



Australian Government
Australian Public Service Commission

2026 APS Employee Census Participant Information Sheet

Have
your
say



2026 APS
Employee Census
4 May–5 June

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APS Employee Census Participation Sheet

This Participant Information Sheet informs you about the APS Employee Census (the Census). It details what is involved in participating and will help you decide if you want to participate. Should you have any further questions, contact your [agency Census coordinator](#), or alternatively APSSurveys@apsc.gov.au.

Participation in the Census is entirely voluntary and **there is no obligation to take part**. The more responses, the more representative and useful the results will be. However, if you choose not to participate there will be no detriment to you or your career. For more information on the Census, including the Privacy Collection Notice, see [APSC Privacy Policy \(Part B\)](#).

Purpose and Authority

What is the Census, and what is its purpose?

The APS Employee Census is an annual employee perception survey of the Australian Public Service workforce that has been conducted since 2012. It collects employee opinions and perspectives on a range of topics, such as employee engagement, leadership, communication, innovation, and wellbeing.

The purpose of the Census is to understand your views on, and experiences of working in, your agency and the broader Australian public service. De-identified data is provided back to agencies to inform programs and planning, and for monitoring trends. This information enables agencies to assess how well they are tracking against other agencies and the public service more generally.

Who conducts the Census?

The Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) conducts the Census with assistance from your agency and an external service provider, Ipsos. Ipsos use Qualtrics as the online survey tool for administering the Census, as well as reporting and analysing survey results.

Who participates in the Census?

All eligible APS employees are invited to participate in the Census. Some agencies also invite their non-APS employees to participate. When it comes to inviting employees, agencies are ultimately responsible for determining eligibility.

When does the Census take place?

The Census is open from 4 May to 5 June 2026. Invitations will be emailed from APSEmployeeCensus@apsc.gov.au over the first five days of the Census period (4 to 8 May). This means you may not receive your invite until Friday 8

May. If you have not received your invite by Monday 11 May, please contact your [agency Census coordinator](#).

How was I identified to participate?

You were nominated by your agency to participate in the Census. The names and email addresses of employees were provided by your agency for the purpose of sending you an invitation to take part in the Census. Your email address is not connected to your response once the survey is completed. You can request to be removed from the email list so you do not receive any more emails by contacting your [agency Census coordinator](#).

Participation and Census Content

Do I have to participate?

While you are encouraged to have your say, participation in the Census is voluntary. If you choose not to participate, you can simply ignore the reminder emails or request they are stopped by contacting your [agency Census coordinator](#) or APSSurveys@apsc.gov.au. You should not feel pressure to participate by anyone or be required to tell others that you did or did not participate.

What do I need to do?

Participation involves completing an online survey which is expected to take approximately 30-45 minutes, depending on how much you wish to convey. You may complete the Census in one or multiple sessions by exiting and returning to the same link later. Each employee receives an invitation containing a unique link to the survey. To protect your privacy, please do not forward or share your personal link, as others may be able to see your responses.

What are the benefits of participating?

The Census is a unique opportunity to contribute to the direction of your agency and the APS. The insights gained inform workforce planning and other initiatives, including improvements to workforce practices and policies. As such, agencies and the APSC are better positioned to evaluate working conditions and workplace environments for you and your colleagues.

What are the risks in participating?

Due to the general nature of the questions, it is not anticipated that you will experience any risk from participating. However, should you feel any discomfort, you are free to not answer the relevant question/s (i.e. skip questions) or stop the survey by closing the web page.

If you require assistance, please contact the services offered to you by your agency's employee assistance program (EAP). Alternatively, you can contact an external support service such as:

- Lifeline: Ph. 13 11 14; <https://www.lifeline.org.au/>
- Beyond Blue: Ph. 1300 224 636; <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>
- Mensline: Ph. 1300 789 978; <https://mensline.org.au/>
- QLife: Ph. 1800 184 527; <https://qlife.org.au/>
- 1800 RESPECT: Ph. 1800 737 732 <https://1800respect.org.au/>
- Suicide Call Back Service: Ph. 1300 659 467; <https://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/>
- Australian Government Health Direct: <https://healthdirect.gov.au/mental-health-helplines>
- 13YARN: Ph. 13 92 76; <https://www.13yarn.org.au>

What questions can I expect to be asked?

The Census asks questions about a range of topics including employee engagement, wellbeing, and leadership.

To be able to submit your response to the survey, you will need to complete four demographic questions (gender, age, state/territory of your workplace, and classification). You are then free to skip and not answer any other questions you cannot or may not want to answer. Demographic questions are asked to understand the profile and views of the many different groups who make up our workforce.

There are free-text questions where you can comment on specific issues. In answering these questions, please do not provide personal information about yourself or any other person, e.g. by including names in your response. Comments provided in free-text fields will be provided to your agency verbatim (word for word, exactly as written) with names and profanities removed.

