

2023 Census: Final content report





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Preface

The *2023 Census: Report on final content* outlines my decisions on the content to be included in the 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings, under delegation of the authority of the Government Statistician. These decisions have been made following submissions and testing.

The content to be collected in the 2023 Census represents information needs that are best met by a large-scale population survey, within the constraints of what is feasible. The 2018 Census saw considerable revision to the information that we collected based on feedback from engagement. However, we did not collect information on gender and sexual identity in the 2018 Census. I'm pleased to confirm that the 2023 Census will collect information on this topic area. This information will inform better decision-making and service provision for the Rainbow community and allow them to see themselves in the census data.

While I acknowledge there are other information needs that could potentially have been met by the 2023 Census, the focus for 2023 is to deliver quality data for the range of content already collected. We didn't get the response rates we should have in 2018, which impacted the quality of the data we could provide, particularly for the critically important iwi affiliation variable. For the 2023 Census, we are focusing on doing a better job of collecting the data, including working with iwi and Māori as partners to Te Tiriti and with community partners to do so.

For the 2023 Census, we plan to continue using administrative (admin) data in a safe and secure manner to complement responses we receive through census forms. This will help us ensure we're delivering the best information we can to inform Aotearoa New Zealand's decision makers.

Finally, thank you for your ongoing support for the census, and thank you to everyone who took part in the engagement process. The information provided during engagement will help to ensure the continued value of the census for Aotearoa New Zealand.



Simon Mason

Deputy Government Statistician, Census and Collection Operations

Purpose and summary

Purpose

The next Census of Population and Dwellings will be held in March 2023. This report outlines the content for the 2023 Census and decisions related to this. The 2023 Census content has been decided by the Deputy Government Statistician, Census and Collection Operations, on behalf of the Government Statistician.

Overview of 2023 Census content

We undertake a content development process for each census. Census 'content' refers to the information (in other words, topics) we collect in the census rather than the specific questions used to get this information; classifications used; or types of data, products, or services that may be produced. However, the questions and classifications used contribute to the content that is available at the end of the process, and to the types of data that can be produced.

For some censuses, there may be a full review of content. For other censuses, there may be a more limited review with less scope for changes or additions. The scope of content change is determined at the start of the planning for the census through the business case option selected by Cabinet. For the 2023 Census, the scope of content change is limited.

The final content for the 2023 Census retains the range of information collected in previous censuses but with some improvements. Changes for the 2023 Census will focus on improving data quality for existing content rather than adding new topics. In summary, the content changes for the 2023 Census are:

- the collection of new information on gender, sexual identity, and variations of sex characteristics
- changes for sex, and for activity limitations/disability
- reinstating questions for number of census night occupants and phone number.

About 2023 Census

The overall goal of every census is to produce the best possible count of the population and dwellings in New Zealand. This count is provided, along with additional information on the characteristics of individuals, families, extended families, households, and dwellings, through a range of accessible products and services.

As well as enabling analysis of the characteristics of New Zealand at a population level, census data has several key uses, including:

- helping to determine the number of electorates and New Zealand's electoral boundaries
- informing population estimates and – as a result – population-based funding
- providing an important source of data on iwi affiliation, Māori descent, Māori ethnicity, and te reo Māori
- providing central government organisations data to make informed decisions (for example, to determine funding and the location of educational institutions)
- providing a way to select the sample for other data collections
- describing the wellbeing of small populations, including local, ethnic, and other communities, which is unique to the census.

The focus of the 2023 Census is to deliver quality data, with significant investment committed to lifting participation and response rates across New Zealand, with a focus on geographic areas and ethnic groups that had the highest non-response in 2018 (particularly Māori, Pacific peoples, and people aged under 29 years). We are committed to providing quality data to Māori as partners to Te Tiriti.

This census will include more support for people to fill in their forms, as well as connect with communities around New Zealand, helping them increase both their representation in – and their confidence using – census data. We also intend to make it easier for people to respond either on paper or online, depending on their preference.

Design of the 2023 Census

In the lead-up to the 2018 Census, we revised our approach for collecting information from people, shifting from a paper-first method to one that focused on maximising online participation, with paper forms available on request. Unfortunately, this approach didn't work for all respondents and, as a result, response rates were too low to allow us to produce good-quality data using form responses only. To address this, after the collection operation had finished, we adjusted our methodology for counting people to include records from administrative (admin) data (admin enumeration) as well as form responses to produce the 2018 Census dataset.

For the 2023 Census we will use a combined methodology by design, as stated in the [Preliminary view of 2023 Census content](#). This combined methodology will involve a full field enumeration aimed at collecting quality census form responses and using admin data to fill data gaps where responses are not available. This approach is consistent with recommendation two of the [Report of the Independent Review of New Zealand's 2018 Census](#).

To produce the 2023 Census dataset, we will usually prioritise the use of responses provided on census forms over the use of admin data. That is, in general we will not replace census form responses with admin data. An admin record is added to the census file when there is evidence that the admin data is high quality and that the individual hasn't submitted an individual form. This is called admin enumeration. For some census variables, we will use alternative data sources (including admin and historical census data) or statistical imputation if a response to the question was not provided on the census form. As with the 2018 Census dataset, we will label and document where and how we have used alternative data sources or statistical imputation when we release the 2023 Census dataset. This supports feedback from data users that they want clear information about our use of admin data in the census dataset.

Determining the content for the 2023 Census

There are constraints on the total amount of information that can be collected in the census. Introducing new content into the census requires significant development work and testing. The limited scope of content change for the 2023 Census reflects:

- its wider aim of improving the response rate
- the major refresh of content conducted before the 2018 Census
- that New Zealand's census currently collects a wide range of information by international standards.

Considering information needs

The content determination process starts with discussions within Stats NZ based on existing knowledge of information needs and the publication of our preliminary views on what content will be included in the next census. This publication may include questions on certain aspects of content that we would like feedback on. Our [Preliminary view of 2023 Census content](#) was published in October 2020.

Collecting submissions

This is followed by a period during which submissions on content can be made. The results of this are then summarised and published. We published the [2023 Census content: Summary of feedback from engagement](#) in February 2021.

We sought input and feedback on several areas to ensure we can deliver the best possible data from the 2023 Census. These covered:

- additional use of admin data to supplement existing census data
- potential quality improvements to existing census content.

Although we only invited feedback on a limited range of information needs, we also received some feedback on broader information needs through this submission process. The feedback received on broader information needs will be used in our considerations of information needs across the range of Stats NZ's data collections, including future censuses.

We acknowledge that other information needs that could potentially have been met by the 2023 Census may not have been raised during the submissions period due to the limited scope for content change and relatively specific nature of what we invited feedback on.

Testing

During the content development process, testing of questions is undertaken with individuals and focus groups. This may include testing of a proposed new question, changes to an existing question, or testing of an existing question where there is a need for more information on how respondents find it (for example, is it easy to understand and answer).

Determining final content

At the conclusion of the question-testing period, decisions are made on what content will be included, and a report summarising these decisions is published on the Stats NZ website. This represents the end of the content-determination process.

