



Review of 2021 Census Topics: Submission Form

On completion, check and submit your form via

- Email: census.content@abs.gov.au
- Or
- Mail: Census Topic Review, GPO Box 9817, Brisbane QLD 4001

Consent to Publish

While all responses received will be included in the analysis of this consultation, the ABS intends to make submissions publicly available after the closing date of 30 June 2018 to share views about the data needs of the Australian community.

If your submission identifies or names an organisation you have collaborated with, please consider obtaining their consent prior to agreeing for the ABS to publish your submission.

Can we publish your submission after the consultation period closes? (see below for details of what each option represents)

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ Yes, but do not publish any parts that are identifiable
- ☐ No

After the closing date of 30 June 2018, submissions received will be available on this consultation where your approval has been given.

- By selecting Yes:
You give permission to publish your responses to the assessment criteria as well as who you are representing and organisation name (if applicable). Contact details, including name, phone number and email address will not be published.
- By selecting Yes, but do not publish any parts that are identifiable:
You give permission to publish your responses to the assessment criteria only. Who you are representing, organisation (if applicable) and contact details will not be published.
- By selecting No:
No part of your submission will be published.

Contact Details

Should we need to communicate regarding this submission, please provide details of the appropriate contact. We will contact you only if we have questions regarding your submission.

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

Contact name: s22

Email address: s22

Phone number: s22

Who you are representing:

(please select applicable)

- ☒ Commonwealth government department
- ☐ State/territory government department
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ Business
- ☐ Industry body/association
- ☐ Community group
- ☐ Educational institution
- ☐ An individual
- ☐ Other

If other please specify:

Name of your organisation (if applicable):

Department of Health

Please list any other organisations you have collaborated with on this submission.

Please consider obtaining their consent prior to agreeing for the ABS to publish your submission.

What is your submission about?

Below is a list of topics related to data currently collected on Census.

Choose one that is the most closely related to your submission.

- ☐ Population
- ☒ Sex and gender
- ☐ Households and families
- ☐ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- ☐ Income and work
- ☐ Unpaid work and care
- ☐ Education and training
- ☐ Disability and carers
- ☐ Housing
- ☐ Location
- ☐ Transport
- ☐ Cultural diversity
- ☐ Religion
- ☐ Other topic

If Other topic please specify: Please note: If you would like to submit ideas on more than one area of interest, please complete separate submissions.

Please provide a brief summary of your submission

This submission seeks the collection of data on sex, gender and sexual orientation in the 2021 Census.

Assessment criteria 1

The topic is of current national importance.

You may wish to consider the following points in your response.

- 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

The collection of this data will be used to support policy-making and service planning that can meet the needs of people from Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) communities. For example, the Aged Care Diversity Framework identifies the requirement to provide care that meets a person's individual diverse needs. To achieve this there is a need to collect LGBTI demographic data and LGBTI indicators within the Australian Census.

Lack of data about LGBTI people puts this cohort of Australians at a significant disadvantage in terms of enabling policy makers and service delivery agencies to accurately predict where resources including healthcare and aged care targeting the LGBTI population may be required. Only the Census can provide the ability to identify small target populations for accurate information to inform government policy making and long-term planning, as no alternative source of information is currently available or likely to be available in the near future.

Assessment criteria 2

There is a need for data from a Census of the whole population.

You may wish to consider the following points in your response.

- 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

The collection of this data is required of the whole population to support meaningful analysis of data resulting from the collection of sex, gender and sexual orientation. Previous data collections, such as the ABS General Social Survey, have resulted in very low levels of reporting on LGBTI-related questions. To ensure the data is able to be used to support the development of policies and programs to support the LGBTI community this data will need to be robust and collected from the whole Australian population.

Assessment criteria 3

The topic can be accurately collected in a form which the household completes themselves.

You may wish to consider the following points in your response.

- the topic is likely to be easily understood by respondents
- the topic can be collected in a simple question or questions
- respondents will easily know the answer to the question(s)
- The question(s) is easy and quick to answer

The collection of data on sex, gender and sexual orientation are suited to the self-reporting mode of data collection used in the Census. As with any new question, there may be some confusion from respondents who are not familiar with the LGBTI community however the question construction will mitigate this. Those who are cognisant of the importance of the issue and to whom the questions are particularly relevant will have no difficulties in providing answers.

Assessment criteria 4

The topic would be acceptable to Census respondents.

You may wish to consider the following points in your response.

- the topic is not likely to be considered intrusive, offensive or controversial
- respondents are likely to be willing and able to answer accurately
- are there other considerations for specific groups?

This topic is considered to be acceptable to Census respondents.

The collection of this data is recognised as important in the *Australian Government Guidelines on the Recognition of Sex and Gender* (Department of the Attorney General, 2013) which states:

“The Australian Government recognises that individuals may identify and be recognised within the community as a gender other than the sex they were assigned at birth or during infancy, or as a gender which is not exclusively male or female. This should be recognised and reflected in their personal records held by Australian Government departments and agencies. “

While it is arguable that the collection of data on sex, gender and sexual orientation may be seen by some as an invasion of privacy, the option for individual respondents to request an individual survey mitigates many of these concerns. It should also be noted that in the early days of capturing indicators around a person’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage, similar concerns of appropriateness to be asked what was then deemed a personal issue were raised but subsequently resolved. The results from the 2017 postal survey on amending the *Marriage Act* to include same-sex marriage suggests that responding to these questions is no longer as stigmatised as in previous Census consultation periods.

Consultations with LGBTI stakeholders by the Department of Health indicate that as a group who have a history of being discriminated against, addressing the lack of data on basic information about who they and how they identify themselves is a core focus of LGBTI communities and they are likely to want to support mechanisms for increased collection of such information.

Assessment criteria 5

The topic can be collected efficiently.

You may wish to consider the following points in your response.

- the topic or question will not present major difficulties for coding the information
- the topic or question will not require extensive processing
- the topic will not significantly add to the overall cost of the Census
- the topic will not require a lengthy instruction or explanation
- the collection of data on the topic will not require a large number of response categories or multiple questions

The limited number of responses to each of these questions ensures they are able to be collected efficiently. As the ABS has experience in collecting similar data the development of questions will not place a significant burden on the survey development process.

Assessment criteria 6

There is likely to be a continuing need for data on this topic in the following Census.

You may wish to consider the following points in your response.

- there is a need for time series data on the topic
- the topic is likely to remain relevant in the future

As these data enable reporting on distinct population subgroups there is a continuing need for data on this topic.

Assessment criteria 7

There are no other alternative data sources or solutions that could meet the topic need.

You may wish to consider the following possible data sources and identify any barriers to access in your response.

- data which is collected for administrative purposes
- the topic is collected in an ABS survey or by another organisation
- data is produced through integration of existing data sources

The Census is the sole source of robust population-level data that can support the needs of the LGBTI community. Some Australian Government administrative data collections collect these data, however this data is only sourced from specific sub-groups of the population and is not able to be utilised effectively. Whilst the General Social Survey collects some data on LGBTI status, and the previous Census included data on same-sex partners, neither collection covers this topic adequately to support the needs of the LGBTI community.

Any further comments?

If you would like to tell us anything else about your submission, please comment below.

You can also provide additional documentation to support your submission.