

**Speech by the Taoiseach, Enda Kenny TD**  
**at the launch of the 2016 Census of Population**  
**in Government Buildings**  
**on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2016 at 12.00**

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you here today to the official launch of Census 2016.

In just over four weeks' time, on the evening of Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> April, every household in Ireland is being asked to sit down and fill out their twenty six census form. This is an important day, not only because it is census night, but also because it will be exactly 100 years to the day that the Easter Rising began, an event that resulted in the formation of modern Ireland. By participating in the census on the 24<sup>th</sup> April, each and every one of us is being invited to record important information about our lives, information which is not only essential in helping us –to understand Ireland today, but which will also be stored for posterity and studied by the historians of the future.

This is a very important time for Ireland, a time when we are faced with making important decisions about the direction we want our country to go, and what plans we will make for the future.

But no decision should ever be made in a vacuum so it is essential that we have the most accurate and up-to-date information in advance of making any decisions. And this information is needed not only to describe the national picture but to help us understand all our lives; this includes those living in apartment blocks in our cities as well as those living in

small towns and villages in rural Ireland. It is only the census that can provide us with this level of detail, as it is only the census that collects information from every household in the state. So it is essential that everyone is included on a census form, as only then can we really understand Ireland - what is working well and what improvements need to be made.

Certainly the information the census provides is indispensable for Government. No new infrastructure project in Ireland today will get past the planning stage without reference to census data, be that a new bus route, a new childcare center or a new primary school. Census provides us with invaluable information on the changing nature of our ethnic make-up, on our religious beliefs, on the number of carers and information on the disabled. It tells us what languages are spoken in Irish homes, how we travel to work or school, and the extent of broadband penetration in rural communities.

But the results of the census are used not only by government. One of the greatest benefits of the census is that the results are available for everyone to use, from small start-up businesses to multi-nationals, local authorities to transport providers, media, students, commentators, local communities and so on. The list goes on because the census is a resource which is available to all and which we can all use.

As you can imagine the census is a major undertaking for the Central Statistics Office. The CSO employ a large body of staff to conduct the census and all staff are signed up as officers of statistics. All the information you provide to the CSO is treated as strictly confidential and is only ever used for statistical purposes. No identifiable information is ever shared with any other body or agency, this is guaranteed by law, and I know the CSO takes its legal responsibility to protect your data very seriously. They have an unblemished record in this regard.

So everyone who participates in the census can have full faith in the confidentiality of their data and it is very important that every household in the country takes part on the 24<sup>th</sup> April. The census enumerators will be happy to assist people with any questions they may have, or indeed if anyone needs assistance in completing their form the enumerators are there to help them, or show them where they can get help on the census.ie web site.

Between now and census night, enumerators will call to every home in Ireland to deliver the 2016 census forms. Some 2 million forms will be handed over in person to householders. This is no small task and I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute in advance to the dedication and professionalism of all those involved who I know will be working very hard over the next ten weeks to make sure that the 2016 census is a success.

The motto for the 2016 census is **Make Your Mark** and the CSO is today asking everyone in Ireland to make their mark by completing their census form and participating in this important national undertaking.

Thank you very much for your attention!