Following publication of the *2023 Census: Final content report* (this report), further preparations for the Dress Rehearsal (undertaken in 2022) and the 2023 Census take place, including form design, development of the Internet Collection System (ICS), and printing of paper forms and other respondent materials. A report on the questionnaire design, development, and testing process will be published in early 2022.

Meeting Māori and iwi information needs

The census plays an important role in enabling the data needs and aspirations of iwi and Māori as treaty partners. There is information collected that relates specifically to iwi and Māori, such as Māori descent, iwi affiliation, ethnicity, and the number of te reo Māori speakers. The wider range of information collected in the census also plays an important role in providing information to, for, and about iwi and Māori. It is crucial that quality data for and about iwi and Māori can be produced from the census, to enable iwi and Māori to use census data to support their aspirations, to inform decisions that affect Māori and iwi, and to meet the Crown's partnership obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

In April 2019, Stats NZ announced that official statistical counts of iwi from the 2018 Census would not be published due to missing iwi affiliation data and a lack of alternative government data sources that could fill gaps in that data. Under the Mana Ōrite Relationship Agreement, Stats NZ and technicians from the Data Iwi Leaders Group worked together to explore and develop appropriate methods to address the high level of missing data in the 2018 Census. While not official census counts, for most purposes the 2018 iwi estimates provide a more relevant and up-to-date picture of iwi than continued use of 2013 Census data. See [Iwi affiliation \(estimated counts\): 2018](#) for more information.

While our primary focus for 2023 is on improving participation to improve data quality, we are also considering improvements to form design to enable people to respond to the iwi question more easily and accurately.

Final 2023 Census content

Summary of topics

Table one below presents a summary of the topics to be included in the 2023 Census and indicates whether each of these is new or has changed since the 2018 Census.

This summary includes:

- topics produced from a direct question on the census form (such as Māori descent)
- some of the topics that are derived from questions on the census form (such as household composition, which is derived from questions about the people living in a dwelling and how they are related to each other).

Table one is not a comprehensive list of the derived variables. It cannot include every derived variable as there are too many to list in this format. Examples of derived variables not included in this table are number of basic amenities available, household income, and type of couple. The list of all variables produced from the census will be available closer to the time of the release of the census dataset.

Further information on each topic or variable is available from page 13.

Table 1: Topics to be included in the 2023 Census

Topic	Status
Population structure	
Absentees	No change
Age	No change
Gender	New
Legally registered relationship status	No change
Name	No change
Number of children born	No change
Number of census night occupants	Reinstated
Partnership status in current relationship	No change
Phone number	Reinstated
Sex	Changed
Variations of sex characteristics	New
Location	
Census night address	No change
Dwelling address	No change
Usual residence address	No change
Usual residence one year ago	No change

Topic	Status
Usual residence five years ago	No change
Years at usual residence	No change
Ethnicity, culture, and identity	
Birthplace	No change
Ethnicity	No change
Iwi affiliation	No change
Languages spoken	No change
Māori descent	No change
Religious affiliation	No change
Sexual identity	New
Years since arrival in New Zealand	No change
Education and training	
Highest secondary school qualification	No change
Highest qualification	No change
Post-school qualification field of study	No change
Post-school qualification level of attainment	No change
Post-school qualification New Zealand/overseas indicator	No change
Study participation	No change
Income	
Sources of personal income	No change
Total personal income	No change
Work	
Hours worked in employment per week	No change
Industry	No change
Occupation	No change
Sector of ownership	No change
Status in employment	No change
Unpaid activities	No change
Work and labour force status	No change
Families and households	
Extended family type	No change

Topic	Status
Family type	No change
Household composition	No change
Child dependency status	No change
Housing	
Access to telecommunication systems	No change
Dwelling occupancy status	No change
Dwelling type	No change
Access to basic amenities	No change
Dwelling dampness	No change
Dwelling mould	No change
Individual home ownership	No change
Main types of heating and fuel types used to heat dwellings	No change
Number of rooms and number of bedrooms	No change
Sector of landlord	No change
Tenure of household	No change
Weekly rent paid by household	No change
Transport	
Educational institution address	No change
Main means of travel to education	No change
Main means of travel to work	No change
Number of motor vehicles	No change
Workplace address	No change
Health	
Activity limitations/disability	Changed
Cigarette smoking behaviour	No change

Detailed topic information

This section outlines the topics that will be included in the 2023 Census. They are grouped into broad topic areas. For each topic, we indicate whether it is new, changed, reinstated, or has not changed. The following key indicates the status of change for each topic since the last census:

	No change
	Changed
	Reinstated
	New topic

These changes relate to the content only. Where a topic is described as having no change, this means that the type of information collected is not changing. There may be changes to other aspects of the topic however, such as classifications and questionnaire wording, which we note where applicable.

Population structure

Population structure is one of the most frequently used census topics. Customers include central government agencies, local authorities, private organisations and businesses, researchers, communities, and the public. Understanding and monitoring changes in population structure is important for an informed society. All policies and social services are influenced by population change.

Absentees

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

An absentee is identified on the census dwelling form (paper) or the household summary form (online) as someone who usually lives in a particular dwelling but has not completed a census individual form there because they were elsewhere in New Zealand or overseas on census night. An absentee may have completed a census individual form elsewhere in New Zealand.

Absentee data is used in conjunction with name and number of census night occupants to help us ensure we have an accurate count of the New Zealand population and families and households. We use information on absentees to help derive household composition, family type, and other family and household topics.

Although the absentee topic itself is not changing, for 2023 we will collect information on absentee gender instead of absentee sex. This reflects the new content on sex and gender and use of gender for family and household topics previously defined and classified according to sex (such as type of couple).

Age

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Age is the length of time a person has been alive, measured in complete, elapsed years. It is measured as the difference between date of birth and the census collection date.

A key use of age data is in the funding of health and education. It is regularly used to help analyse other census data. For example, to investigate population ageing and to provide the base population for fertility and mortality rates.

Collection of this information in the census is legally required under the Statistics Act 1975.

Gender

This topic will be included in 2023 for the first time.

Gender will be collected in the 2023 Census and will be the primary demographic variable that we will produce information on. This replaces the previous use of the sex variable, and output data will use gender by default. This reflects our updated [Statistical standard for gender, sex, and variations of sex characteristics](#). This information is to help inform better decision-making for – and about – gender minority groups and will allow more people to see themselves in the data. Although gender will be the default variable for output, output data on sex will still be available. We acknowledge that there may be certain uses of the data for which it is more appropriate to use sex than gender.

Gender refers to a person's social and personal identity as male, female, or another gender such as non-binary. Gender may include the gender that a person internally feels ('gender identity'), and/or the gender a person publicly expresses ('gender expression') in their daily life. A person's gender may change over time. A person's current gender may differ from the sex recorded at their birth and from what is indicated on their current legal documents. Some people may not identify with any gender.

Gender, along with sex, is a fundamental demographic characteristic used in social and population analysis.

Legally registered relationship status

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Legally registered relationship status is a person's status with respect to their relationship, which has been registered according to the laws or customs of the country in which they entered that relationship.

Census data on legally registered relationship status, along with partnership status in current relationship, enables understanding and analysis of the relationships of usual residents aged 15 years and over.

