



Any questions?

If you have a question about the upcoming Census, we have the answer.

Q: Why does Australia need a Census?

A: The information collected in the Census allows us to build an understanding of the Australian population. This means the information provided is used to make planning decisions that shape the future of our community. Census information is used in all areas – whether it's education, housing, transport or healthcare.

Q: Who is counted in the Census?

A: The Census includes everyone in Australia, wherever they happen to be on Census Night. This includes people travelling or on holidays, newborn babies, students from overseas, transport drivers, new immigrants and visitors to Australia. The only exceptions are foreign diplomats and their families.

Q: Is the Census compulsory?

A: Ultimately, yes. The Census is authorised by the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, which provides for the compulsory completion of the Census form. If you do not answer the Census questions, the Australian Statistician has the power to direct you in writing to provide the information. If he does this, you are legally obliged to do so. While penalties exist for failure to comply, there is rarely a need to enforce them. The vast majority of Australians willingly take part in the Census because they understand the importance of the information it provides.

Q: How do I get a Census form and what do I do with it?

A: A Census form and help guide will be delivered to your home prior to Tuesday 8th August by an official Census Collector. Census Collectors are easily recognised as they carry a large yellow satchel and wear an official identity badge containing their photograph.

On the night of Tuesday 8th August, every person in the house should be listed on the Census 'Household' form, whether they live there or are just visiting. For those people who want to keep their information private from other members of the house, they can request a 'Personal' form, or choose to complete the eCensus option.

Q: How is my Census form collected?

A: Sometime between 9th August and 28th August the Collector will return to collect your completed form, unless you've submitted it online. If you are not at home when the Collector calls, a card will be left with an estimation of when they will return. However, if your form hasn't been collected by 28th August, please notify the ABS by calling the Census Inquiry Service on 1300 362 883.

Q: What about privacy and security?

A: The answers you provide on your Census are confidential. The ABS is required by the Census and Statistics Act to maintain the secrecy of all information provided. No information will be released in a way that would enable an individual or household to be identified. Once Census processing is completed all name and address information is destroyed.

The one exception is that, if you agree, your name-identified information will be included in the Census Time Capsule which will be kept securely by the National Archives of Australia for release in 99 years time.

Census Collectors are required to quickly scan forms to ensure all pages are completed, but they are also bound by law never to reveal any information they collect. If you have any concerns, you can ask the Collector for a privacy envelope or complete your form online.

Q: Can I really fill in my Census form online?

A: Yes you can. 2006 is the first year that Australians will have the option of completing their Census forms online (eCensus). The eCensus form uses the strongest encryption technology that a standard browser will support. The level of security for the eCensus is similar to that for internet banking, which is used by over half a million Australians each year.

For more information, call the Census Inquiry Service on 1300 362 883 or go to www.abs.gov.au/census



Australia's counting on you.