Review of 2021 Census topics

Housing

The ABS is consulting to seek views on the information to be collected in the next Census and this topic brief provides detail about what has been previously included on housing.

The opportunity to participate in the consultation will be available from 3 April to 30 June 2018 via consult.abs.gov.au

What was included in the 2016 Census?

Housing topics on the Census included:

- type of tenure (nature of occupancy)
- structure and types of dwellings
- homelessness

- housing costs
- number of bedrooms
- internet access.

How is this information used?

Information collected in the Census about housing provides an indication of the number and types of homes around Australia. Questions are also asked about ownership and renting, and housing costs in terms of rent or mortgage payments.

This information helps inform planning for community housing, as well as provides insights to the extent of overcrowding in parts of Australia. This data can be used in conjunction with demographic information and other data sources to assist with planning for future housing needs.

Housing data, in conjunction with a person's response of 'none' to the usual address question also contributes to estimating the number of people experiencing homelessness.

A question on access to the internet has been included on the Census since 2001, when planning internet access and online services was a key priority. However, the way that individuals access the internet continues to change rapidly, so this question may not be as useful as it was in the past.

Dwelling information aids in the development and maintenance of the ABS Address Register, which is critical to how the Census operation is conducted. This information is also used as a quality measure to ensure that everyone is included in the Census across Australia.

The questions asked on the 2016 Census

- ➢ How many bedrooms are there in this dwelling?
- ➢ Is this dwelling: owned outright, with a mortgage, being purchased, rented, etc.
- ➢ If this dwelling is being rented, who is it rented from?
- ➢ How much does your household pay for this dwelling?
- ➢ Does any member of this household access the internet from this dwelling?

Further to these questions, the ABS collects information on occupancy, structure, location, and type of dwelling during Census preparation and operations. Additional processes and strategies are also applied to assist people experiencing homelessness to participate in the Census.

Data produced from the 2016 Census
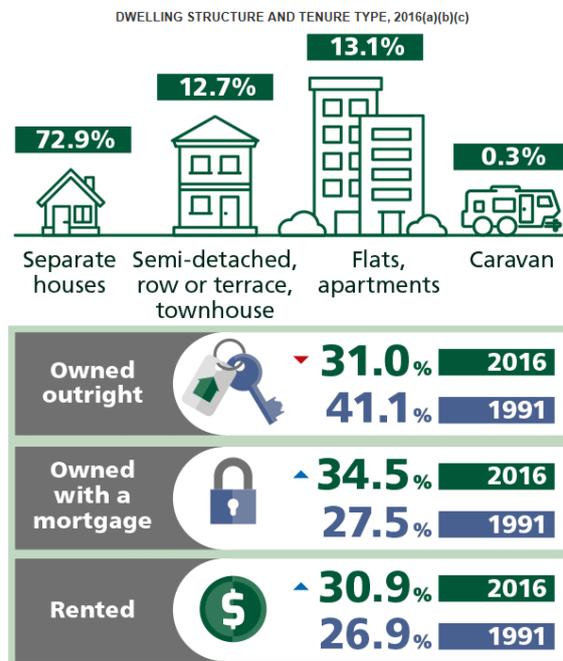
Questions about housing provide data on:

- Tenure and landlord types (TEND, LLDD, TENLLD)
- Housing costs through mortgage and rent (MRED, MRERD, RNTD, RNTRD)
- Dwelling type, structure and location (DWTD, STRD, DLOD)
- Non-private dwellings including supported accommodation (NPDD, RLNP, SAFD)
- Housing Suitability (HOSD)

- Number of Bedrooms in Private Dwelling ([BEDD](#), [BEDRD](#))
- Dwelling Internet Connection ([NEDD](#))

For more information view [2901.0 – Census Dictionary](#)

Estimates of homelessness are based on responses to questions on usual residence, dwelling type, number of bedrooms, and various person and family characteristics.

Highlights from the 2016 Census on housing

DWELLING STRUCTURE AND TENURE TYPE, 2016(a)(b)(c)

72.9% Separate houses
12.7% Semi-detached, row or terrace, townhouse
13.1% Flats, apartments
0.3% Caravan

Owned outright — ▼ 31.0% 2016 / 41.1% 1991

Owned with a mortgage — ▲ 34.5% 2016 / 27.5% 1991

Rented — ▲ 30.9% 2016 / 26.9% 1991

(a) Includes households in occupied private dwellings only. Excludes visitor only and non-classifiable households.
(b) Owned with a mortgage includes 'Being rented under a shared equity scheme'.
(c) Rented includes 'Being occupied rent free'.
Source: Census of Population and Housing 1991, 2016

AVERAGE PEOPLE PER HOUSEHOLD, 2016(a)

2.6

Average people per household

(a) Includes households in occupied private dwellings only. Excludes visitor only and non-classifiable households.
Source: Census of Population and Housing 2016

Standards

For details of how the ABS defines concepts related to housing and homelessness, please refer to the following papers:

[1200.0.55.011 - Housing Variables, 2014](#)

[4922.0 - Information Paper - A Statistical Definition of Homelessness, 2012](#)

For more information go to [www.abs.gov.au/census](#)