Name


This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

We use name together with number of census night occupants to check that the individual forms completed in a dwelling match the people listed on the paper dwelling form or online household set-up form. Name is also used to link census data to previous census and admin

data within the security of the [Integrated Data Infrastructure \(IDI\) environment](#). Name information collected in the census is not shared with any other agency, and data in the IDI has name removed before it is made available for research and analysis.

Collecting name is a statutory requirement under the Statistics Act 1975.

Number of children born


 This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Number of children born is the number of children ever born to each female aged 15 years and over, who usually resides in New Zealand. Stepchildren, adopted children, foster children, and wards of the state are not included.

Number of children born is a key source of information on fertility, family size, patterns and timing of childbearing, and childlessness.

Feedback from engagement on the proposed content for the 2023 Census supported continuing to collect this data for women only. We will not be expanding it to include paternity (of men). Although this topic is not changing, it is affected by the updated statistical standard for gender, sex, and variations of sex characteristics. For 2023, it will be collected for those whose sex at birth was female.

Number of census night occupants

 This topic will be reinstated in 2023.

Number of census night occupants is being reinstated as a question on the census dwelling form (paper) and household summary form (online). The information is used to ensure that the correct number of individual forms is received from each household thus providing operational and efficiency benefits for field collection and processing, including assessing the completeness of each household. This will help improve data quality for population and dwelling counts, and for family and household data, including family and household data for Māori. It was recommended in the [Final report of the 2018 Census External Data Quality Panel](#) and supported by feedback from engagement. In 2018 it was derived by counting the number of individual forms filled out at a dwelling and the number of names listed on the dwelling form.

Number of census night occupants is the number of people who were present in a particular dwelling in New Zealand on census night. It includes people who were present and usually live there, and people who were present but live overseas or elsewhere in New Zealand. It excludes people who usually live in the dwelling but were absent on census night.

Number of census night occupants is a statutory requirement under the Statistics Act 1975.


Partnership status in current relationship

 This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Partnership status is a person's status with respect to their current relationship and is based on their legally registered relationship status and their living arrangements.


Census data on partnership status in current relationship, along with legally registered relationship status, enables understanding and analysis of the relationships of usual residents aged 15 years and over.

Phone number

 This topic will be reinstated in 2023.

A question on a contact phone number is being included in the 2023 Census to enable us to contact people by phone to participate in the 2023 New Zealand Disability Survey. The 2023 New Zealand Disability Survey is primarily carried out using phone interviews. Phone numbers were collected in previous censuses but not in 2018 as there was no post-censal disability survey in 2018. Phone numbers collected in the census are not shared with any other agency or data users and are not included in the IDI.

Sex

 This topic will be included in 2023 with change.

For 2023, we will collect information on sex at birth. Previously we collected information on sex with no further clarification of what that meant. This change reflects our updated [Statistical standard for gender, sex, and variations of sex characteristics](#).

Sex is based on a person's sex characteristics, such as their chromosomes, hormones, and reproductive organs. While typically based upon the sex characteristics observed and recorded at birth or infancy, a person's sex can change over the course of their lifetime and may differ from their sex recorded at birth.

Sex at birth refers to the sex recorded at a person's birth (for example, what was recorded on their birth certificate). Sex at birth may also be understood as sex assigned at birth.

Sex, along with gender, is a fundamental demographic characteristic used in social and population analysis. It will also be used in combination with gender to derive cisgender (a person whose gender corresponds with their sex at birth) and transgender population data.

Variations of sex characteristics

 This topic will be included in 2023 for the first time.

Variations of sex characteristics will be collected in the 2023 Census, reflecting our updated [Statistical standard for gender, sex, and variations of sex characteristics](#). This information allows more people to see themselves in the data and informs better decision-making for – and about – sexual minority groups.

Variations of sex characteristics refers to people born with genetic, hormonal, or physical sex characteristics that do not conform to medical norms for female or male bodies. It refers to a wide spectrum of variations to hormones, chromosomes, genitals and/or reproductive organs. Other terms used to describe being born with variations of sex characteristics are intersex person, a person with an intersex variation, or Differences of Sex Development (DSD). Some people may identify as intersex, while others may see their intersex variation more as part of their medical history, rather than their identity.

Historically the census has not allowed those with variations of sex characteristics to respond accurately to the census question on sex. This has resulted in multiple complaints to the Human Rights Commission. Based on the Guide to collecting gender, sex, and variations of sex characteristics data recommended by the review of the statistical standard, sex at birth information is to be collected with binary response options (male / female) to produce accurate information on the transgender population when combined with gender

responses (male / female / another gender). A separate question on variations of sex characteristics will enable respondents with variations of sex characteristics to accurately respond and see themselves in the census forms. (See Guide to collecting gender, sex, and variations of sex characteristics data on [Statistical Standard for gender, sex, and variations of sex characteristics](#).)

Cognitive and focus-group testing during question development indicated that although some respondents had difficulty interpreting the concept, overall, the question gathered the correct information from most respondents.

The data quality expectations for this variable are relatively low compared with most census topics collected. This is due to the small population group of interest, potential interpretation issues identified during testing, and the lack of non-census sources of this information to supplement census responses. However, as outlined, the primary reason for including variations of sex characteristics go beyond the expected quality and use of this data. Collecting this information in the 2023 Census will allow more New Zealanders to see themselves in the census forms and data.

Location

The census is New Zealand's most valuable source of information about the size and characteristics of New Zealand's population at a subnational level. It covers the whole of New Zealand and is available at the most detailed geographies, enabling better understanding of the variances within our communities and targeting of resources at a local level where they are needed. Census location information is also a critical input to population estimates and projections, providing information on how communities are changing.

Users of census location data include central government agencies, local authorities, private organisations and businesses, researchers, communities, and individuals. It is used to formulate, monitor, and evaluate central and local government planning and policy.

Census night address and dwelling address

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Census night address is the physical location of the dwelling where a person was located on census night.

Dwelling address consists of the distinguishing details of the physical location of a dwelling and can include street number, name, and type; suburb or rural locality; and city, town, or district. Dwelling address is used to confirm the location of dwellings across New Zealand.

Census night address, along with usual residence address, provides the only means of distinguishing between those usually living in New Zealand, overseas visitors, and those living in an area or just present there on census night. Dwelling address is the primary piece of information used to ensure that every dwelling is counted and counted only once.

There is a statutory requirement under the Statistics Act 1975 for the census to collect census night address and dwelling address.

Usual residence address

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Usual residence is the address of the dwelling where a person considers that they usually live.

Usual residence address, along with census night address, provides the only means of distinguishing between those usually living in New Zealand, overseas visitors, and those living in an area or just present there on census night.

Usual residence one year ago, usual residence five years ago, and years at usual residence

These topics will be included in 2023 with no change.

Usual residence one year ago is a person's usual residence one year before census night 2023, which may be different to their current usual residence as at census night 2023. Usual residence five years ago is a person's usual residence five years before census night 2023, which may be different to their current usual residence as at census night 2023. Years at usual residence is the number of completed years up to census night that a person has lived at their usual residence. Short-term absences may be ignored, but long-term absences of 12 months or more are excluded.

