



Census

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[Home](#) > [Media centre](#) > [Media releases](#) > Media Release 6342372ee6342

12 insights about work and study from the 2021 Census

Media Release

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Source: [Income and work: Census, 2021](#)
[Education and training: Census, 2021](#)

The 2021 Census data released today provides a fascinating snapshot of employment and education in Australia. Trends and emerging fields of work and study can be seen in the Census data.

Here's a quick snapshot of 12 insights revealed by 2021 Census data:

- 1. Four big industries make up 40 per cent of the workforce.** Health Care, Retail, Construction and Education employ the most people in Australia, accounting for over 40 per cent of the workforce.
- 2. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing have the oldest workforce.** Almost 30 per cent of people working in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing are aged 60 years and over, compared to 11 per cent across all industries.
- 3. Young people are serving it up.** Fast Food Cooks had a median age of 18 years old, followed by Café Workers at 21 years. The observation that young people work in hospitality is confirmed in the Census data: the Accommodation and Food industry has the youngest workforce, with 45 per cent aged under 25 years.
- 4. No changes in top occupations.** Sales Assistants, Registered Nurses and General Clerks were the top three occupations in Australia, as they were in 2011 and 2016.

5. **Female teachers are head of the class.** The majority of Early Childhood Teachers (98 per cent), Primary School Teachers (85 per cent) and Secondary School Teachers (62 per cent) are female.
6. **Construction slowly builds diversity.** Female representation is increasing gradually in the Construction industry, with females accounting for 10 per cent of the 109,000 Construction Managers in 2021 (up from 7 per cent in 2016). The number of females with qualifications in Building Construction Management has doubled since 2016, to almost 2,000. However, only 1 per cent of Plumbers, Concreters, Roof Tilers, Bricklayers and Carpenters are female.
7. **New technology, new jobs.** Software and Application Programmer now appears in the top 20 occupations in Australia, and Security Science is the fastest growing field of study. Advances in technology are also reflected in declining occupations. There are 41,000 Keyboard Operators in 2021, compared to 170,000 Stenographers and Typists 50 years ago.
8. **More than half of Australians now have a qualification.** Over 11 million people in Australia have a vocational or tertiary qualification, more than half of the population aged 15 years and over and a 20 per cent increase since 2016. We are also up-skilling further, with 1.1 million people studying after having already obtained a non-school qualification.
9. **Migration translating to work and study increases.** Qualifications in Southern Asian Languages more than doubled since 2016 becoming the third fastest growing field of study. The growth in this area of study is in line with Punjabi emerging as one of the top five languages used at home and the continued growth in Indian and Nepalese communities throughout Australia. In 2021, there were 5,600 Translators and Interpreters in Australia.
10. **Overseas born Australians are more qualified.** People born overseas were more likely to have a non-school qualification (63 per cent) than those born in Australia (56 per cent). 4 in 5 Australians who were born in India (82 per cent) and Bangladesh (82 per cent) held a non-school qualification.
11. **Students get down to business.** The most common fields of study in Australia are Business, Teaching, Nursing and Building. In 2016, Business was also the most common field of study.
12. **What do volunteers do when they're not volunteering?** In the 2021 Census, the professions most likely to volunteer were Ministers of Religion, Legislators, and Mixed Crop and Livestock Farmers, also the top three in 2016.

We love our data at the ABS! Here are four more quirky findings about work that didn't make our top 12 but we didn't want to leave out -

- **New industries, be...Gin (and other spirits)** - Employment in the Spirit Manufacturing industry increased by 240 per cent and in Beer Manufacturing by 50 per cent.
- **New business of home tours?** - 17 per cent of Tour Guides worked from home in the week before the 2021 Census.
- **Want to hire a DVD on Friday night?** - There are 160 people employed in Video and Other Media Rental Hiring Services in Australia.
- **Making the count** - There are 3,500 Statisticians in Australia and 400 work in Belconnen ACT... the humble Canberra home of the ABS.

Media notes

- When reporting ABS data you must attribute the Australian Bureau of Statistics (or the ABS) as the source.
- For media requests and interviews, contact the ABS Media Team via media@abs.gov.au (<mailto:media@abs.gov.au>) (8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri).
- Search for 2021 Census data through the [QuickStats tool](https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area>).

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