



Census

2026 Census of Population and Housing

Northern Institute, Charles Darwin University

August 2026



A large, light purple circular pattern composed of concentric rings of dots, located on the left side of the slide.

**The Australian Bureau of Statistics acknowledges
the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country
throughout Australia and recognises their continuing
connection to land, waters and community. We pay our
respects to their cultures and Elders, past and present.**

A large, light purple gear-like pattern with a central heart shape, located on the right side of the slide.

What is the Census?



Census

- Every five years, the ABS conducts the Australian Census of Population and Housing.
- The Census counts every person and home in Australia.
- Census data tells us about the economic, social and cultural make-up of the country.
- The Census is compulsory for everyone in Australia on Census night (including international students, temporary workers, and tourists).

The next Census will be held on Tuesday 11 August 2026.



The value of the Census



Census

- The Census provides some of the country's most valuable statistics. It helps us understand what we need now, and into the future.
- Census data is used to estimate Australia's population, set electoral boundaries and distribute government funds.
- Census data helps inform decisions about transport, schools, health care and infrastructure for communities across Australia.
- Community groups, not-for-profit organisations, businesses and governments use Census data to make important decisions.
- It helps to plan and ensure the right services are available to individuals, families and communities, where and when they are needed.





"We know how important it is to have healthy kids, having a strong evidence-base through Census data backs up our goal to provide that."

Healthy Deadly Kids, Program Facilitator, Tyson Demos



Census



"Census is really important for communities, especially remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities."

Diat Alferink, CEO of Torres Strait Islander Media Association

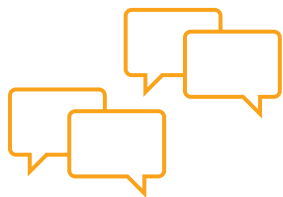


Census

2021 Census, Northern Territory

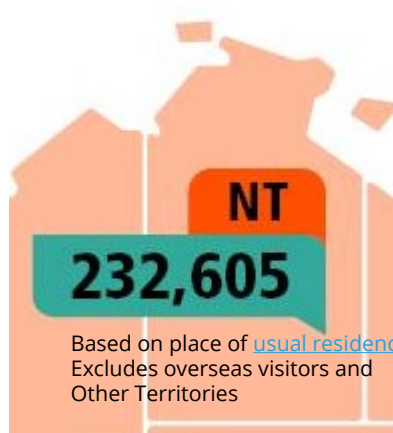


Census



Most common languages used were

Kriol (2.2%)
Djambarrpuyngu (1.7%)
Greek (1.4%)
Nepali (1.3%)



5.1%
Group households



23.9%
Lone households



71.0%
Family households

How we keep your information safe



Census

- Your privacy and the information you provide on the Census is protected by law.
- The ABS is legally required to keep data secure and not release information in a way that is likely to identify an individual.
- Personal information is protected by law under the *Privacy Act 1988* and the secrecy provisions of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.
- Your personal information isn't shared with anyone (including other government agencies, police, Centrelink or housing offices).
- Census systems are designed in line with Australian Government information security standards developed by the Australian Signals Directorate.
- The ABS uses ASD-recommended strategies to prevent unauthorised access and cyber intrusions.
- To find out more, go to **census.abs.gov.au/privacy**

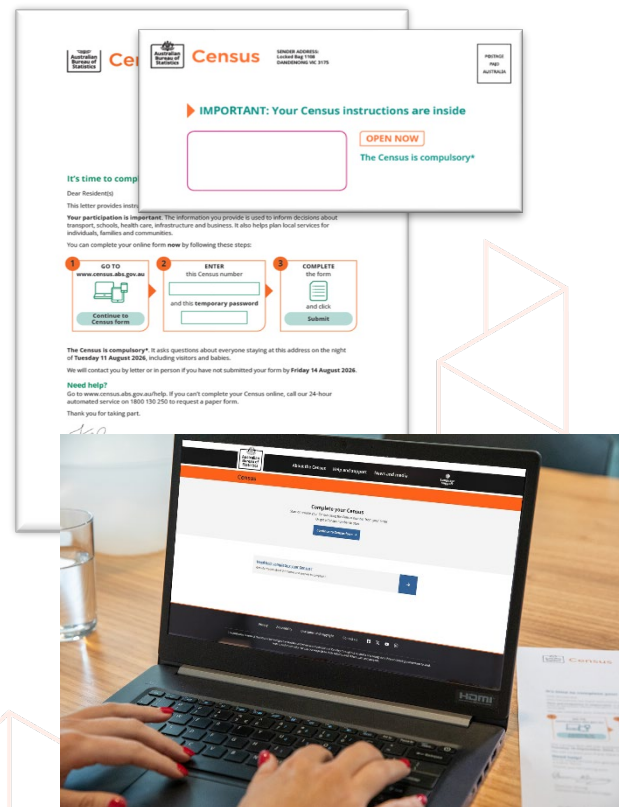


Ways to participate



Census

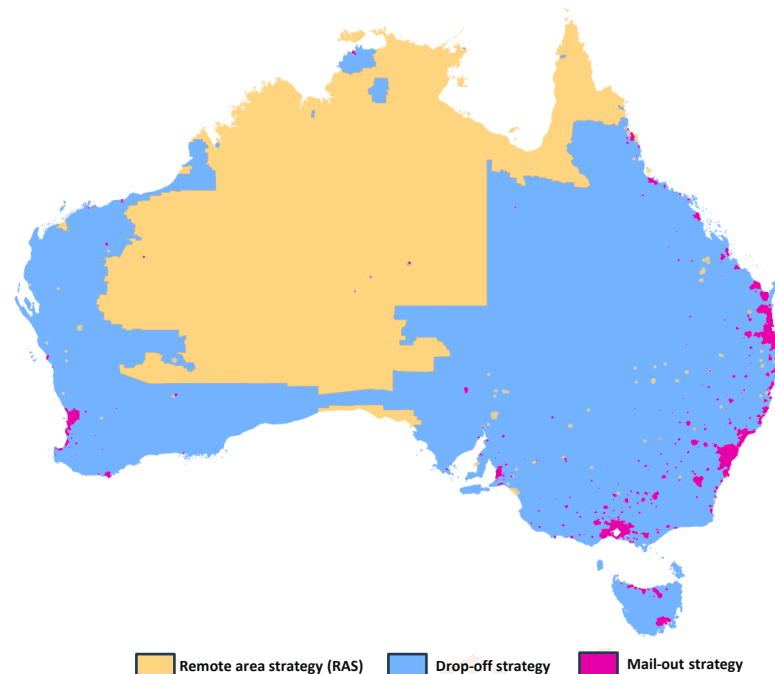
- Households can complete the Census in their preferred way – online, by paper or with help from us.
- From late July 2026, households will receive instructions on how to complete the Census.
- Households can complete their Census as soon as they receive instructions if they know who will be home on Census night.
- Some people living in remote areas and people experiencing homelessness will have help to complete their Census from one of our Census staff.
- If you, or someone in your household, would like to complete a separate form for privacy reasons, you can get a Census number to complete online or request a paper form by calling the Census Contact Centre.