The information collected on usual residence one year ago, usual residence five years ago, and years at usual residence provide population mobility data, which is used in the models for net internal migration. This is an integral part of calculating subnational population estimates. Population estimates and projections are used widely across the public and private sectors for many purposes including planning, evaluation, forecasting, policy advice, resource allocation, and construction of various indicators of social, environmental, and economic progress. Examples of use of location information include the population-based funding formula for district health boards (DHBs) and setting electoral boundaries as required by the Electoral Act 1993.

While there will be no changes to the years at usual residence topic, we are changing who we collect the information from. For the 2023 Census, we will collect this information from those who give a New Zealand address for their usual residence. We previously collected this information from everyone.

Information on usual residence five years ago will not be collected via a question on the census form. For those aged five years and over, it will be collected by linking an individual's 2023 Census record to their 2018 Census record. This approach was used in the 2018 Census.

Ethnicity, culture, and identity

Birthplace

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Birthplace is defined as the country where the respondent was born. It refers to the current name of the country at the time of the data collection.

Data on birthplace, along with years since arrival in New Zealand, religious affiliation, and languages spoken, provides a useful indicator of cultural diversity and aids in planning services. Information on birthplace and years since arrival in New Zealand are also used to develop, monitor, and evaluate settlement programmes for migrants.

While there will be no changes to the birthplace topic for the 2023 Census, there will be a change to the format of the question we use to collect this information.

Ethnicity

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Ethnicity is the ethnic group or groups a person identifies with or has a sense of belonging to. It is a measure of cultural affiliation (in contrast to race, ancestry, nationality, or citizenship). Ethnicity is self-perceived, and a person can belong to more than one ethnic group.

Ethnicity is used extensively by central government agencies, local authorities, non-government organisations, iwi, and individual ethnic groups. It is used to compile a wide range of demographic estimates and projections, and to derive measures for monitoring the wellbeing of ethnic groups. The census provides an important source of ethnicity data for small areas and small ethnic groups.

Collection of this information in the census is legally required under the Statistics Act 1975.

Ethnicity will be collected using the same question as in the 2018 Census. There was a minor update to the standard classification for ethnicity in 2020 following public consultation, which our output data will reflect. For more information see [Ethnicity standard classification: Findings from public consultation November 2019](#).

Iwi affiliation

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

An iwi, or Māori tribe, is one of the largest kinship groupings and is generally made up of several hapū that are all descended from a common ancestor. Hapū are clusters of whānau, where the whānau is usually an extended family grouping consisting of children, parents, often grandparents, and other closely related kin.

For statistical purposes, an iwi is defined as a whakapapa-based kinship grouping that generally has several hapū and one or more active marae, and a recognised structure that represents the interests of the iwi, such as a rōpū whakahaere, committee, or board.

The census is currently the only source of comprehensive iwi affiliation information. As there are no alternative sources of this information, at present we are totally reliant on responses to the census question for data on iwi affiliation.

Iwi information can be combined with other census information to help with understanding outcomes for iwi and broader characteristics of iwi. The statistical standard for [Iwi and iwi-related groups](#) was updated in 2017. The statistical standard is used by iwi to formalise their iwi status as it is used as the source of official statistics on iwi population numbers for Treaty claims and public policy.

We are aware of the interest in collecting information on hapū in the census, however this will not be included in the 2023 Census. Collecting and outputting this information would require major development work, including creation of a classification, and work on coding and collection guidelines. Currently our focus is on collecting quality iwi data. This emerging information need will continue to be monitored across the range of Stats NZ's data collections, including future censuses.

While there will be no changes to the iwi topic for the 2023 Census, we are considering improvements to form design to ensure good quality data can be produced.

Languages spoken

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Languages spoken provides information on which languages, and how many, a person can speak or use. This includes te reo Māori and New Zealand Sign Language.

Census data on te reo Māori is a primary source of information for helping to understand the health of the language.

Data on languages spoken, along with birthplace, years since arrival in New Zealand, and religious affiliation, provides a useful indicator of cultural diversity and aids in planning services.

Māori descent

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

A person is of Māori descent if they are the descendent of a person who has Māori descent or ancestry (these terms are used synonymously).

Māori descent is based on a genealogical or biological concept, rather than on cultural affiliation to the Māori ethnic group. Information on cultural affiliations, or ethnicity, is collected in the census question on ethnic group(s). For the purposes of the Māori descent classification, having Cook Island Māori ancestry is not classified as being of Māori descent.


Te Puni Kōkiri use Māori descent census data for monitoring the descent population size and characteristics, as well as determining the number of Māori who are eligible for certain benefits.

The Department for Courts Waitangi Tribunal and Māori Land Court Divisions, the Office of Treaty Settlements and Te Ohu Kaimoana (Treaty of Waitangi Fisheries Commission) use Māori descent for Treaty of Waitangi matters.

Māori descent information is used in conjunction with Māori electoral registrations to calculate the Māori electoral population, which is subsequently used to determine the number of Māori electorates. Although this is not a specific requirement of the census, the Electoral Act 1993 requires the derivation of Māori electoral populations based on Māori descent to be produced by Stats NZ. Māori descent information is also used for projections of the Māori descent population. After the 2018 Census, Māori descent and ethnicity data were used to establish the sample for Te Kupenga, the post-censal survey of Māori wellbeing.

While there will be no changes to the Māori descent topic for the 2023 Census, there will be a change to the question wording we use to collect this information.

Religious affiliation


 This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Religious affiliation is the self-identified association of a person with a religion, denomination, or sub-denominational religious group.

A religion is a set of beliefs and practices that usually involves acknowledging a higher power, and guides people's conduct and morals. Religious affiliation can have multiple responses as people may have affiliation with more than one religion or denomination.

A denomination is a subgroup of a religion. For example, Roman Catholic is a Christian denomination. Data on religious affiliation, along with birthplace, years since arrival in New Zealand, and languages spoken, provides a useful indicator of cultural diversity and aids in planning services.

Sexual identity

 This topic will be included in 2023 for the first time.

Sexual identity covers the ways in which a person's sexuality is expressed and the terms they choose to identify with. Sexual identities include heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, and asexual, among others.

This information will help to establish a baseline population for the wide range of sexual identities across New Zealand, enabling better understanding of service provision requirements for these groups. It will also allow analysis and comparison of outcomes across the range of sexual identities. This information will also allow more people to see themselves in the data.

Sexual identity will be collected in the 2023 Census, in accordance with the statistical standard for [Sexual identity](#) released in 2019.

Years since arrival in New Zealand

 This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Years since arrival in New Zealand is the length of time in completed years (including any intervening absences, whether temporary or long term) since a respondent who was born outside of New Zealand first arrived to live in New Zealand, as a permanent or long-term resident, until the date of data collection (census night).

Data on years since arrival in New Zealand, along with birthplace, religious affiliation, and languages spoken, provides a useful indicator of cultural diversity and aids in planning services. Information on birthplace and years since arrival in New Zealand are also used to develop, monitor, and evaluate settlement programmes for migrants.

While there will be no changes to the years since arrival in New Zealand topic for the 2023 Census, there will be a change to the question wording we use to collect this information.

