

For immediate issue

**“All of us count, and all of us should be counted”:** Support for Calls for Inclusion of Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics, and Sexual Orientation in the 2026 Census

SHINE SA supports the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) proposal to include three essential topics—gender, innate variations of sex characteristics, and sexual orientation—in the 2026 Census. We encourage the Commonwealth Government to prioritise the health and wellbeing of all Australians by embracing this important step towards comprehensive and inclusive data collection.

The ABS's 2020 Standard for Sex, Gender, Variation of Sex Characteristics, and Sexual Orientation Variables was developed to ensure that data relating to these areas is collected and shared in a standardised way. These questions are straightforward and have already been successfully implemented in various national studies, as well as in other jurisdictions such as the United Kingdom, Canada, Scotland and New Zealand.

As a sexual and reproductive health service, we rely on data that captures these areas to provide meaningful and effective services.

SHINE SA's CEO, Holley Skene said, “At SHINE SA, we see firsthand the impact that inclusive and comprehensive data can have on health outcomes. This isn't just about numbers—it's about improving lives and ensuring that no one is left behind.”

The lack of relevant Census data on LGBTIQ+ populations create significant gaps in health policy, programs, and services, creating inefficiencies and rendering some members of our communities invisible. The inclusion of these topics in the 2026 Census will help enable accurate targeting of health and social services, informed by reliable data. Without this data, policymakers, researchers, and health practitioners are left without the necessary tools to address the needs of these communities effectively.

We join the call for the Australian Government to support the inclusion of all three topic areas in the 2026 Census. Each of these topics represents a distinct and necessary dimension of identity that cannot be captured through questions on gender or sexual orientation alone.

By ensuring that our Census reflects the diversity and complexity of our society we support better outcomes for everyone.

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**About SHINE SA**

SHINE SA is a leading provider of comprehensive and integrated sexual and reproductive health services and programs. SHINE SA is a non-profit organisation with a vision for sexual and relationship wellbeing for all.