

Common geographies or area boundaries:

- *Mesh Block (Residential block/rural area)*
- *Statistical Area Level 1 (Neighbourhood/rural district)*
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- *Local Government Areas*
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- *Commonwealth Electoral Divisions*

More information is available on the [Census geography glossary](#) page.

☐ National

☐ State/territory

☒ Statistical Area Level 2 (suburb or locality)

☐ Statistical Area Level 1 (neighbourhood/rural district)

☐ Local Government Area

☐ Don't know

☐ Other (please specify)

Additional information

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☐ No

Contact details

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Contact name

| Angela Wicks |

Organisation (if applicable)

| Canteen |

Email address

| Angela.wicks@canteen.org.au |

3. Do you wish to receive email updates on the outcomes of this consultation and at key points in the 2026 Census topic selection process?

☒ Yes

☐ No

4. Select the category that best describes you or the organisation you represent (Select one)

☐ Individual

☐ Academia/educational institution

☐ Australian government

☐ Business

☐ Community organisation

☐ Industry body/association

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☐ Other (please specify)

| |

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☒ Yes – *please list name, organisation (if applicable) and email address in the section below.*

☐ No

Additional individual(s) or organisation(s)

What information would you like the ABS to collect and produce statistics on?

If you have multiple topics and data needs, please complete a separate submission for each.

6. Please provide a brief summary of the information you would like the ABS to collect and produce statistics on.

> We would like the ABS to collect and produce statistics on more diverse family and household relationships and compositions with more contemporary descriptions of household, family and kinship relationships, particularly with regard to arrangements for shared care of children and same sex couples with children.

7. What topic does this information most relate to? (Select one)

You can find more information about Census topics in our Census dictionary.

☐ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

☐ Cultural diversity

☐ Health, disability, unpaid work and care

☐ Household and families

☐ Housing and homelessness

☐ Income, work, education and training

☐ Location and transport

☒ Population, including sex and gender

☐ Other (please specify)

8. To help us assess your submission, tell us why it is important that the ABS should collect and produce this information, including how you would use the data.

Please do not include any information which could identify you or another person.

The ABS should recognise and reflect changes in society and the diversity of family and household relationships. Contemporary Australian households and families include blended families, same-sex families, and shared care arrangements for children.

Collecting and producing statistics on these diverse family and household structures can provide a better understanding of family dynamics and help to ensure that policy decisions and resource allocation reflect the needs of all Australian families. This information is particularly important to inform policy decisions related to family support, child welfare, and social welfare.

Recognising a broader range of family and household structures also promotes inclusivity and reduction of stigma and discrimination.

9. For what purpose(s) will you use the data? (Select all that apply)

☒ Resource allocation for programs and policies

☒ Planning, development, monitoring and evaluation related to programs, policies and service delivery

☒ Research

☐ Journalism/media

☒ Other (please specify)

Advocacy

10. What is the smallest area or geography required to effectively use this data? (Select one)

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>
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Contact name

Angela Wicks

Organisation (if applicable)

Canteen

Email address

Angela.wicks@canteen.org.au

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☒ Yes

☐ No

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☒ Yes – *please list name, organisation (if applicable) and email address in the section below.*

☐ No

Additional individual(s) or organisation(s)

Cancer Council

ACON

What information would you like the ABS to collect and produce statistics on?

If you have multiple topics and data needs, please complete a separate submission for each.

6. Please provide a brief summary of the information you would like the ABS to collect and produce statistics on.

> We would like the ABS to collect and produce statistics on sexual orientation.
>
> Collection of this information could be achieved by including a question such as:
>
> How does the person describe their sexual orientation?
>
> Straight or heterosexual / Gay or lesbian / Bisexual / They use a different term [please specify] / Don't know
>
> The wording of these questions aligns with wording endorsed by ACON. A 'Prefer not to answer' option may be added if appropriate. Inclusion of a 'Not applicable' option may also be appropriate, for example for if the person is a child.

7. What topic does this information most relate to? (Select one)
You can find more information about Census topics in our Census dictionary.

☐ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

☐ Cultural diversity

☐ Health, disability, unpaid work and care

☐ Household and families

☐ Housing and homelessness

☐ Income, work, education and training

☐ Location and transport

☒ Population, including sex and gender

☐ Other (please specify)

8. To help us assess your submission, tell us why it is important that the ABS should collect and produce this information, including how you would use the data.

Please do not include any information which could identify you or another person.