Education and training

The census is a key source of education and training data for small areas and small populations across time. This data is used to identify over- and under-supply of skills, and to develop, implement, and evaluate immigration policy. It is also used to assess the impact of educational reforms and, in combination with other census variables, to measure socio-economic status (for example, to examine the link between qualifications and other socio-economic indicators such as occupation and income). Census data on education features among the census variables that are used to construct the New Zealand Deprivation Index (NZDep), which is an area-based measure of socioeconomic deprivation in New Zealand. (See NZDep2018 Index released on [Socioeconomic Deprivation Indexes: NZDep and NZiDep, Department of Public Health](#).) A qualification is a formally recognised award for educational or training attainment. Formal recognition means that the qualification is approved by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority or any formally recognised existing approval body in New Zealand or overseas, or their predecessors, or any previous approval body.

A qualification is defined as requiring full-time equivalent study of three months or more. Study time is an estimate of the typical time it takes a learner to achieve the learning outcomes of the qualification. This includes direct contact time with teachers and trainers, as well as time spent in studying, assignments, and assessment.

Highest secondary school qualification

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

This is the highest secondary school qualification gained by category of attainment and is collected for people aged 15 years and over. It is used along with post-school qualification to derive highest qualification for people aged 15 years and over.

Highest qualification

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Highest qualification is derived for people aged 15 years and over and combines highest secondary school qualification and post-school qualification to obtain the single highest qualification of a person by category of attainment.

Data on highest qualifications is used by central government agencies and researchers to measure levels of qualification in the population, how they are distributed across population groups, and how these change over time.

Post-school qualification field of study

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Post-school qualification field of study is the subject for the highest qualification a person aged 15 years and over has gained over and above any school qualifications. Included are qualifications awarded by educational and training institutions, as well as those gained from on-the-job training.

Post-school qualification field of study data is important for identifying skills shortages and over-supply, and mismatches between people's skills and occupations (for example, the current occupation of those with teaching qualifications). It is also used in combination with

post-school qualification level of attainment information for analysis of the economic value of a worker's experience and skills (human capital analysis).

Post-school qualification level of attainment

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Post-school qualification level of attainment is the qualification level for the highest qualification a person aged 15 years and over has gained over and above any school qualifications.

Post-school qualification level of attainment is used in combination with post-school qualification field of study information for analysis of the economic value of a worker's experience and skills (human capital analysis).

While there will be no changes to the post-school qualification level of attainment topic for the 2023 Census, there will be a change to the question wording we use to collect this information.

Post-school qualification New Zealand/overseas indicator

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

In 2018, a new question was introduced to determine whether a respondent's highest post-school qualification was gained in New Zealand or overseas.

Post-school qualification New Zealand/overseas indicator is used to show what proportion of New Zealand's skills/qualifications were acquired overseas for research purposes. It is also useful for helping to ensure correct coding of responses and production of good-quality data.

Study participation

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Participation in education or training measures those attending, studying, or enrolled in tertiary institutions, school, early childhood education, or any other place of education or training. It is grouped into full-time study (20 hours or more a week), part-time study (less than 20 hours a week), and those not studying.

Study participation data is used to monitor changes in the population who are undertaking study, as well as targeting at-risk groups. For the 2018 Census, the collection of information on study participation was extended from usual residents aged 15 years and over to all usual residents, to collect information for the new travel to education topic for people at all levels of education.

Income

Sources of personal income

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Sources of personal income identifies all the various sources from which a person aged 15 years and over received income in the last 12 months prior to census night.

Total personal income

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Total personal income is the total before-tax income of a person in the last 12 months prior to 31 March 2023. The information is collected as income bands rather than dollar amounts.

Census data on total personal income and sources of personal income is collected for the usually resident population aged 15 years and over, enabling detailed geographic and demographic breakdowns (for example, by sex, age, and ethnic group). This data shows the spread of income levels and types of income received across the population. It is frequently combined with other census data on work to understand how income varies by work and labour force status, occupation, and industry. It is also used to derive household income and family income.

Key users of census income data include central government agencies, local authorities, private organisations, and researchers. Information on household income and benefits (from sources of income) are inputs into the NZDep. This index is widely used for a range of research and policy work, and for targeting services and spending to help New Zealand's most vulnerable people.

Work

Census data on work is collected for the census usually resident population aged 15 years and over and enables detailed geographic and demographic breakdowns (for example, by ethnic group).

Stats NZ uses census data on industry, occupation, sector of ownership, and status in employment to help produce the Labour Cost Index (LCI). This index provides a measure of wage inflation and is used in wage negotiations, contract escalation clauses, economic research, and policy making.

Hours worked in employment per week

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Hours worked in employment is the total number of hours usually worked in employment each week by a person aged 15 years and over who:

- worked one hour or more for pay, profit, or payment in kind, in a job, business, farm, or professional practice, or
- worked one hour or more without pay in work that contributed directly to the operation of a business, farm, or professional practice operated by a relative, or
- had a job or business they were temporarily absent from.

Hours worked is derived by summing the number of hours worked in a main job, and number of hours worked in all other jobs for pay, profit, or income.

Hours worked in employment per week is used in official productivity statistics, and by research institutes, central, and local government in policy formation.

Industry

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Industry is the type of activity undertaken by the organisation, enterprise, business, or unit of economic activity that employs one or more people aged 15 years and over.

Industry data is used by central and local government agencies and social and economic researchers to monitor and evaluate employment for specific population groups. Within Stats NZ it is used to verify National Accounts production statistics and, along with other census work variables, to reweight the LCI, which measures changes in salary and wage rates for a fixed quantity and quality of labour input and so provides a measure of wage inflation (used in wage negotiations, contract escalation clauses, economic research, and policy making).

Occupation

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

An occupation is a set of jobs that require the performance of similar or identical sets of tasks by employed people aged 15 years and over.

Occupation data has many uses including: analysing and monitoring structural changes in the labour market; planning for new demand in occupation resulting from technological or economic changes; developing curriculum training policies; studying occupational accidents; and analysing socioeconomic status in studies of social disadvantage, poverty, and equity. Occupation is also used by Stats NZ (along with other work variables) to reweight the LCI which provides a measure of wage inflation used in wage negotiations, contract escalations clauses, economic research, and policy making.

Sector of ownership

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

The sector of ownership identifies the part of the economy that owns an organisation, enterprise, business, or unit of economic activity. Examples are central or local government, or private ownership.

Sector of ownership data is used (along with census industry, occupation, and status in employment data) to reweight the LCI. The LCI provides a measure of wage inflation that is used outside Stats NZ in wage negotiations, contract escalation clauses, economic research, and policy making. Sector of ownership is also used to compare trends between the public and private sector and by the State Services Commission to look at public sector trends.

Status in employment

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Status in employment classifies employed people aged 15 years and over according to whether they were working for themselves or for other people in their main job.

Employed people are categorised as:

- a paid employee
- an employer

- self-employed and without employees
- an unpaid family worker.

Status in employment is used (along with industry, occupation, and sector of ownership) to reweight the LCI. It also provides information on the economic and social structure of the labour force, helping to explain changes in many of the other work variables.