How we reach all of Australia

We make contact with households across Australia in different ways:

- **Mail out** – 88.5%
Letters delivered by Australia Post
- **Drop off** – 11.1%
Paper form delivered by field staff
- **Remote** – 0.4%
Interview with field staff



Making sure everyone is counted

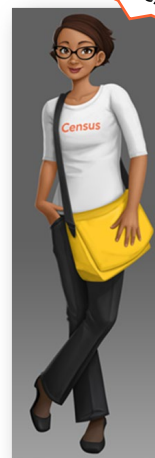


Census

- The Census asks questions about age, country of birth, ancestry, language spoken at home, work and education.
- A critical part of any Census is to make sure anyone who is in Australia on Census night is counted.
- For the 2026 Census we have designed inclusive strategies for groups that face barriers, challenges or obstacles to taking part in the Census.
- These strategies provide different types of support for people to participate in the Census.

Supporting people to participate

- 30,000 field staff for the 2026 Census
- Census Contact Centre
 - Translating and Interpreting Service
 - National Relay Service
- Census website, including chatbot
- Information sessions and Pop-up Hubs
- Accessible forms and information resources
- Strong relationships with community and partners
- Special approaches for harder to reach communities
- Translated information including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages
- Support in communities to help with remote participation and homelessness count.



International visitors

- It is important that all visitors to Australia complete the form on Census night, regardless of how long they intend to stay. A form will be provided by their accommodation provider or by the person whose home they are staying at. Alternatively, they can complete your Census online.

Travellers

- It is important that everyone completes their Census form with the address of where they stayed on Census night, even if they were travelling. People can complete their Census online or pick up a form from pre-identified locations around Australia.

Hotels, motels, caravan parks

- A Census form and instructions will be provided by accommodation providers on Census night.

Hospitals and care facilities

- A Personal form and instructions will be provided by facilities on Census night.

When will data be released?

June 2027

- Key demographics
- Cultural diversity
- Health



October 2027

- Employment
- Educational qualifications
- Internal migration



Early to mid 2028

- Journey to work
- Socio-economic indexes for areas (SEIFA)
- Estimates of people experiencing homelessness



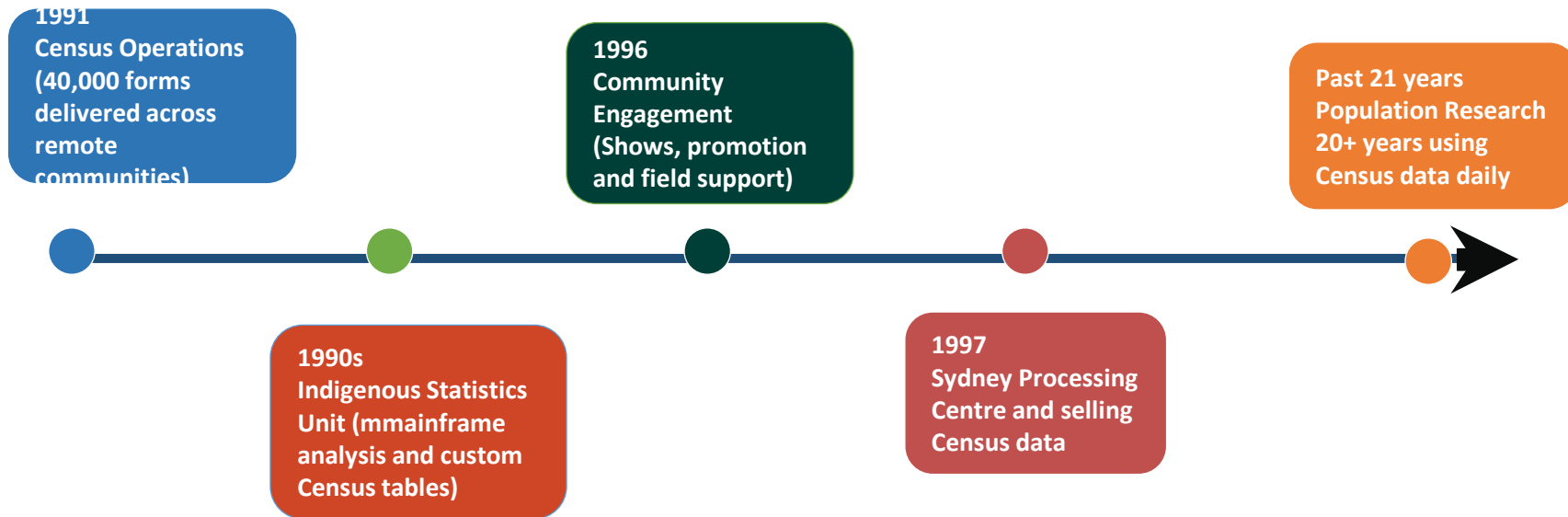
Next steps & timeframes

What's Ahead

- Census night: Tuesday 11 August 2026
- 2026 Census data released from June 2027



My census journey(s)



THE CENSUS: A MIRROR OF SOCIETY AND OUR COMMUNITIES

We are reflected in the Census. The Census reflects who we are.

SOCIETY AND OUR COMMUNITIES

Our people. Our lives. Our diversity.
Always evolving.

THE CENSUS QUESTIONS

Designed to reflect society.
Updated over time.

- OUR POPULATION
- OUR CULTURES
OUR IDENTITIES
- OUR WORK
AND EDUCATION
- OUR HOMES
AND COMMUNITIES
- OUR VALUES
AND BELIEFS
- OUR CHALLENGES
AND OPPORTUNITIES

THE CENSUS

A point-in-time reflection
captured through questions.

Robust. Independent. Trusted.

Informing decisions for
a better Australia.

	Who are we? Age, sex, relationship, marital status, Indigenous status	1911
	Where do we live? Address, dwelling structure, household members	1961
	What do we do? Occupation, industry, employment	1981
	What is our level of education? Qualifications, field of study	1991
	What is our cultural and linguistic background? Country of birth, languages spoken	2001
	How is our wellbeing? Health, disability, unpaid care, volunteering	2011
	What matters for our future? Digital access, climate awareness, gender identity (selected topics)	2021

Questions
evolve as
Australia
evolves

SOCIETY SHAPES THE CENSUS

Our changing lives, experiences and priorities
inform the questions we ask.

