

EVERY ANSWER MATTERS

Help us plan for
Australia's future
2026 Census



Census

HOMELESSNESS GUIDE

What is the Census?

Every five years, the Census counts every person in Australia. It helps us understand how people live and what communities need.

Why do your answers matter?

The Census is the only way to estimate how many people are experiencing homelessness in Australia.

Your answers help governments and community organisations plan what support is needed, and where.

This includes:



Emergency shelters



Domestic violence shelters



Fresh meal services



Mobile laundries and shower facilities

What questions will you be asked?

The Census asks questions about your age, languages used, work, education and housing.



Your answers are confidential and protected by law. They are not shared with anyone, including other government agencies. Find out more at census.abs.gov.au/privacy

Making a difference

Organisations like Street Side Medics use Census information to improve their services.

Knowing where people are means they can set up health clinics in the right places. This ensures doctors and nurses reach people who are sleeping rough or need to access care.



Where and when do I complete the Census?



I'm sleeping rough

Census staff will visit places where people are known to sleep rough including streets, parks, cars and tents.

They will help you complete a short Census form during the week of 11 August 2026.



I'm staying in a refuge, hostel or boarding house

Service providers or refuge staff will give you a Census form to complete. Call us if you do not receive a form by Tuesday 11 August 2026.



I'm between homes and staying with friends, family or couch surfing

Census instructions will be sent to every house or address. You can be included on that form or request a separate form by calling 1800 181 227.

How to answer the usual address question

On the Census form you will see this question: **"Where does the person usually live?"**. It helps us understand how many people are experiencing homelessness in Australia.

There are two ways to answer:

1

You are sleeping rough, couch surfing or staying in a refuge or hostel

Write **NONE** for the suburb part of the question. Leave all other fields blank.

13 Where does the person usually live?

- For people who usually live in another country and who are visiting Australia for less than one year, mark 'Other country'.
- For other people, 'usually live' means the address at which the person has lived, or intends to live, for a total of six months or more in 2026.
- For people who have no fixed or return address (for example, due to family conflict or eviction), write 'NONE' in the 'Suburb/Locality' box.
- For boarders at boarding school, write the address of the boarding school or college.
- Mark box, like this: ☐

☐ Same as in Question 1
☐ Elsewhere in Australia (specify address)
Apartment/Flat/Unit number (if any)
Street number
Street name
Suburb/Locality
NONE

2

A housing/homelessness service has organised and paid for your temporary accommodation (hotel, motel, caravan park or backpackers)

Write **NONE - CRISIS** for the suburb part of the question.

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☐ Same as in Question 1
☐ Elsewhere in Australia (specify address)
Apartment/Flat/Unit number (if any)
Street number
Street name
Suburb/Locality
NONE - CRISIS

WE'RE HERE TO HELP



Talk to your homelessness support worker
If you have one



For more information
Visit www.census.abs.gov.au/help
Call 1800 181 227



For help in your language
Call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on **131 450**