Unpaid activities

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

The unpaid activities topic in the census covers activities performed in the four weeks before census night, without payment, for people living either in the same household, or outside the person's household. This includes any help or voluntary work through any organisation, group, or marae.

Information on unpaid activities has important value in measuring social capital, providing recognition of the importance of this work, and in allowing people who do not undertake paid work to record their participation in unpaid activities. This data is also used to understand the difference in unpaid work between men and women. Other users of this data include central and local government and researchers. The census is also the main source of information for many voluntary organisations, who use the information to support their funding application processes.

Work and labour force status

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Work and labour force status classifies a person aged 15 years and over by their inclusion in or exclusion from the labour force. For an employed person, it distinguishes between full-time employment (30 hours or more per week) or part-time employment (fewer than 30 hours per week). A person who was not employed is classified as either unemployed or not in the labour force.

Note that the definitions of employed, unemployed, and not in the labour force are based on those of the International Labour Organization, as set down at the 13th International Conference of Labour Statisticians, 1982.

Work and labour force status is used to generate the number of people employed, unemployed, and not in the labour force, as well as labour force participation rates, and employment and unemployment rates for different subgroups in the population. A variety of organisations use work and labour force status data, from central and local government to research institutions, community groups, and businesses. It is used to analyse the labour market position of population groups and small geographic areas, analyse occupation and industry composition, the size and characteristics of the labour market, the links between income, qualifications and labour market outcomes, and measure changes over time. It provides a broad indicator of socio-economic status and is an input into the NZDep.

Families and households

The census provides the only comprehensive source of data on the structure of households and families in New Zealand. Understanding changes over time is important for understanding the changing social fabric of New Zealand society. Data on family type, extended family type, and household composition also provides important context for understanding the wellbeing of New Zealanders. It is used extensively for formulating social policy, planning, monitoring programmes, and research. Users of this data include central government agencies, local authorities, private organisations, and researchers. Examples of use include the Ministry of Social Development's [Families and Whānau Status report](#) 2018, informing the creation of the NZDep, and by Stats NZ to derive family and household projections.

Family and household data from the census can provide information at the individual level as well as the family or household level. For example, data can be produced that indicates the work and labour force status of parents in certain family types, or the ethnicity of people in extended families.

Family and household data is derived from information about relationship to reference person (including that of absentees), living arrangements, and usual residence indicator (the relationship between a respondent's usual residence and their census night address).

Following the 2018 Census, preliminary analysis of the family and household data resulted in concerns about its quality. Due to this, a detailed investigation was done to understand the sources of error and impacts. This investigation delayed the release of family and household data from the 2018 Census. Although initially all this data was assigned a quality rating of very poor, further investigation showed that most family and household variables were of moderate quality, extended families was poor quality, and variables relating to same-sex couples were very poor quality. It also showed that households with Māori or Pacific residents were under-represented in the data. [Families and households in the 2018 Census: Data sources, family coding, and data quality](#) has more information on our assessments of the data quality. After this investigation was completed, family and household data from the 2018 Census was released. See the [2018 Census data user guide \(second edition\)](#) for information on the availability of this data.

For 2023, we are planning improvements to ensure that good quality family and household data can be produced. These include reinstating the number of census night occupants question and improving our internal processes for creating these variables.

Extended family type

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

An extended family is a group of related people who usually reside together:

- either as a family nucleus with one or more other related people, or
- as two or more related family nuclei, with or without other related people.

Included are people who were absent on census night but who usually live in a particular dwelling and are members of an extended family in that dwelling, if they were reported as absent by the reference person on the dwelling form (paper) or the household summary form (online).

Family type

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Family type classifies family nuclei according to the presence or absence of couples, parents, and children.

Household composition

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Household composition classifies households according to the relationships between usually resident people. The classification is based on how many and what type(s) of family nuclei were present in a household, and whether there were related, or unrelated people present.

Child dependency status

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

We have two measures of child dependency status: dependent child under 18 indicator and dependent young person indicator.

A dependent child under 18 is a child in a family nucleus aged under 15 years or aged 15–17 years and not employed full time.

A dependent young person is a child in a family nucleus aged 18–24 years and not employed full time.

Children in a family nucleus who are aged 15 years or over and employed full time or are aged 18 years and over are classified as adult children. This group is made up of all dependent young people and all non-dependent children.

Children in a family nucleus who are aged 15–24 years and employed full time or are aged 25 years or over are classified as non-dependent.

While there are no changes to the family and household topics since 2018, there will be updates to reflect the new content on sex and gender. Topics previously defined and classified according to sex (such as type of couple) will now be based on gender.

Housing

Housing data from the census provides information on the housing stock of New Zealand, home ownership and renting, and the suitability (for example, size) and habitability (for example, quality) of housing. The coverage of the census means that information can be provided at low geographic levels and for different population groups.

Users of housing data from the census include central government agencies, local authorities, private organisations, housing providers, policy analysts, and researchers. Formulation, monitoring, and evaluation of housing policy by central and local government is a key use of this data. Census housing data is also used in constructing the NZDep, Consumers Price Index, and compiling the National Accounts.

Access to telecommunication systems

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Access to telecommunication systems is the ability of residents in a private dwelling to communicate, through cell phone, telephone, or the Internet, with people outside the dwelling and to use services provided through these media. The device(s) and connection(s) must be in working order. This data provides information on access to telecommunication systems at the household level. It does not show whether a particular household member has access to those amenities. In some cases, not every member of a household may have equal access to a particular telecommunication system, such as a cell phone or the Internet.

The information collected on access to telecommunication systems is useful for monitoring use of different forms of telecommunications and provides an indicator of living standards and people's ability to obtain services in an emergency. It is used in constructing the NZDep. Other uses of this information include evaluating methods for collecting survey data and assessing coverage and bias for telephone surveys.

Dwelling occupancy status

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Dwelling occupancy status classifies all dwellings according to whether they are occupied, unoccupied, or under construction on census night. Unoccupied dwellings are further classified as unoccupied empty or unoccupied residents away.

Unoccupied dwellings are classified as empty if they have no current occupants and new occupants are not expected to arrive or move in on – or before – census night. This includes unoccupied private dwellings being repaired or renovated, and baches and holiday homes with no census night occupants. Unoccupied non-private dwellings are classified as unoccupied empty. Dwellings are classified as unoccupied residents away if the occupants are identified as being temporarily away and are not expected to return by noon on the day after census night.

Dwelling type

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Dwelling type classifies all dwellings (that is occupied dwellings, unoccupied dwellings, and dwellings under construction) according to their structure and function. It covers private dwellings (for example separate houses, units joined to others, private dwellings in motor camps, and improvised dwellings such as garages) and non-private dwellings (for example boarding houses and residential care for older people). For private dwellings, it provides information on the number of storeys.

Dwelling type provides valuable information on the types of housing people are living in. Uses of this data include monitoring housing trends, measuring dwelling density patterns, planning services, identifying substandard housing, and measuring severe housing deprivation (homelessness). In addition to counts of dwellings, this data can be used to produce counts of people in particular dwelling types and information on their characteristics. For example, it can provide information on the characteristics of those living in private dwellings in motor camps, boarding houses, or residential care for older people.