THE CENSUS REFLECTS US

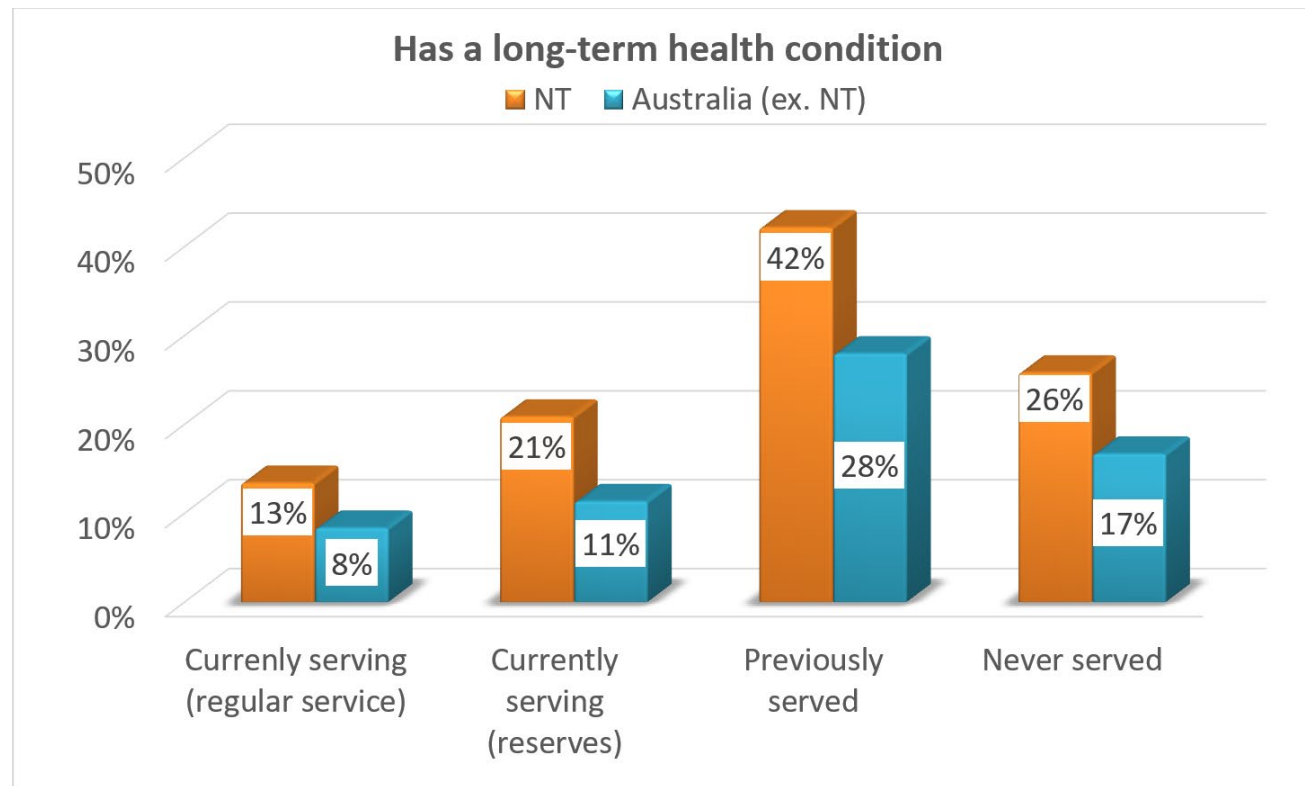
A snapshot of who we are,
helping us understand our nation.

THE CENSUS SHAPES OUR FUTURE

The insights guide decisions, services
and policies that shape our communities.

A CONTINUOUS CYCLE FOR A BETTER AUSTRALIA

Health outcomes for those serving, who served and never served



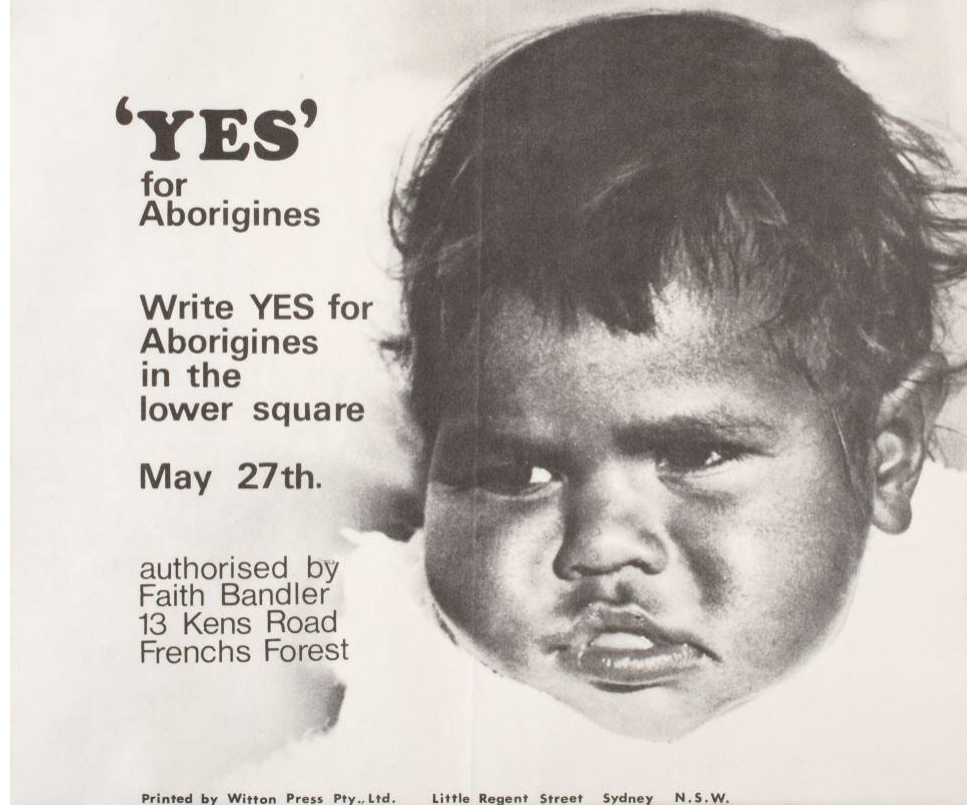
Source: Author calculations from ABS Table Builder, 2021 Census, Place of Usual Residence

A mirror of injustices and an in institutional perpetrator of it

Through categories, exclusions and administrative practices, the Census both documented and contributed to the marginalisation of First Nations peoples.

Section 127 of the Constitution
(removed after the 1967 Referendum)

"In reckoning the numbers of people of the Commonwealth, or of a State or other part of the Commonwealth, aboriginal natives shall not be counted."



