



**Joint Statement from the National LGBTI Health Alliance and Intersex Human Rights Australia: Federal Government must ensure LGBTI people are counted in the 2021 Census**

**Thursday 10 October 2019**

The National LGBTI Health Alliance (the Alliance) is the national peak health organisation in Australia for organisations and individuals that provide health-related programs, services and research focused on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex people (LGBTI) people. Intersex Human Rights Australia (IHRA) is a national intersex-led organisation that promotes the human rights and health of people born with intersex variations.

The Alliance and IHRA have been working closely with the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) since early 2018 to support and advise on how to meaningfully and appropriately include questions on sexual orientation, gender identity and sex characteristics in the 2021 Census.

Following an unexpected media report on Saturday claiming that sexual orientation and gender identity questions had been removed from the upcoming Census, and making unclear claims about non-binary sex, the Alliance and IHRA met with the ABS to gain clarification. A statement correcting the article from the ABS can be found [here](#).

“While we have been advised the decision as to which new questions will be included in the Census will ultimately be made by government and are still under consideration, we are not confident that these questions will be asked in the 2021 Census, given that they won’t be tested on 40,000 households in Wagga Wagga later this month. This is very disappointing,” Nicky Bath, Executive Director, the Alliance said.

She continued, “The 2021 Census provides us with an amazing opportunity to better understand our communities. If we continue to be ignored in the Census, it means that we will remain absent from a whole range of much needed health and wellbeing data systems. Both the UK and New Zealand are moving forward with these inclusions and we need them here. Researchers, health and social services, policy makers and governments need and want this data as soon as possible and certainly not in 2026 or beyond. This data is essential if we are to make informed decisions on policy and service planning issues that address the health and wellbeing needs of LGBTI people.”

Morgan Carpenter, IHRA Co-Executive Director, said: “Intersex people are born with sex characteristics that don’t fit medical norms for female or male bodies. Intersex people are a diverse population, including people who are female or male and identify with their sex assigned at birth, and infants and children too young to freely express any identity. This population is commonly confused with a non-binary population - people who identify or are legally recognised

as neither female nor male. Like all demographics, these populations overlap, but they have different characteristics, including distinct health, justice, and socio-economic concerns.”

“It is not ok to confront intersex women and intersex men with Census options that misrepresent their legal and social statuses. The diversity of intersex people must be respected. Best practice is to ask a question on intersex status separately to a question on sex or gender identity,” Morgan Carpenter concluded.

The aim of the Census is to accurately collect data on key demographics of the Australian population. In order to achieve this core objective, the Census must count us appropriately and meaningfully in 2021.

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