

Questions and answers

All public sector employees are being asked to take part in the 2023 WA Public Sector Census.

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General questions

What is a census?

A census collects information from everyone in a population of interest. It is different to a sample survey which collects information from a sample of people.

Why a census?

The Public Sector Commission collects information about the public sector workforce in a number of ways, including from payroll and HR systems, for compliance and reporting purposes. The nature of this data means using it to make better decisions or provide insights for better workforce management is limited.

A workforce census provides more accurate, relevant and timely insights by asking employees questions about their experiences and behaviours in the workforce. It helps us all understand the size, shape, composition, integrity, diversity, capability, leadership and culture of the sector so we can evaluate existing policies and frameworks and inform new ones, and continue to improve and be the best we can to serve the people of Western Australia now and into the future.

When is the 2023 Census taking place?

The 2023 Census is being conducted over 3 weeks from 13 March to 2 April 2023 inclusive.

Which agencies are participating?

All [116 agencies](#) with employees in the WA public sector are included.

Who is the census for?

All 166,000 public sector employees are invited to participate including permanent, fixed term, sessional and casual employees and trainees. This also includes sworn police officers, teachers and firefighters.

Is it compulsory?

Everyone in the public sector is encouraged to complete the census but it is not compulsory. The more employees who complete it the better information agencies will have to develop informed workforce plans that create a stronger, more capable workforce.

How do I take part?

Every WA public sector employee is being provided with a link to the Census. There are also posters in your workplace with a QR code to access the census via a mobile device.

What kinds of questions are asked?

The questions cover a range of topics including demographics, job type and tenure, diversity and inclusion, education, working conditions and workplace experiences.

Why are postcodes needed?

Knowing the general area where employees live and work helps to inform policies and decisions about our workplaces and the way we work.

Why are there questions about diverse sexualities, gender and sexual characteristics?

The sector is working to improve diversity in the workforce and build welcoming and inclusive workplaces for all employees. Information about the representation of employees of diverse sexualities and genders informs inclusion strategies.

Doesn't my agency already have information?

The census asks questions that go beyond what is collected by your agency.

How long does it take to complete?

It takes 8 minutes on average to complete.

Do I have to complete all the questions?

All questions require a response. Some questions allow you to answer with 'Prefer not to say'.

Can I complete it more than once?

No. To ensure the information collected is accurate and useful, please only complete the census once.

Is this confidential?

We are committed to [protecting your privacy](#). The information you provide is private and confidential and is not shared in a way that identifies individual responses. Names and email addresses are not captured in your response.

How is the information used?

The information will be used by agencies to make better decisions about their workforce and how to support staff, now and into the future. Further information about how data will be managed and used is in the [Privacy Statement](#).

Who has access to the data?

Access to the data is restricted to essential staff in the Public Sector Commission, with governance rules and controls on confidentiality to reduce the risk of identifying individuals. Examples of these controls include capturing data in ranges and allowing you to answer 'Prefer not to say' in response to some questions. Further information on how data is being managed and used is in the [Privacy Statement](#).

Who do I contact if I need help?

For help, follow the instructions provided by your agency. Each agency has a Census Champion who may also be able to assist.

Can my manager see my responses?

No. The information you provide in the census is private and confidential and is not shared in a way that identifies individual responses.

Do you have a glossary for terms?

Yes. See the [2023 WA Public Sector Census glossary](#).

Can I access it on my mobile?

Yes. The platform is compatible with mobile devices including smartphones and tablets.

Which browser should I use to access it?

You should use the latest version of any of the following browsers Chrome, Edge, Safari and Mozilla Firefox to access it.

Troubleshooting

What if I can't find my agency in the list of options?

Your agency may be grouped under an Agency Group. If you can't find your agency in the list, refer to the [Agencies in the 2023 WA Public Sector Census](#) list to select the right option.

If I receive multiple invitations, which one do I use?

If you work in more than one agency, select the agency where you are currently working or work the most. If you are employed in more than one position in your agency, answer for the job you consider to be your main job. You should only complete the census once.

I only know my hourly rate of pay. What do I do?

For all employees other than casuals, both full time equivalent annual salary and hourly equivalent are listed. Select the band that correctly represents your hourly rate of pay. For casual employees, hourly rates are listed.

I can't find my country of birth in the list. What do I do?

The list of countries is based on the current list of countries in the world. If you were born in a country which is not listed, select the most appropriate country that reflects your birthplace. Alternatively, you can select the last option 'Born in a country not listed'.

How do I save my responses?

Your responses are automatically saved each time you press the 'Next' button.

I started the census but accidentally closed it. What do I do?

Re-access the census using the same browser and device you originally used. You are returned to the last place where your responses were saved. Note this may not apply if using private or incognito mode to access the census.

If I stop part way through can I come back to it later?

Yes. When you re-access the census, make sure to use the same browser and device you originally used. Note this may not apply if using private or incognito mode to access the census.

When I click on the link, my agency blocks access to the census. What do I do?

For help, follow the instructions provided by your agency. Each agency has a Census Champion who may also be able to assist.

I have been sent a link and I have seen the QR code. Which one do I use?

Choose the option you prefer – both take you to the census. The QR code is great if you prefer to use a smartphone or do not have access to a desktop computer or work email address.

How do I use the QR code?

Most smartphones use the camera app to read QR codes. When you open the camera and position the QR code in the view finder, your mobile device should automatically read the code and take you to the questionnaire. If this does not work, you may need to install an app on your mobile device that reads QR codes. Alternatively, type in the link provided by your agency on your device's web browser.

What if I deleted the email with the link to the census?

For help, follow the instructions provided by your agency. Each agency has a Census Champion who may also be able to assist.

If I change my mind about an answer, can I go back?

Yes. Use the 'Back' navigation button to move back and change your response.

What if I submitted my answers but want to make a change?

Once you complete the census it can't be unlocked and accessed again.

Is my email address recorded?

Your email address is not collected.

Can I see the results?

Public results are available on WA.gov.au from November 2023.

How are the results shared with agencies?

Your agency gets a summary of the results to help it have a deeper understanding of where it is now and to plan for the future.

How do agencies share the results with their employees?

Chat to your Census Champion about this.