

**Parliament of New South Wales Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters  
PROPOSALS TO INCREASE VOTER ENGAGEMENT,  
PARTICIPATION AND CONFIDENCE**

**RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON NOTICE  
Australian Electoral Commission**

Subject: Elector data  
Question date: 27 September 2024  
Question type: Hearing Proof Hansard, page 31  
Response date: 10 October 2024

**Question**

**Mr STEPHEN BALI:** Do you see value, if someone's enrolling now, in at least starting to ask the question whether they're from a non-English-speaking background or whether they're Indigenous? You need facts and data to change the system for us to understand what the take-up of votes is. Is it difficult or what would it take to actually ask a couple of extra questions that used to be there?

**TOM ROGERS:** Can you let me take that one on notice?

**Mr STEPHEN BALI:** Yes.

**TOM ROGERS:** There's a legislative aspect there as well, and a privacy aspect, that I need to think my way through, but I understand the intent. Let me take that one on notice and I might come back to you on that.

**Response**

The Australian Census, conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics every five years, is the most comprehensive snapshot of the country. The Census collects information from people including age, country of birth, ancestry, and language used at home. Census data helps inform and improve AEC services by identifying Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

It is not the role of the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) to collect data on the social and cultural make-up of Australia, and as such, the electoral roll does not contain identifiers such as Indigeneity or language spoken.

The AEC uses Census data and other trusted administrative datasets extensively. Redesigning enrolment processes to capture more detailed elector demographics would necessitate legislative change and is a matter for Parliament.

The AEC is committed to electoral engagement with Cultural and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) and Indigenous voters, as shown through the AEC's investment in initiatives such as:

- Indigenous community outreach
- in-language advertising and electoral information materials
- pre-election community engagement in some high-CALD areas
- recruitment of polling-place staff with local CALD communities in mind

- remote area mobile polling for Indigenous communities
- extensive availability of postal voting, which assists remote voters
- multilingual telephone support at polling time.

Evidence of the AEC's work can be seen with the significant increases in the estimated Indigenous enrolment rate in recent years, growing from 74.7% in 2017 to a high of 94.1% ahead of the 2023 referendum, and through the high rate of formality: 99.02% at the 2023 referendum, and 94.81% for the House of Representatives and 96.58% for the Senate at the 2022 federal election.