Housing quality – access to basic amenities, dwelling dampness, and dwelling mould

These topics will be included in 2023 with no change.

Access to basic amenities indicates what basic amenities (for example cooking facilities, shower or bath, and electricity) are available inside an occupied private dwelling. The amenities need to be in working order to be counted.

The information collected on dwelling dampness indicates whether an occupied private dwelling is not damp (dry throughout) or the degree to which it is damp – sometimes or always. Dampness is defined as when a dwelling feels or smells damp or has damp patches on the wall, ceiling, floor, or window frames.

The information collected on dwelling mould provides a measure of the total amount of visible mould inside occupied private dwellings. It indicates whether there is mould present that has a total area larger than an A4 sheet of paper, or whether the total amount present is smaller than A4 size, or there is no mould. It excludes any mould that is not visible (for example mould inside walls).

The housing quality information collected in the census (dampness, mould, and access to basic amenities) enables better understanding of the state of New Zealand's housing. Poor quality housing is linked to illnesses such as rheumatic fever. Housing quality data can be used to develop initiatives to address housing quality issues, inform public health action, and ensure that resources are targeted for maximum benefit. It also feeds into legislative requirements of councils, civil defence and emergency management planning, and measurement of severe housing deprivation.

Individual home ownership

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Individual home ownership indicates whether a person aged 15 years and over owns (or partly owns) the dwelling they usually live in or holds the dwelling in a family trust.

Individual home ownership information collected in the census is important for monitoring trends and changes in home ownership rates. It allows patterns and trends for different age groups and ethnic groups to be examined.

Main types of heating and fuel types used to heat dwellings

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Main types of heating used measures the types of heating that are usually used to heat an occupied private dwelling. It indicates the appliances used and, in most cases, the fuels used, for example heat pump, fixed gas heater, wood burner. Any types of heating that are only used very rarely or are available but not used are excluded.

Information on heating is used for understanding changes in energy demands, supporting requirements to monitor air quality, tracking risk factors for respiratory diseases, and informing public health interventions. It helps with identifying areas affected by fuel poverty, which is related to the increase in morbidity, mortality, and health system loading during winter.

Number of rooms and number of bedrooms

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

A room is defined as a space in a dwelling that is used, or intended to be used, for habitation and is enclosed by walls reaching from the floor to the ceiling or roof covering, excluding service areas.

The number of rooms includes each attic, bedroom, conservatory, dining room, family room, games room, habitable cellar, hobby room, kitchen, living room, lounge room, studio, and study. Service areas such as bathrooms, corridors, garages, hallways, laundries, pantries, spa rooms, toilets, verandas, and walk-in wardrobes should not be counted as rooms.

A bedroom is defined as a room that is used, or intended to be used, for sleeping in.

The data on the number of rooms and number of bedrooms in private dwellings provides an indication of dwelling size, and, together with other census variables, allows measures of household crowding to be derived.

Number of rooms is a statutory topic under the Statistics Act 1975.

Sector of landlord

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Sector of landlord refers to the type of organisation or person from whom households rent or lease private occupied dwellings. It can be the private sector (private person, trust, or business) or the state sector (for example, Kāinga Ora (Housing New Zealand)).

A rented private dwelling is a dwelling that is not owned by the usual resident(s) and for which the usual resident(s) makes rent payments.

A leased private dwelling is a rented dwelling for which the owner has granted another person or group of people exclusive possession for an agreed period.

Census information on sector of landlord is useful for measuring shifts in the approach taken by government to housing assistance and studying the consequences of policy change. It also enables Kāinga Ora to assess whether it is meeting its social objectives as required by law.

While there will be no changes to the sector of landlord topic for the 2023 Census, there will be a change to the question because Housing New Zealand has been replaced by a new housing entity called Kāinga Ora.

Tenure of household

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Tenure of household indicates whether a household in a private dwelling rents, owns, or holds that dwelling in a family trust, and whether payment is made by the household for the right to reside in that dwelling.

Tenure of household does not refer to the tenure of the land on which the dwelling is situated. A dwelling held in a family trust is owned by the family trust, so the household does not directly own the dwelling.

The collection of this information is a statutory requirement under the Statistics Act 1975.

Weekly rent paid by household

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Weekly rent paid by household is the total amount of money spent weekly by a household on obtaining shelter in a private dwelling. This sum normally excludes payments for the use of furniture and utilities (such as electricity, gas, and water), and for the provision of special services such as washing or cooking.

The census data on weekly rent paid by household allows investigation of the adequacy of low-rent housing when combined with other census housing variables.

Transport

Census transport data is used in a variety of ways, which include informing transport planning and measuring travel demand, planning infrastructure around schools, and informing targeted initiatives for different modes of transport.

Users of transport data include councils, transport organisations, and transport planners.

Educational institution address

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Educational institution address is the physical location of an educational institution. Distinguishing details can include the name, campus and/or suburb, and city, town, or district.

Workplace address

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Workplace address is the physical location of a workplace. Distinguishing details can include the building name; street number, name, and type; suburb or rural locality; and city, town, or district. The census data on workplace address relates to the workplace address for the main job held by an individual. This is the job in which a person works the most hours.

Census data on educational institution address and workplace address is used in combination with other variables (such as usual residence address) to provide information on transport flows. Transport planning work requires information on transport flows and the use of different transport modes for small geographic areas.

Main means of travel to education

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Main means of travel to education is the usual method that a person studying part-time or full-time in any educational centre, from early childhood education to tertiary education, used to travel the longest distance to their place of education (for example, by bicycle, school or public bus, walking, or driving).

'Usual' is the type of transport used most often – for example, the one used for the greatest number of days each week, month, or year. If there are two (or more) forms of transport used equally as often, the most recent form of transport is recorded.

'Main' is the type of transport used for the component of the journey that covers the longest distance.

Having data on travel to education in addition to data on travel to work provides a more complete picture of transport patterns in different areas of New Zealand and supports transport planning work. The transport patterns of the population that travels to education are different from those travelling to work.

Main means of travel to work

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Main means of travel to work is the usual method that an employed person, aged 15 years and over, uses to travel the longest distance to their place of employment (for example, by bicycle, public bus, walking, or driving).

'Usual' is the type of transport used most often – for example, the one used for the greatest number of days each week, month, or year. If there are two (or more) forms of transport used equally as often, the most recent form of transport is recorded.

'Main' is the type of transport used for the component of the journey that covers the longest distance.

Number of motor vehicles

This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

This is the number of motor vehicles available for private use by the usual residents of a private dwelling (that is, a household). These vehicles must be mechanically operational, but not necessarily licensed or with a current warrant of fitness.

Motor vehicles include:

- business vehicles available for private use by people in the dwelling
- cars, four-wheel drive vehicles, station wagons, trucks, vans, and other vehicles used on public roads
- hired or long-term leased vehicles
- vehicles temporarily under repair.

They do not include:

- farm vehicles not licensed for road use
- motorbikes or scooters
- vehicles used only for business
- vehicles that belong to visitors
- vehicles occasionally borrowed from another household.

Census data on number of motor vehicles is used by local government and transport planners to plan transport services. It assists in the location of public transport services, commercial facilities, and welfare facilities, and is also used to study energy conservation.

