

2026 ABS Census topic consultation

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) is responsible for hosting the Census of Population and Housing, where a range of questions are asked to evaluate the economic, social and cultural make-up of the country. On the 28th of February 2023, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) opened Phase One of consultations for the inclusion of new topics to the 2026 Census. The consultation evaluated the proposed topics for their national importance, the need for data, and the continuing need for the topic.

Cancer Council Australia participated in this consultation process, providing a submission with consideration for the inclusion of two new Census topics:

1. Ensuring an LGBTQI+ inclusive Census which includes questions to ascertain sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status.
2. Smoking status of people in Australia

Cancer Council Australia advocated for the inclusion of questions for sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status as there is a need for robust LGBTQI+ data to better facilitate health policy development and health service planning. Early evidence shows poorer cancer outcomes in the LGBTQI+ community when compared to the heterosexual population. This is also reflected in lower cancer screening rates, and so Census data could provide opportunities for targeted, localised and culturally appropriate engagement with LGBTQI+ populations.

Given that smoking remains the leading risk factor for burden of disease in all populations in Australia, there is a need for accurate data that ascertains the prevalence of smoking in our communities, and to reliably detect change at the state or local level. Including a question on smoking status would help with the evaluation of the National Tobacco Strategy 2022-2030 and would provide much-needed data to provide targeted services and programs to help people quit smoking.

Information about the progress of this consultation can be found on the consultation [website](#).