'YES'
for
Aborigines

**Write YES for
Aborigines
in the
lower square**

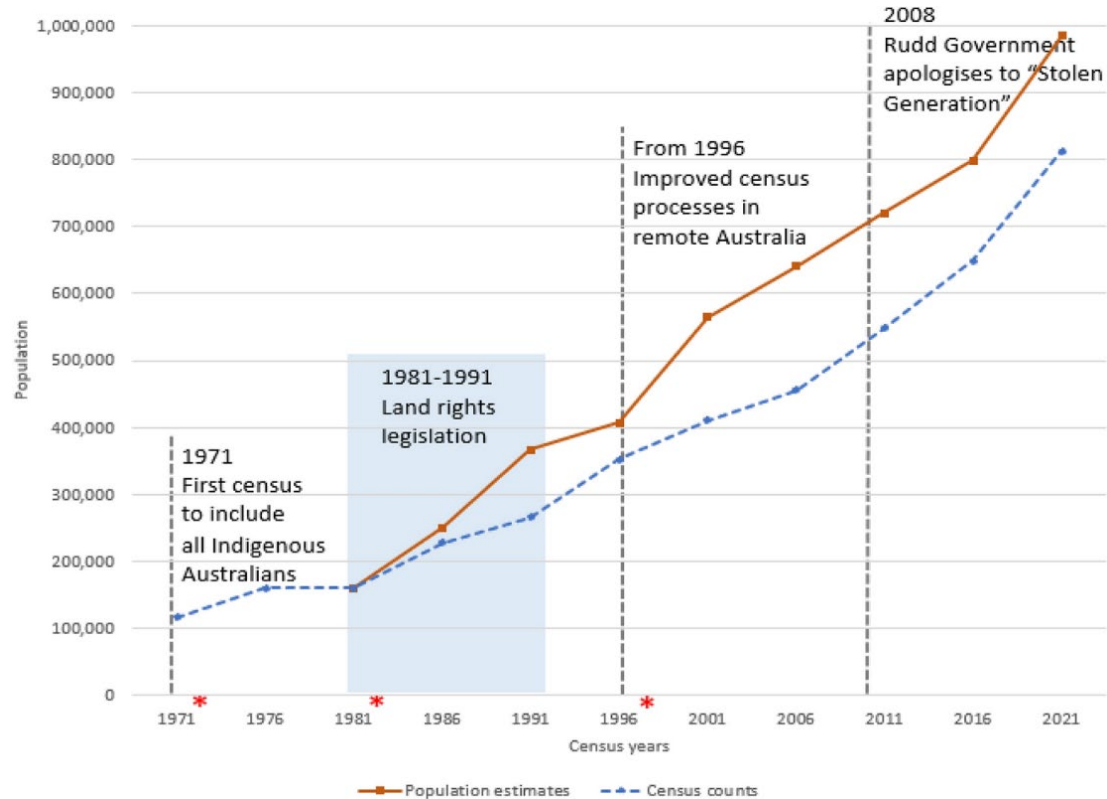
May 27th.

authorised by
Faith Bandler
13 Kens Road
Frenchs Forest

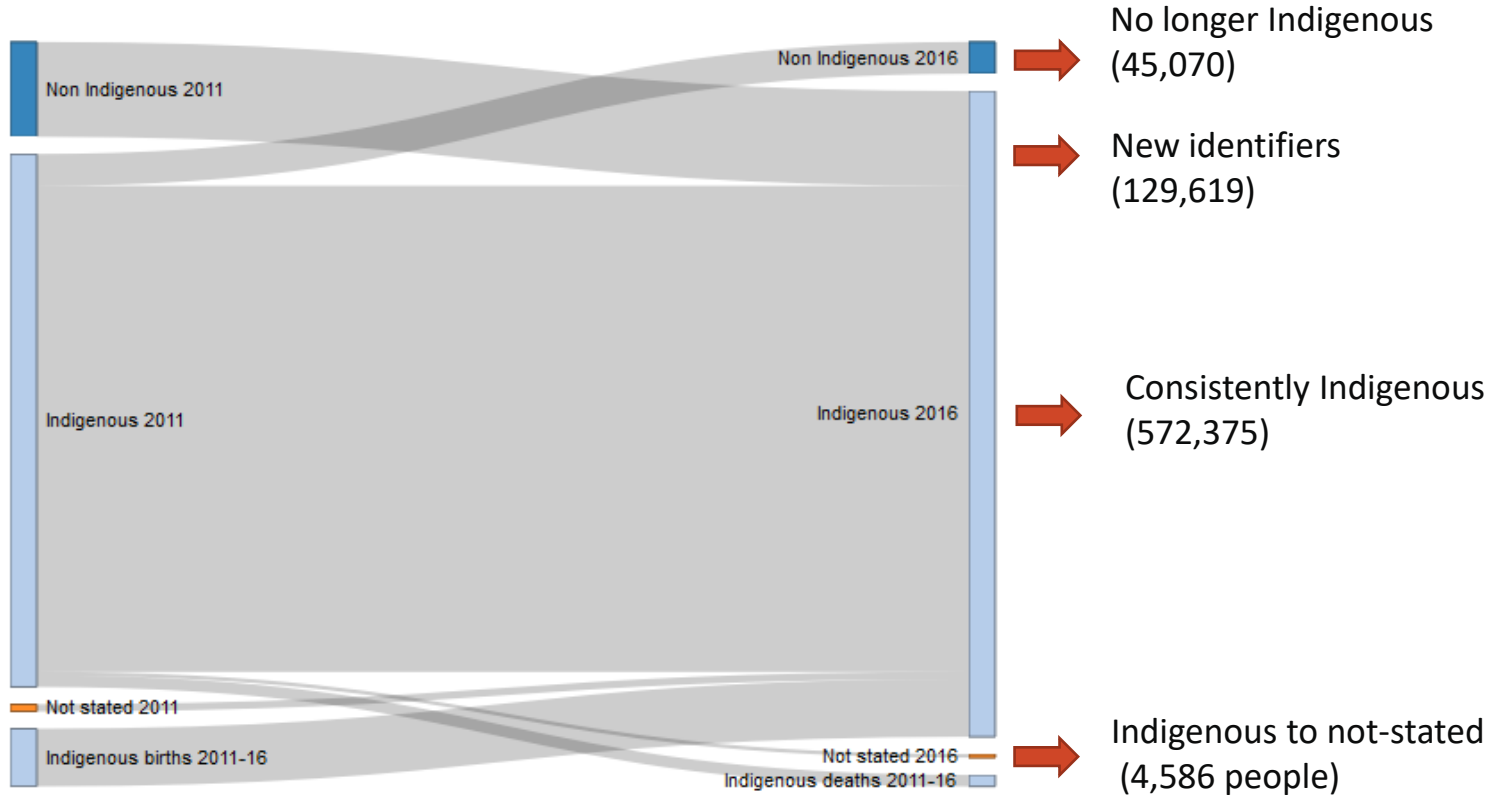
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Drivers of growth in Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population



Drivers of growth in Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population (2)



Economic imperatives



NORTHERN
INSTITUTE
People. Policy. Place.



Billions of dollars of investments are guided by Census data during each 5-year Census cycle and/ or using data from multiple Censuses:

- Health
- Education
- Housing
- Private sector investment
- Economic policy

The more information we have (on an aggregate basis), the higher the likelihood (putting politics aside!) that decisions will meet the needs of our families and communities.



PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT

Help businesses identify opportunities, plan locations and create jobs and growth.

Example: Business expansion, infrastructure, regional investment



EDUCATION

Plan schools, universities and training to support communities now and into the future.

Example: New schools, training programs, early childhood services



HOUSING

Understand housing needs and plan supply, affordability and homelessness services.

Example: Social housing, urban development, homelessness support



HEALTH

Plan and fund hospitals, health services and aged care where they are needed most.

Example: New hospitals, local health services, mental health programs

The census - the best available data source for planning, investment, policy making and policy evaluation

- ✓ Provides denominator data for epidemiologists to calculate disease prevalence and incidence.
- ✓ Enables banks and insurance providers to develop risk profiles, informing the design, availability, and pricing of financial and insurance products.
- ✓ Informs major housing policy initiatives, including the National Housing Accord target of 1.2 million new homes, via data on home ownership, household composition, rental stress, and housing stock.
- ✓ Supports measurement of Closing the Gap outcomes (education, language and workforce measures).
- ✓ A key input to population projection models used for long-term planning and forecasting.
- ✓ Identifies fundamental demographic shifts and emerging long-term trends shaping the.