Privacy, Confidentiality and Data Security

How is my confidentiality maintained?

When Census data is collected and shared, methods are applied to preserve the confidentiality of both individuals and groups of people.

Reporting outputs to agencies only include aggregated results for groups of 10 or more respondents. Your full, individual response is not made available to your agency and no identifying information (e.g. email address) is attached to your response.

For more information on privacy, including the Privacy Collection Notice, see [APSC Privacy Policy \(Part B\)](#).

How will my answers be shared? Who will see my response?

About 6 weeks after the Census closes, the APSC and Ipsos provide de-identified, aggregated data to your agency via a range of **reporting outputs** and through an **online dashboard**.

The reporting outputs only include aggregated results for groups of 10 or more respondents. Your full, individual response is not made available to your agency and no identifying information (e.g. email address) is attached to your response.

Reporting outputs are provided by the APSC to HR teams within agencies who then choose the best way to distribute across their agency. Many managers and leaders receive these reports to support them in their roles and share them with their teams.

Online dashboard access is restricted to a smaller number of key HR contacts within your agency.

Please see some example reporting outputs below section to see how your data is shared.

Can I see examples of how data is shared in the reporting outputs?

Reporting outputs

By default, agencies receive two main types of reports: PDF Highlights reports and Excel heatmaps.

PDF Highlights report

This (approx.) 24 page report includes results for key questions and index scores. It includes, where possible, comparisons to previous years and benchmarks such as the APS Overall and results for the entire agency.

Highlights reports for teams comprising fewer than 50 respondents *do not include a demographics page*.

Some indicative example reports of how units and agencies appear in the PDF are available here:

- [Example APS Employee Census Highlights report \(Business Unit level; 50 respondents\)](#)
- [Example APS Employee Census Highlights report \(Agency level; 1000+ respondents\)](#)

Excel heatmaps

Sometimes referred to as comparison reports, these reports show the percent positive for all attitudinal questions in the survey, broken down by demographic questions. These reports enable managers and HR teams to see how the employment experience varies for parts of the workforce (e.g. age, gender, classification and cultural background).

Columns comprising fewer than 10 respondents *are redacted*.

Indicative examples of the agency-level Excel heatmap is available here:

- [Example APS Employee Census Heatmap report \(agency level\)](#)

Online dashboard

Like the PDFs and Excel heatmaps, reporting in the online dashboard is restricted (i.e. not displayed) when there are fewer than 10 responses from a group.

The dashboard allows users to filter on particular groups of respondents such as gender, age, classification or where the respondent works within the agency. Where any of these filters would result in fewer than 10 responses in a group, no data will show through any reporting products.

- [Click here to view a demonstration of how the data is displayed on the Qualtrics dashboard.](#)

Free-text comments to the last two questions in the survey are made available through the online dashboard. Comments are cleaned for names and profanities, but are otherwise shared verbatim (word for word, exactly as written). Comments are restricted (i.e. not displayed) when there are fewer than 30 responses from a group.

When you answer these questions, please do not provide personal information about yourself or any other person (e.g. by including names in your response). Employees are reminded to act in accordance with the Values and Code of Conduct.

Unit Record Datasets (URDs)

The Commission and Ipsos may also provide agencies with de-identified unit record datasets. No identifying information (e.g. email address) is attached to your response, and methods are taken such that responses within these datasets will not be reasonably attributable to any specific individual.

Before sharing a de-identified dataset, the data is analysed for any unique cases (e.g. unique combinations of demographic information: gender, age, classification, etc.). In the rare circumstance that there is a unique respondent, the data will be further aggregated to uphold privacy. In order to obtain a Unit

Record Dataset (URD), agencies agree to store the data in a manner consistent with the Australian Privacy Principles.

An example of a de-identified census dataset is uploaded to data.gov.au.

How is my information stored?

Your information is stored by Ipsos who employ data management systems and a security policy that are ISO 27001 (Information Security Management System) certified. See their privacy policy here: [Ipsos Privacy Policy](#)

All employee data including names and email addresses are held securely within the Qualtrics platform onshore in Australia. See their privacy policy here: [Qualtrics privacy policy](#)

Email addresses are removed from any dataset or report that is supplied to the APSC or agencies. De-identified data is supplied to the APSC, which is stored on the Commission's information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure in accordance with the Commission's ICT security policies and practices. Access to data is granted on a strict need-to-know basis.

The [APSC Privacy Policy \(Part B\)](#), provides more information about how your data is collected and maintained.

De-identified datasets are uploaded to data.gov.au in accordance with the [Australian Government Public Data Policy](#). De-identification of data is undertaken in accordance with guidance provided by the [Office of the Australian Information Commissioner](#). These de-identified datasets can be used by members of the public for generic or secondary purposes including, but not limited to, academic research.

