Overview of data available from the 2023 Census

Census | Stats NZ

This is a brief guide to the data available from the 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings.

Overview of data available from the 2023 Census

This is a brief guide to the data available from the 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings.

The 2023 Census data user guide provides more detailed information.

The New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings is the official count of how many people and dwellings are in Aotearoa New Zealand. It provides a snapshot of our society at a point in time. The census helps to tell the story of our social and economic change over time.

Census information is used by government agencies, local authorities, businesses, iwi, Māori organisations, community organisations, and the public for developing and implementing new policies, research, planning, and decision-making. The information helps with deciding how to best use public funding, especially for health, education, housing, and transport.

Types of census data available

Census data includes information about:

- individuals
- families
- extended families
- households
- dwellings.

For individuals, data is available for the 'census usually resident population' and the 'census night population'.

Most data on individuals is for the usually resident population. The census usually resident population count includes all people who usually live in New Zealand and were in New Zealand on census night. People who were in New Zealand but away from home on census night are counted where they usually live.

The census night population is used less frequently. This is a count of all people in New Zealand on census night, including people who usually live in New Zealand and visitors from overseas. People who were in New Zealand but away from home on census night are counted where they were visiting on census night.

Population statistics – user guide has more information on the census usually resident and census night population counts. It also explains what population estimates and projections are, which are different from census counts.

Census topics, concepts, and variables available

Census data covers several broad topics, each of which contains at least one concept. These are shown in the table on the following page.

Each concept includes one or more variables for which data is available. For example, housing quality includes variables for access to basic amenities, dwelling dampness, and dwelling mould.

Occasionally, data for a variable may have some restrictions on its use due to data quality issues.

Stats NZ DataInfo+ has more information on the concepts and variables available from the 2023 Census. Variables can be found via the explore function of DataInfo+, by drilling down through the topics and concepts under 2023 Census.

Data quality ratings for 2023 Census variables shows the data quality rating for each census variable.

2023 Census of Population and Dwellings – Information by concepts provides more detailed information about the 2023 Census concepts and variables, including information on data quality, restrictions on use, and recommendations for use.

Topics and concepts available from the 2023 Census

Topic	Concept
Activity limitations	Activity limitations Disability indicator
Education and training	Qualifications Study participation
Ethnicity, culture, and identity	Birthplace Ethnicity Iwi affiliation Languages spoken Māori descent Rainbow/LGBTIQ+ indicator Religious affiliation Sexual identity Years since arrival in New Zealand
Families and households	Child dependency status Couples Extended families Families Households Individual's role in family nucleus
Health	Cigarette smoking behaviour
Housing	Access to telecommunication systems Dwelling occupancy status Dwelling type Heating Housing quality Individual home ownership Number of rooms Sector of landlord Tenure of household Weekly rent paid by household

Topic	Concept
Income	Sources of income Total income
Location	Census night address Dwelling address Usual residence address Usual residence five years ago Usual residence one year ago Years at usual residence
Population structure	Absentees Age Cisgender and transgender status Gender Number of children born Relationship status Sex at birth Variations of sex characteristics
Transport	Educational institution address Main means of travel to education Main means of travel to work Number of motor vehicles Workplace address
Work	Hours worked in employment per week Industry Job search methods Occupation Sector of ownership Status in employment Unpaid activities Work and labour force status

Census years available

Many 2023 Census data tables also include 2013 and 2018 Census data for comparison. However, some variables are not available for all three of these censuses. This can be because the information was not collected in previous censuses or due to historical data quality issues.

For 2023 Census products, all data, including data from the 2018 and 2013 Censuses, uses the same 2023 geographic boundaries. This is done so that the data is comparable over time.

Data for earlier censuses is also available but uses older geographic boundaries that may have changed in the interim and therefore may not be comparable with 2023 Census data.

Sometimes data for a category of a variable may not be available for a particular census. This can be due to changes in the type of information collected or how the data has been classified (grouped into a category for output).

2023 Census of Population and Dwellings – Information by concepts includes information on how to compare data over time.

Geographic levels for census data

Census data is available at different geographic levels, ranging from national level and broad areas to much smaller areas. The geographic levels included in published products are:

· New Zealand

· island indicator (first release tables only)

· regional council

· territorial authority (city or district council)/Auckland local board

· health region and health district – new for 2023 Census (replaces district health board)

· urban/rural area

· ward

· statistical area 3 (SA3) – new for 2023 Census

· statistical area 2 (SA2)

· statistical area 1 (SA1).

General electorates and Māori electorates are not standard published geographies for 2023 Census outputs.

Occasionally, a variable may not be available at some geographic levels due to data quality issues.