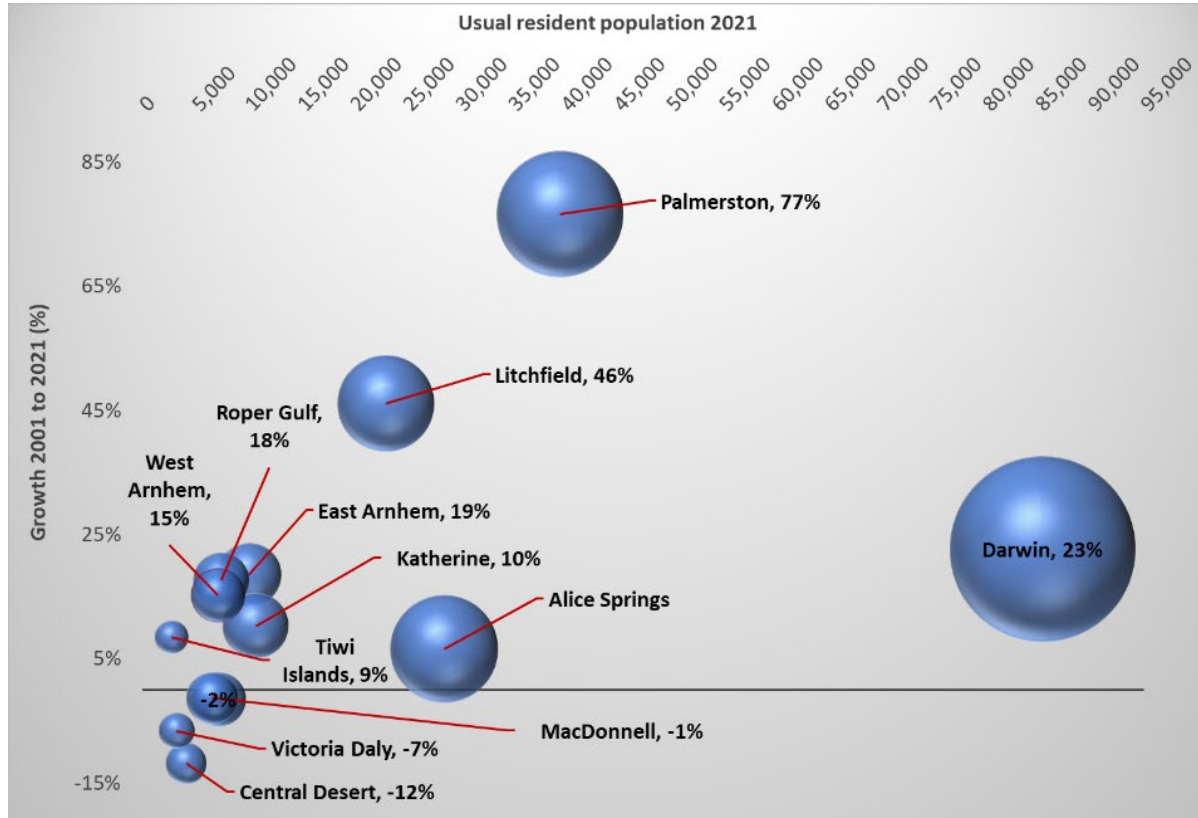
Census data identifying NT demographic megatrends