While there will be no changes to the number of motor vehicles topic for the 2023 Census, there will be a change to the question we use to collect this information to make it clearer that scooters should not be included.

Health


Activity limitations/disability

 This topic will be included in 2023 with change.

The information collected on activity limitations (using the Washington Group Short Set (WGSS)) is not changing, but we will also collect additional information to capture disabled people who may be missed by the WGSS. The additional information is required for – and will only be used for – selecting the sample for the 2023 New Zealand Disability Survey. Similar information was collected in 2013 but not in 2018 because we did not have a post-censal disability survey in 2018.

The additional question is a self-reported indicator of whether a disability, long-term condition, or mental health condition limits a person’s ability to carry out activities of daily living. Activities of daily living can include any daily activity we perform for self-care such as feeding ourselves, bathing, dressing, grooming, or activities for work, household chores, and leisure. Long-term describes conditions that have lasted at least six months or are expected to last at least six months.

Cigarette smoking behaviour

 This topic will be included in 2023 with no change.

Cigarette smoking refers to the active smoking of one or more manufactured or hand-rolled tobacco cigarettes, from purchased or homegrown tobacco, per day, by a person aged 15 years and over.

The term ‘active smoking’ refers to the intentional inhalation of tobacco smoke and does not refer to or include passive smoking (the unintentional inhalation of tobacco smoke).

Cigarette smoking does not include:

- the smoking of tobacco in cigars, pipes, and cigarillos
- the smoking of e-cigarettes
- the smoking of any other substances such as herbal cigarettes or marijuana
- the consumption of tobacco products by other means, such as chewing.

Data on cigarette smoking behaviour is used by those working in the health sector. Information on current and ex-smokers is used to monitor changes in smoking prevalence among New Zealanders. This information enables health professionals to understand more about smokers, to better target at-risk groups in the community with future health education programmes, and to assess the success of ongoing health education programmes.

Smoking data from the census is also used as a general health indicator. It is increasingly being used as a flag for population groups that are disproportionately represented in negative wellbeing and deprivation indicators.

Topics considered but not collected in the 2023 Census

The [2023 Census content: Summary of feedback from engagement](#) highlighted some interest in information that won't be collected in the 2023 Census.

Volunteering

Feedback on the 2023 Census supported collecting more detailed information on unpaid activities, particularly volunteering. As part of the 2018 Census content-development process, we tested collecting more detailed information on volunteering. This was not considered suitable for collection in the 2018 Census due to the complexity of the concept for respondents, as discussed on page 26 of the [2018 Census report on final content](#).

We will not be collecting more detailed information on volunteering in the 2023 Census. Stats NZ collects specific information on volunteering elsewhere, most recently in the 2020 General Social Survey. We will continue to consider data needs on volunteering and how these are best met across Stats NZ's data collections.

Age of dwelling and floor area

We asked for feedback on using admin data to add age of dwelling and floor area to the 2023 Census dataset, subject to further assessment of feasibility. These would potentially provide further depth to the range of census information on housing. Submissions were mostly in support of this, but concerns were raised over the quality of admin sources and their suitability for inclusion alongside census response data. We would also not be able to evaluate the data quality of these variables in the same way as for other census variables.

Although we recognise that there would be some value in including this information, based on the feedback received, we will not be incorporating these variables into the 2023 Census dataset. We will continue to consider this for future censuses, and to consider alternative approaches to best meeting customer needs for using census information together with other data sources.

Multiple and new modes of travel

There was some feedback for 2023 in support of collecting more detailed information on travel, including multiple modes, new modes, and travel to places other than work or education.

The transport topic and its questions were reworked for the 2018 Census. Feedback on this topic was received during the 2018 Census content consultation and summarised on page 35 of the [2018 Census report on final content](#). As discussed in that report, while the transport information collected in the census does not cover all aspects of travel, collecting more detailed types of information would require additional, more complex questions and is

more suitable for a specialist survey than the census. We will not be collecting more detailed information on transport in the 2023 Census.

Use of electronic cigarettes

We received feedback in support of collecting information about electronic cigarette use. As mentioned, based on the limited scope for content change for the 2023 Census, information about electronic cigarette use (vaping) will not be collected in the 2023 Census.

Appendix

Table 2 lists the priority levels for the topics that will be included in the 2023 Census. Priority levels are used to help determine things such as placement of questions on census forms, whether a question is made mandatory on the online form, processing rules, data quality targets, the amount of resource put into checking data quality, and field collection processes.

Priority one topics are those that make up the core reason for conducting a census and have the highest output quality need. Priority two topics are often used together with priority one topics and are of high public and policy interest. Priority three topics are those that we would not run a census solely for but are important to some groups or are data that is useful to select the sample for other surveys. All output data, no matter which priority level it is assigned, must reach minimum quality standards of being fit for purpose and meeting information needs.

The priority level for some topics has changed since the 2018 Census. These changes are indicated in table 2. Priority levels for these topics changed for various reasons reflecting changes to census methodology used to calculate population counts, a need to ensure consistency of priority levels for related variables, the importance of topics like iwi affiliation, and recommendations from the External Data Quality Panel.

Table 2: Topic priority levels for the 2023 Census

Topic	Priority level
Population structure	
Absentees	2 (was 1 in 2018)
Age	1
Gender	1
Legally registered relationship status	2
Name	Not applicable
Number of children born	3
Number of census night occupants	2 (was 1 in 2018)
Partnership status in current relationship	2
Phone number	3
Sex	1
Variations of sex characteristics	3
Location	
Census night address	1
Dwelling address	1
Usual residence address	1

Topic	Priority level
Usual residence one year ago	2
Usual residence five years ago	2
Years at usual residence	2 (was 3 in 2018)
Ethnicity, culture, and identity	
Birthplace	2
Ethnicity	1
Iwi affiliation	1 (was 2 in 2018)
Languages spoken	2 (was 3 in 2018)
Māori descent	1
Religious affiliation	3
Sexual identity	3
Years since arrival in New Zealand	3
Education and training	
Highest secondary school qualification	2
Highest qualification	2
Post-school qualification field of study	2
Post-school qualification level of attainment	2
Post-school qualification New Zealand/overseas indicator	2
Study participation	2
Income	
Sources of personal income	2
Total income	2
Work	
Hours worked in employment per week	2
Industry	3
Occupation	2 (was 3 in 2018)
Sector of ownership	3
Status in employment	2
Unpaid activities	3
Work and labour force status	2
Families and households	

Topic	Priority level
Extended family type	2
Family type	2
Household composition	2
Child dependency status	2
Housing	
Access to telecommunication systems	3
Dwelling occupancy status	1
Dwelling type	2
Access to basic amenities	3
Dwelling dampness	3
Dwelling mould	3
Individual home ownership	3
Main types of heating and fuel types used to heat dwellings	3
Number of rooms and number of bedrooms	3
Sector of landlord	2
Tenure of household	2
Weekly rent paid by household	2
Transport	
Educational institution address	2
Main means of travel to education	2
Main means of travel to work	2
Number of motor vehicles	3
Workplace address	2
Health	
Activity limitations/disability	3
Cigarette smoking behaviour	3