



MINUTES

LGBTIQ+ Expert Advisory Committee (EAC) for the 2026 Census

When	1:30pm to 4:00pm (AEST), 28 September 2023	
Chair	Bindi Kindermann, General Manager, People and Place Division, Australian Bureau of Statistics	
Attendees	<p>Duncan Young</p> <p>S47F</p>	<p>General Manager, Census and Population Division, ABS</p> <p>S47F, East Metropolitan Health Service, WA</p> <p>S47F, Switchboard Victoria</p> <p>S47F, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society, La Trobe University</p> <p>S47F, Diversity Council Australia</p> <p>S47F, Equality Australia</p> <p>S47F, Intersex Human Rights Australia</p> <p>S47F, School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Melbourne</p> <p>S47F, Community Health, Aids Council of NSW</p> <p>ACT Government Office for LGBTIQ+ Affairs</p> <p>S47F, The Kirby Institute, UNSW</p> <p>S47F, Public Interest Advocacy Centre</p> <p>S47F, SMART Recovery Australia</p> <p>S47F, Australian Human Rights Commission</p> <p>Metadata, Information Management & Classifications Unit, AIHW</p> <p>School of Sociology, Australian National University</p> <p>S47F, Health Equity Branch, DoHAC</p> <p>S47F, Attorney General's Department</p> <p>S47F, BlaQ Aboriginal Corporation</p> <p>S47F, Australian GLBTIQ Multicultural Council</p> <p>S47F, Policy, Strategy and Research, Aids Council of NSW</p> <p>S47F, Equality Australia</p> <p>S47F, LGBTIQ+ Health Australia</p>
Apologies	S47F	<p>S47F, LGBTIQ+ Health Australia</p> <p>S47F, Health Equity Branch, DoHAC</p> <p>S47F, Equality Australia</p> <p>Black Lorikeet Cultural Brokering</p> <p>Royal Australian College of General Practitioners</p> <p>S47F, ACT Government Office for LGBTIQ+ Affairs</p> <p>S47F, The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne</p>
ABS Presenters and observers	S47F	<p>Director, Census Content Development</p> <p>Director, Respondent and Collection Methodology</p> <p>Census Content Development</p> <p>Director, Social Characteristics Section</p> <p>Census Content Development</p> <p>Census Content Development</p>
Minutes	Social Characteristics Section, ABS	



<p>Summary of Action Items</p>	<p>Action 1: ABS to review Committee membership based on feedback from members.</p> <p>Action 2: ABS to update the Terms of Reference with EAC feedback for consideration and endorsement at the next meeting.</p> <p>Action 3: ABS to consider youth sub-group to help inform on LGBTIQ+ youth issues.</p> <p>Action 4: ABS to seek nominations from the EAC to contribute to a collaborative paper to recognise the longstanding contribution of LGBTIQ+ organisations working with the ABS.</p> <p>Action 5: ABS to provide EAC members with an update of cognitive testing findings to review and provide feedback on, in an out-of-session update in late October.</p> <p>Action 6: ABS to circulate presentation slides from the meeting to EAC members and invite them to nominate for sub-groups.</p>
<p>Agenda Item #1</p>	<p>Welcome and introductions</p> <p>The Chair welcomed members, provided an Acknowledgement of Country and recognised the ongoing relationship with LGBTIQ+ experts across the work program of the ABS.</p> <p>The Chair highlighted the ABS’ commitment to work collaboratively with the EAC, and acknowledged the 2021 Census experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ABS understands the absence of questions on gender identity, variations of sex characteristics and sexual orientation in the 2021 Census meant some people felt invisible and excluded when completing the Census and in the results that were released. • The ABS is also aware the framing of some 2021 Census questions and certain language used in those questions, and across the history of Australian Censuses, was also seen or experienced by some as hurtful, confusing, demeaning and discriminatory. • The Chair assured members that the ABS recognises the importance of these issues and regrets any distress experienced by members of the LGBTIQ+ community when responding to the 2021 Census and earlier Censuses. • The ABS is committed to processes and approaches for the 2026 Census to minimise the risk of harm. This includes the steps already taken and the important role of the Expert Advisory Committee in providing guidance and input into the Census topic review and framing of Census questions, and the way that Census data is collected, processed and disseminated. <p>The Chair noted the support for this work from the responsible Minister, the Honourable Andrew Leigh. Minister Leigh has been briefed on the establishment of this meeting and has reconfirmed his commitment to attend a future meeting.</p>
<p>Agenda Item #2</p>	<p>Endorsement of the Terms of Reference (ToR)</p> <p>The Chair sought feedback on the composition of the EAC and asked the Committee to provide feedback on membership and the ToR.</p> <p>Members noted the strength and the collective expertise of the current membership, and suggested consideration of whether the membership had sufficient expertise, within the organisations they represent, or whether additional members should be added to ensure</p>