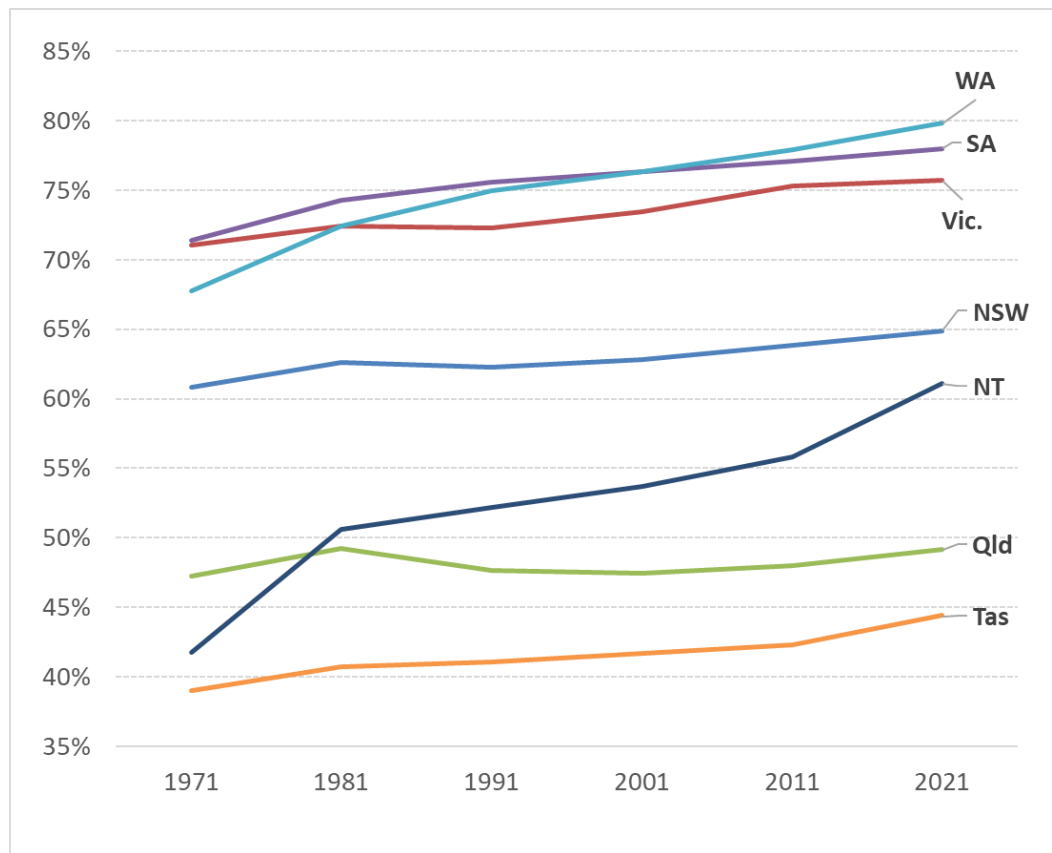
MEGATREND



NT megatrends – Urbanising at pace

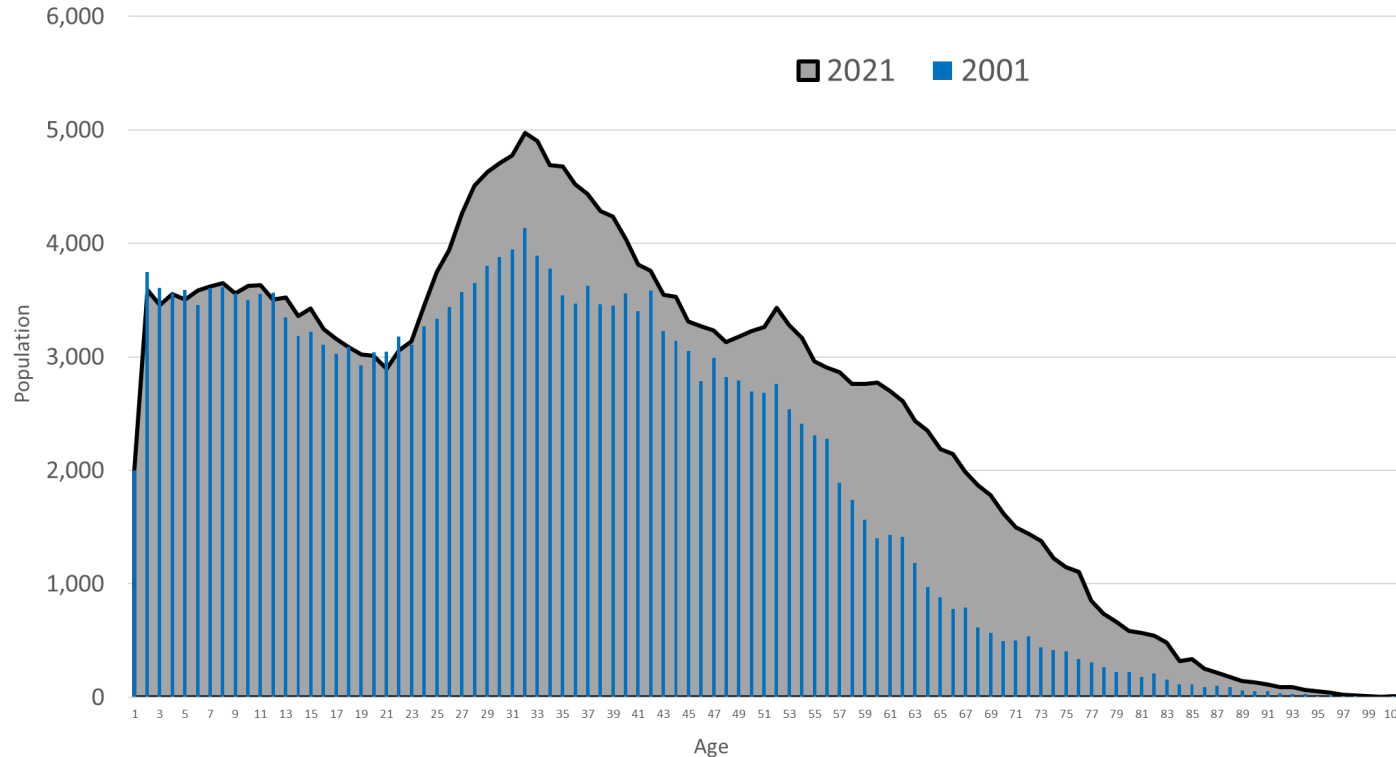


Urbanising at pace (2)