Common Census Questions

Do I have to answer all of the questions?

No, with the exception of four demographic questions, you may skip any other question you cannot or may not want to answer.

Do I need to press submit?

Your response will auto-save each time you press 'Next', allowing you to return to complete the questionnaire as many times as required during the Census period.

If you do not complete the questionnaire or press 'Submit' by the time the Census period closes, your response will be converted to complete, as long as you have answered the four mandatory questions. Partially or half completed answered surveys will still be counted at the end of the survey period.

Can I browse through the questions before completing the Census?

Yes, you can access a copy of the questions in the footer of the online survey introduction page prior to completing it. Alternatively, once you complete the four demographic questions, you can browse through the online survey by clicking the Next and Back buttons. If you accidentally submit an incomplete survey you will be able to re-access the survey and commence the survey again.

What if I use a screen reader or have other accessibility needs?

While the APSC has tested the online questionnaire using various screen readers and technologies, it may still be the case that an employee's unique set-up means they face challenges in completing the Employee Census in the online platform.

If this is the case, we encourage them to reach out to the APSC and/or our external survey provider Ipsos to find a solution which may comprise a verbal or email submission.

Contact details:

- **Ipsos** - E: auexsupport@ipsos.com, P: 1800 443 031
- **APSC Surveys Team** – E: APSSurveys@apsc.gov.au, P: 1800 464 926

Can I change my responses after I have entered them?

Following the last question in the Census, you will have the opportunity to review your responses before you submit them. You can navigate to any section of the Census you wish to review by selecting the relevant section from a list. Once you are ready to submit your responses, click “Submit” on the review page.

You can change your survey response as many times as you like up until the Census closes on 5 June. Each time you access the survey and change an answer, the system will overwrite all previous responses (i.e. save the latest version once you press submit).

If you would like to delete a response to a question altogether, you will need to have your survey link reset which will clear all of your responses. This can be done by contacting your [agency Census coordinator](#) or the APSC directly at APSSurveys@apsc.gov.au.

It is not possible to change or withdraw your responses after the Census closes on 5 June.

I'm too busy to complete the Census at work. Can I do it from home?

As the Census is considered a work-related activity, it is encouraged that you complete it during your working hours. However, you can forward the email with your unique link to a private email account if you prefer to do so.

I can't find my email invitation or Census link. What do I do?

Please note that email invitations are staggered across the first week of the Census (4-8 May), and you may not receive your invite until Friday 8 May. We suggest that you wait until Monday 11 May before contacting your [agency Census coordinator](#).

Commencing 14 May, reminder emails will be sent each Thursday to those who have yet to complete the survey. If you have deleted or cannot find your survey invitation you should receive a reminder as part of the reminder process. If you do not receive the reminder please contact your agency Census coordinator as it is possible that your email was not been included on the email list your agency provided.

I can't get the online survey to work. What do I do?

The survey is designed to work using common browsers such as Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome, Safari, and Mozilla Firefox. If you experience any issues completing the Census, try a different web browser or check your internet connection before contacting your [agency Census coordinator](#).

What happens if I am on temporary transfer or secondment during the Census period?

If you are on temporary transfer or secondment during the Census period, you should be included in your host agency's email list provided you commenced with them on or prior to the cut-off date of three weeks before the start of the Census.

The Census questions typically ask you to consider your response in terms of your current role, however some ask about the previous 12 months. It may be challenging to respond if you have been engaged by two agencies over the previous 12 months. Therefore unless stipulated, please answer in relation to your host agency. If you are unsure about which agency or work unit you should respond for, get in touch with your [agency Census coordinator](#) to confirm where your answers will be assigned to.

What happens if I am on leave during the Census period?

If you have planned leave or are absent and wish to take part in the Census, please contact your [agency Census coordinator](#) in the first instance. Your agency Census coordinator can request that the invitation be sent to your personal email address.

Can I print the Census?

A link to a PDF version of the questions is provided in the footer of the online survey. It can be downloaded at any time while accessing the survey. Submissions must be made through the online survey unless other arrangements have been made directly with the APSC.

Contact Information

Who should I contact if I have questions?

In most instances, your first point of call should be your agency Census coordinator. See your agency's group email at this link: [List of Census coordinator email addresses](#). Coordinators from every agency work directly with the APSC and will have technical information specific to your agency.

If you'd like to get in contact with the APSC Employee Census team directly, you can do so at: APSSurveys@apsc.gov.au or 1800 464 926.

Our external service provider Ipsos can be contacted in specific circumstances, for example if you wish to complete a verbal or email submission to the census instead of the online questionnaire. They can be contacted at: auexsupport@ipsos.com or 1800 443 031.