	<p>representation from the following perspectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ asexual ○ youth ○ older age ○ disability ○ rainbow families (several members said that they themselves are from rainbow families) ○ women or non-binary people with innate variations of sex characteristics ○ trans women ○ geographical representation. <p>The lack of representation from people with a disability was particularly noted by the group as a gap that should be addressed by the ABS.</p> <p>The ABS agreed to consider whether a distinction between community representatives and government representatives should be made in the ToR.</p> <p>Chairing arrangements were discussed, and the ABS agreed to consider an external co-chair for the EAC from the membership, given the Chair and Deputy are both ABS representatives.</p> <p>The ABS agreed to consider opportunities to facilitate feedback from the EAC to provide input relating to administrative data used in Census collection, noting that the scope to influence administrative collections may be limited.</p> <p>Actions Action 1: ABS to review Committee membership based on feedback from members. Action 2: ABS to update the Terms of Reference with EAC feedback for consideration and endorsement at the next meeting.</p>
<p>Agenda Item #3</p>	<p>2026 Census Overview</p> <p>The ABS agreed that it was important to carefully consider communication of data to reduce the risk of misuse, particularly where it was acknowledged that there would likely be undercounts of people who respond to the gender and sexual orientation questions, due to concerns related to disclosure and privacy. This was noted to particularly impact youth, CALD, and LGBTIQ+ people with disability.</p> <p>The ABS agreed to consider establishing a youth sub-group to inform on LGBTIQ+ youth issues.</p> <p>Actions Action 3: ABS to consider youth sub-group to help inform on LGBTIQ+ youth issues.</p>
<p>Agenda Item #4</p>	<p>2026 Census topic review and consultation</p> <p>The ABS provided an overview of the process involved with including new or amended versions of questions on the Census.</p> <p>The group agreed that it would be valuable for the EAC and ABS to develop a short collaborative paper to summarise the contributions of LGBTIQ+ organisations who have worked with the ABS to date in order to provide the group with a base level understanding of the work that has already been undertaken. Equality Australia offered to lead a briefing on this.</p>



	<p>Actions</p> <p>Action 4: ABS and EAC members to collaborate on a briefing for the group to recognise the longstanding contribution of LGBTIQ+ organisations working with the ABS.</p>
<p>Agenda Item #5</p>	<p>Testing of LGBTIQ+ topics</p> <p>The ABS shared information about the question design process, testing timeframes and initial outcomes from the first round of cognitive testing.</p> <p>The ABS agreed to continue to seek EAC guidance on proposed changes for the next round of testing (Round Two).</p> <p>The ABS agreed to provide ongoing updates regarding results from each round of testing.</p> <p>Actions</p> <p>Action 5: ABS to provide EAC members with an update of cognitive testing findings to review and provide feedback on, in an out-of-session update in late October.</p>
<p>Agenda Item #6</p>	<p>Next steps and engagement</p> <p>The ABS agreed to seek nominations for sub-groups established to seek targeted advice on specific topics.</p> <p>The ABS agreed to disseminate out-of-session updates to the Committee in late October to provide progress updates from testing undertaken to date.</p> <p>The ABS agreed to conduct the next EAC meeting via TEAMS before the end of the year.</p> <p>The ABS agreed to consider creating a sub-group on the use of administrative data.</p> <p>Actions</p> <p>Action 6: ABS to circulate presentation slides from the meeting to EAC members and invite them to nominate for sub-groups.</p>

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Responses to question from meeting chat – September LGBTIQ+ Expert Advisory Committee for the 2026 Census