Source: ABS Census data, multiple years

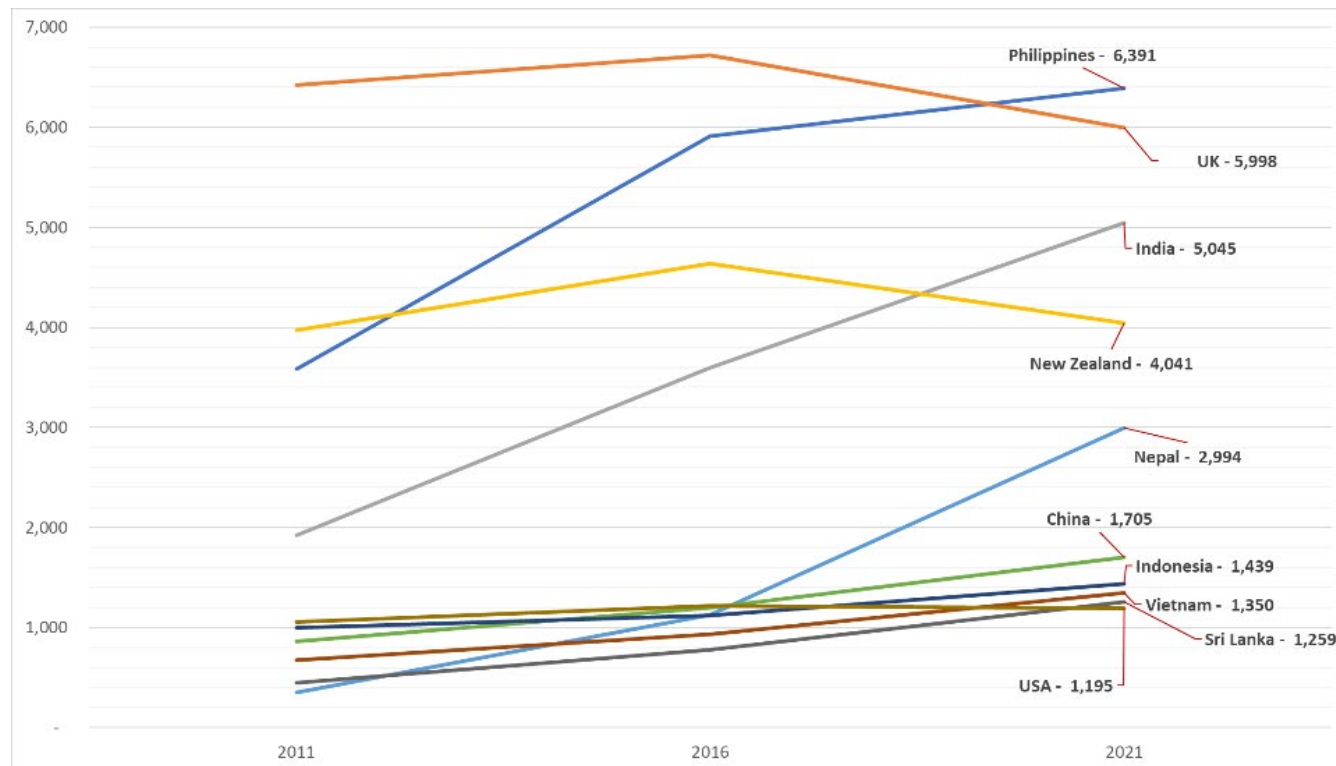
NT megatrends - Our ageing population



Source: ABS Census data, multiple years

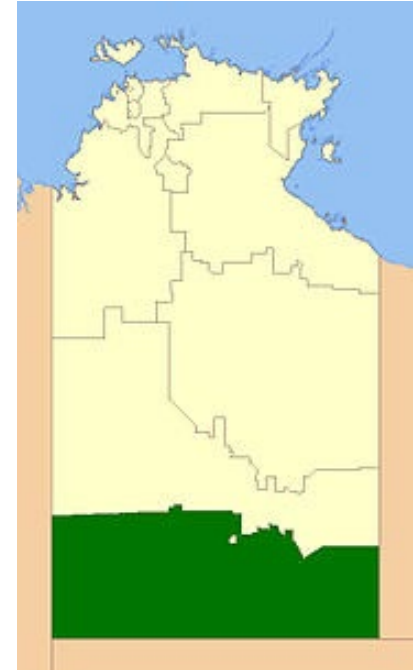
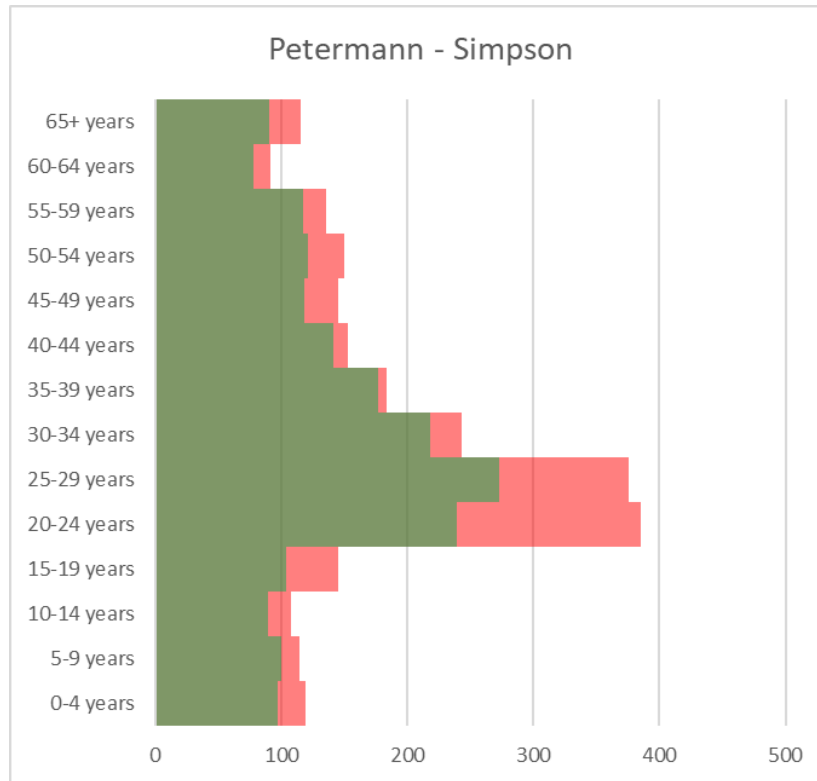


NT megatrends – Our changing societal make-up



Source: ABS Census data, multiple years

Also Census 'microtrends'



Source: ABS Census data, multiple years

Census for fact checking

The claims

Labor backbencher Michelle Ananda-Rajah says there are 122,000 people sleeping rough. Is that correct?

RMIT ABC Fact Check

Posted 13 Jun 2023 at 7:30am



"Eighty per cent of those are women," she continued. "Where women go, children follow. One in seven of those are 12 years or less; they are children, they are babies."

Source: ABC (2023). [Labor backbencher Michelle Ananda-Rajah says there are 122,000 people sleeping rough. Is that correct? - ABC News](#)

The Census data

- Yes 122,494 experiencing homelessness in 2021, but 7,636 (6%) were "sleeping rough".
- Males the majority: 57% of homeless, 66% of those sleeping rough.
- There were 208 children aged under 12 sleeping rough on census night (3%).

The verdict



On all counts

Let's talk about the “U-word”

The ABS attempts to enumerate everyone:

- Some get missed
- Some get double counted

Soon after Census, ABS does the Post Enumeration Survey from which it derives the “net undercount rate”.

NT has always had a higher net undercount rate than the rest of Australia (6% v 0.7% in 2021).

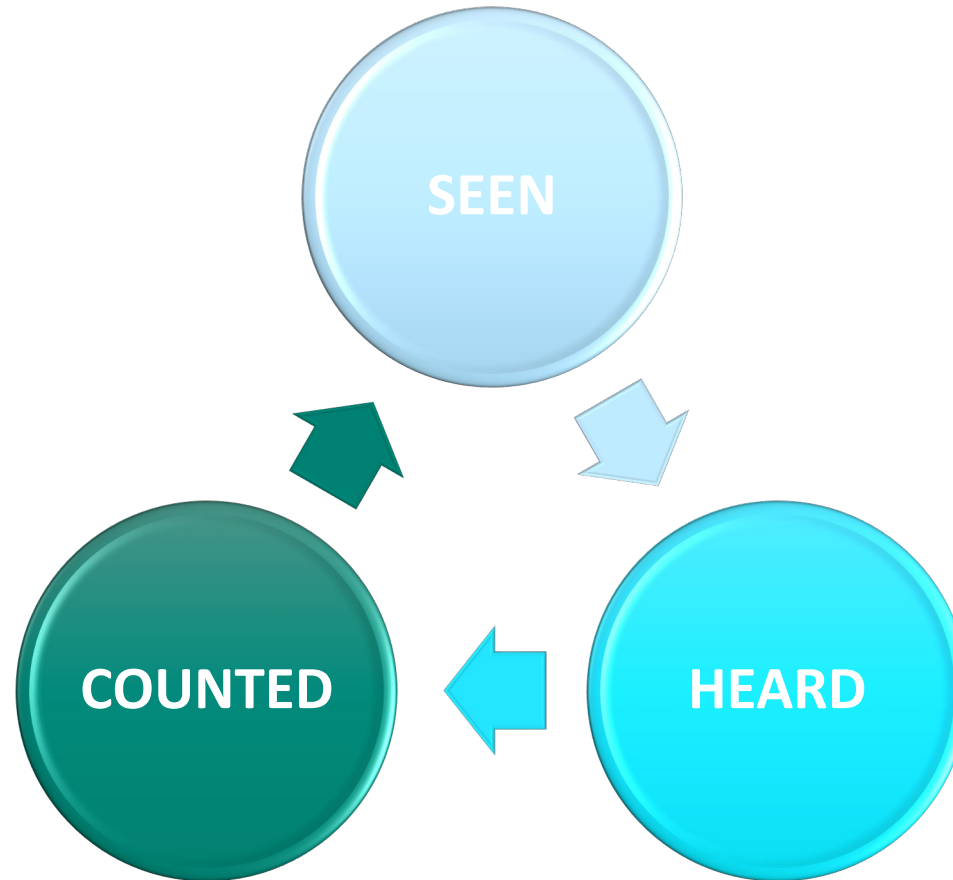
Positively correlated with remoteness, males, single people, Indigenous percentage and age (higher for younger).

For Indigenous Australians it was 17% in 2021.

DON'T PANIC! This is adjusted for in the official population estimates – the Estimated Resident Population



A CENSUS COLLECTOR READY FOR THE ROAD.
Mr. R. B. Pitt (Charters Towers), who will cover about 600 or 700 square miles of country. The gentleman standing is Mr. Frank Hasler, lands surveyor.
—Owen and Sonnet photo.