Stats NZ Geographic boundary viewer shows geographic levels and how these relate to each other on a map of New Zealand.
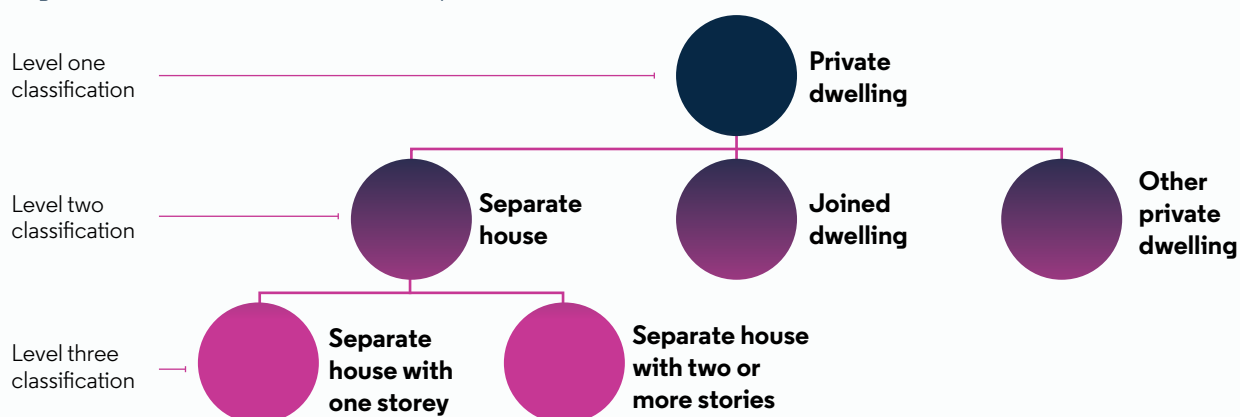
Geographic hierarchy and Statistical standard for geographic areas 2023 contain more information on geographic areas, their definitions, and classifications.

Classification levels for census data

Classifications allow us to group and organise responses to census questions meaningfully and systematically, usually in exhaustive and structured sets of categories.

Some census variables have multi-level classifications with broad categories at the top level that split into increasingly detailed categories at lower levels. For example, 'Private dwelling' at level one of the dwelling type classification splits into 'Separate house', 'Joined dwelling', and 'Other private dwelling' at level two. At level three, 'Separate house' splits into 'Separate house with one storey' and 'Separate house with two or more storeys'.

Figure 1: Multi-level classification example

Level one classification — Private dwelling

Level two classification — Separate house / Joined dwelling / Other private dwelling

Level three classification — Separate house with one storey / Separate house with two or more stories

Data for variables with multi-level classifications is usually available at different levels of these classifications. The level used in published tables may vary for different census products.

In some census products, such as those that use Aotearoa Data Explorer, you can choose the classification level(s) you would like. Some data may have restrictions or recommendations for use that relate to a particular level.

Other census variables have classifications with only one level, but the data can be grouped in various ways depending on the amount of detail required. For example, age has single-year categories that can be grouped into 5- or 10-year age groups to provide more summarised information.

2023 Census of Population and Dwellings – Information by concepts includes information on classifications and the ways in which data can be grouped.

Multiple response questions in the census

For some census questions, respondents could provide more than one response.

For example, a person may belong to more than one ethnic group or speak multiple languages.

When this occurs, people (or dwellings) are counted in each category that applies to them. This means that individual categories sum to more than the total and percentages add to over 100 percent.

Questions where respondents could provide more than one response are labelled as 'total response' in census products.

Confidentiality and rounding of census data

Census data is rounded to prevent identification of any person, family, household, or dwelling. Some cells of data are not shown if the numbers are too small. These are marked as 'confidential'.

Applying confidentiality rules to 2023 Census data and summary of changes since 2018 and 2013 Censuses provides more information on rounding and confidentiality.

Calculation of percentages in census releases

Percentages in all census data are calculated using 'Total stated' as the denominator. This means that data in categories such as 'Not elsewhere included', 'Not stated', 'Response unidentifiable', and 'Response outside scope' is excluded when calculating percentages.

Where to find more information on census data

The 2023 Census data user guide includes more detailed information on the data available from the 2023 Census of Population and Dwellings.

2023 Census products and services has a list of the census products and services available.

2023 Census product and release finder is an Excel-based tool that provides easy-to-find data, statistical products, publications, and planned release dates in one place for the 2023 Census. You can use the tool to help identify what data to request from our Information centre.

2023 Census release schedule has the most up-to-date information on the release of 2023 Census data.

Te Whata is an iwi-designed and operated data platform. Its purpose is to make iwi data more accessible and useful, so insights from the platform can be used by iwi to make evidence-based decisions and engage with other decision-makers, including government.

Te Ara Takatū: Census data for iwi and iwi-related groups is a free service that provides census data to iwi, including data that is customised to meet specific needs. We can work with you to shape your questions and understand whether census data can answer them.

Use our Customised data services if you want more detailed data than what is available online.

Contact the Information centre for more information.

Access further face-to-face and online support and training from our customer and community engagement teams to understand how to use census data.