Data on sexual orientation is of national importance because sexual orientation is an important aspect of an individual's identity and can impact how we view ourselves and others and impacts our experiences and interactions in society. There is likely to be a continuing need for the data on this topic due to growing understanding of how sexual orientation can affect many aspects of a person's life and experiences, and due to increasing acceptance and appreciation of sexual diversity in society.

Collecting data on sexual orientation allows us to understand the size and distribution of the LBG population to support government policies and services targeted for these groups. The data can help identify patterns and disparities in determinants of health and health outcomes for different groups, such as homelessness, substance use and mental health. Identification of these patterns would inform policies and health and social services planning and delivery, to better meet the needs of people with different sexual orientations and provide for a more equitable society.

9. For what purpose(s) will you use the data? (Select all that apply)

☒ Resource allocation for programs and policies

☒ Planning, development, monitoring and evaluation related to programs, policies and service delivery

☒ Research

☐ Journalism/media

☒ Other (please specify)

Advocacy

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Email address

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☐ No

Additional individual(s) or organisation(s)

Cancer Council Australia

Cancer Institute NSW

What information would you like the ABS to collect and produce statistics on?

If you have multiple topics and data needs, please complete a separate submission for each.

6. Please provide a brief summary of the information you would like the ABS to collect and produce statistics on.

We would like the ABS to collect and produce statistics on tobacco smoking status and vaping/e-cigarette smoking status. This information would be most useful if it included volume, frequency and whether the person used to smoke or vape but doesn't anymore.

7. What topic does this information most relate to? (Select one)
You can find more information about Census topics in our Census dictionary.

☐ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

☐ Cultural diversity

☒ Health, disability, unpaid work and care

☐ Household and families

☐ Housing and homelessness

☐ Income, work, education and training

☐ Location and transport

☐ Population, including sex and gender

☐ Other (please specify)

8. To help us assess your submission, tell us why it is important that the ABS should collect and produce this information, including how you would use the data.

Please do not include any information which could identify you or another person.

Assessment criteria:

The ABS uses a range of criteria to assess whether it includes topics in the Census or surveys. This includes the need for the data, the ability and willingness of the public to respond and how easy it is to collect the information. Your response to this question will help with our assessment regarding the need for the data. The specific criteria we will be looking for you to address in your submission are:

    a. *The topic is of current national importance.*
    b. *There is a need for data at the national level, and either the local level or for small population groups.*
    c. *There is likely to be a continuing need for data on the topic following the Census.*

Data on smoking status is of national importance because tobacco smoking is still the single most important preventable cause of ill health and death in Australia. (AIHW, 2022)

Additionally, data on vaping status/e-cigarette use is of national importance due to the growing rates of e-cigarette use, particularly among young people. (Watts etc al. 2022) As a youth-focused organisation, we at Canteen are particularly aware and concerned about vaping rates among young people. Vapes have been found to contain a cocktail of chemicals, many of which are known to be toxic and there is increasing evidence that e-cigarettes pose signification health risks. (Larcombe et at. 2021)

Population-level smoking and vaping status data is critical to understanding and addressing the ongoing impacts on health systems of tobacco smoking and the emerging issue of vaping which may have significant impact on our health systems in the future unless we take urgent action with data-driven solutions.

Current sampling, such as the NSW Population Health Survey is not adequate to determine smoking and vaping prevalence in priority populations or to reliably detect changes over time.

National, population-level data on smoking and vaping status is needed to understand use among priority populations such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with diverse sexualities and genders, people living in regional and remote Australia, people with disabilities, people with lower levels of education and people from low socioeconomic areas.

Including questions about smoking and vaping status on the Census would provide reliable data to assess progress towards reduced use of tobacco and nicotine products including use among small priority populations. Census data on smoking and vaping would inform policies, health and social services planning and delivery, targeted health promotion and prevention campaigns, and evaluation of the National Tobacco Strategy 2022-2030.

9. For what purpose(s) will you use the data? (Select all that apply)

☒ Resource allocation for programs and policies

☒ Planning, development, monitoring and evaluation related to programs, policies and service delivery

☒ Research

☐ Journalism/media

☒ Other (please specify)

Advocacy

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>
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☐ National

☐ State/territory

☒ Statistical Area Level 2 (suburb or locality)

☐ Statistical Area Level 1 (neighbourhood/rural district)

☐ Local Government Area

☐ Don't know

☐ Other (please specify)

Additional information

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