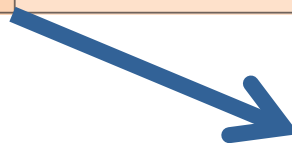




Being seen for the first time: LGBTQI+ communities

From this (2021)

7 Is the person: • Mark box, like this: ☐ i Go to www.census.abs.gov.au/questions for more information.	☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Non-binary sex	☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Non-binary sex
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To this (2026)

8 What was the person's sex recorded at birth? • Mark 'Another term' when the person was registered as something other than male or female at birth. • Mark one box, like this: ☐	☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Another term	☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Another term
9 What is the person's gender? • Answer for people aged 16 years and older. • This question refers to how the person currently identifies or expresses their gender, which may be different to sex at birth. • Mark one box, like this: ☐ i Go to www.census.abs.gov.au/questions for more information.	☐ Man ☐ Woman ☐ Non-binary ☐ Uses another term (specify) ☐ Prefer not to answer	☐ Man ☐ Woman ☐ Non-binary ☐ Uses another term (specify) ☐ Prefer not to answer

Alice Springs and same-sex couples

New research finds Alice Springs ranks in top 10 inclusive cities for LGBTQIA+ people

By Elsie Lange LGBTQIA+

Posted 3 Jul 2026 at 7:08am



Same-sex couple Sue Fielding and Jenny Taylor say Alice Springs felt like a refuge when they arrived in the 1980s. (ABC News: Xavier Martin)

In short:

New research has placed Alice Springs in Australia's top 10 inclusive cities for LGBTQIA+ people, with the historic trend of a high rate of lesbian same-sex relationships continuing.

The data shows almost 2 per cent of Alice Springs couples are in same-sex relationships, and 67 per cent of those same-sex relationships are female.

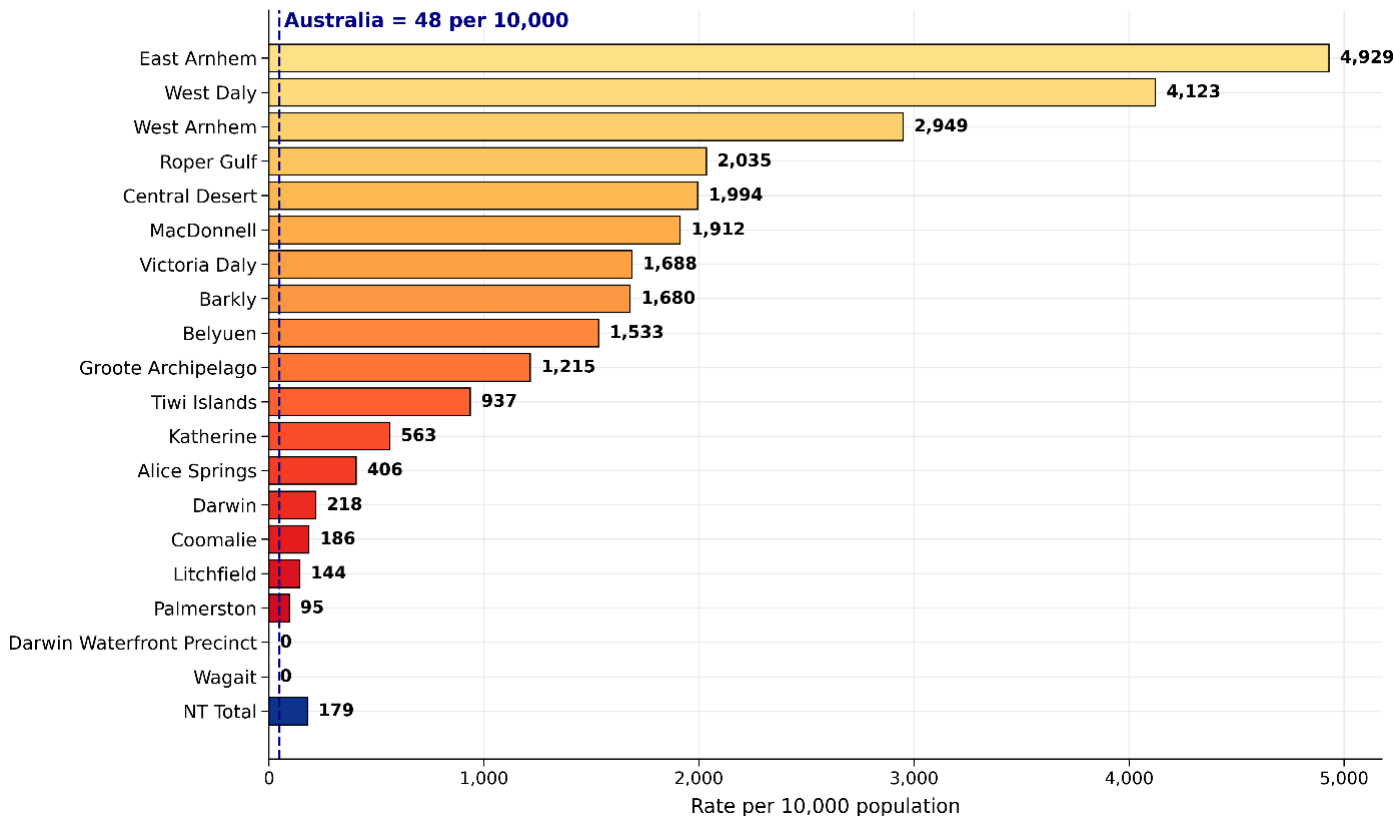
What's next?

A Charles Darwin University demographer says this year's census will be particularly interesting because it will capture gender diversity for the first time.

Source: ABC (2026). [New research finds Alice Springs ranks in top 10 inclusive cities for LGBTQIA+ people - ABC News](#)

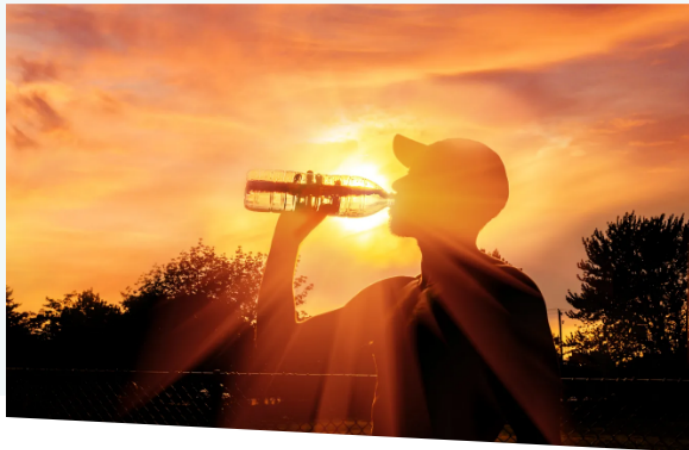
People experiencing homelessness

Homelessness Rate per 10,000 Population



81% of homelessness in the NT is overcrowded dwellings

Research for knowledge and policy



Research

Location-specific solutions needed to manage heat in global climate crisis

July 2026 edition

Place-specific strategies for adapting to increasing temperatures are crucial to keeping remote towns and communities across Northern Australia habitable, according to a recent study on the future impacts of climate change-intensified heat on people in the geographic edges of Australia.

The study by Charles Darwin University's (CDU) Northern Institute focused on the impact of heat exposure, which is the leading factor contributing to deaths across Northern Australia.

The modelling showed remote towns in northern Australia are projected to experience an average of 166 days above 35°C by the end of the 21st century, up from 130 days in the 2020s.

In summary...

The Census enables us to see the size, characteristics and locations of the many groups that make up Australia. In doing so, it helps ensure that people and communities are seen, their needs are heard, and they are counted in the decisions that shape our future.





Thank you – Questions please

andrew.taylor@cdu.edu.au