Questions raised in the Teams Chat	Responses
What is the paper form print deadline?	We cannot answer this definitively until the ABS has procured the print provider. However, if the timeframes remain the same as 2021, the paper form will need to be finalised by mid-2025. There are several quality assurance processes prior to this deadline.
Does the census regulation need to be approved by the current government or the next?	The plan is to have the Regulation tabled in both houses of Parliament before the end of the 2024. Members of Parliament and Senators have 15 sitting days to move to disallow the proposed changes. The Regulation should have the required number of sitting days before the election is called if the House of Representatives continues for the maximum term.
Who determines what goes on the special short form (used for homeless etc)?	The ABS has the authority to make the decision on what is included on the Special Short Form used for rough sleepers in southern parts of Australia. This decision balances operational feasibility and highest priority data needs. The ABS undertakes engagement to determine the highest priority topics for inclusion. The Census team undertakes testing to determine whether this data can be collected safely and accurately.
Have variations of sex characteristics, gender and sexuality been tested before and what was learnt from that?	Testing was conducted in the development of questions for the 2020 Standard. This included cognitive testing and self-enumeration via web forms. The questions included in the 2020 Standard are a result of this testing.
Are there improvements/changes being considered for the 2020 Standard?	Feedback received related to the experiences of Household Surveys program, feedback from external use of the Standard and 2026 Census testing will inform any required updates to the 2020 Standard.
What is the age limit for asking sexual orientation?	The 2020 Standard guides users to ask this question of those aged 15 years and over.
How are age limits related to categories being decided. Is this taken from the census in Scotland?	2020 Standards testing informed the age limits set. International best practice has also been taken into consideration as well. The Regulation specifies the age limits for Census topics so the limits will need to be determined early 2024. Cognitive testing will inform the recommendation to the Government.
Does any country offer 'queer' as an option for sexuality?	Not that we are aware of. Most response options line up with what is in the 2020 standard.
Is it more important to capture labels or behaviour? for example, people who are multi-gender attracted may not identify as bisexual?	The 2020 Standard outlines that the concept being collected in the Sexual Orientation question is based on sexual identity and attraction. The 2026 Census content testing strategy is using the 2020 Standard as the basis with which to begin testing and seek feedback about how this relates to the population.



<p>Will there be a funded a LGBTIQ+ enumeration strategy like the there is in travellers, homelessness and CALD?</p>	<p>As background, the Census tries to consider all members of the community to plan for effective support to participate in the Census. Our planning seeks to address the needs and barriers of the community across such dimensions as consultation/engagement, content, enumeration, communications and output. Where a community have significant barriers in our standard enumeration approach, we may implement special strategies with activities to assist people to respond. Examples of this include use of interpretation services and fill-in-form sessions for migrant communities, conducting interviews for remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and special homelessness enumerators to look for and assist homeless people to be counted.</p> <p>In the 2016 and 2021 Census, the ABS has engaged with LGBTIQ+ community and representative organisations to support participation in the Census. This has included discussing the design of the Census and supporting the operations, including providing promotional messages and instructional materials on how to participate. The ABS has also produced analytical articles on areas of interest related to the LGBTIQ+ community.</p> <p>For the 2026 Census, the ABS plans to provide educational materials and undertake events/activities to support LGBTIQ+ people to complete the Census. These will be designed and developed, with input from the EAC, once the topics and questions for the Census are finalised. We will work with EAC to understand the barriers for participations for members of the LGBTIQ+ community to help design our approaches. We will also consider where staff training is required for ABS staff.</p>
<p>Do you do testing on admin data collections?</p>	<p>Census testing programs in recent cycles have not conducted testing of admin data receipt from establishments. In very limited cases, administrative data is collected from an establishment and used in place of collecting information through completion of Census forms. In the 2021 Census, agreements were in place for administrative data for people in the following establishments and areas: prisons, immigration detention areas, Antarctica and Macquarie Island and US Marines on rotation. As a COVID contingency, summary data was also provided by some hospitals and aged care facilities in lockdown areas.</p> <p>Data items vary depending on the data provider and are negotiated on a case-by-case basis. The ABS seeks datasets that meet a minimum set of demographic requirements, e.g. age, sex, indigenous status, usual address, country of birth. Census data processing staff undertake standard checks that the format and content are accurate to expectations. Once the data is loaded into our processing environment, standard procedures for processing and quality assurance are undertaken on the combined data.</p>



MINUTES

LGBTIQ+ Expert Advisory Committee (EAC) for the 2026 Census

When	2:00pm to 4:30pm (AEST), 1 December 2023	
Chair	Bindi Kindermann, General Manager, People and Place Division, Australian Bureau of Statistics	
Attendees	S47F	<p>S47F, East Metropolitan Health Service, WA</p> <p>S47F, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society, La Trobe University</p> <p>S47F, Diversity Council Australia</p> <p>S47F, Intersex Human Rights Australia</p> <p>S47F, JC2 Athletics and disability advocate</p> <p>ACT Government Office for LGBTIQ+ Affairs</p> <p>S47F, Community Health, Aids Council of NSW</p> <p>S47F, The Kirby Institute, UNSW</p> <p>S47F, Equality Australia</p> <p>S47F, Public Interest Advocacy Centre</p> <p>Royal Australian College of General Practitioner</p> <p>S47F, Australian Human Rights Commission</p> <p>Metadata, Information Management & Classifications Unit, AIHW</p> <p>Health Equity Branch, Department of Health and Aged Care</p> <p>Sex and Gender Section, Attorney General's Department</p> <p>S47F, Australian GLBTIQ Multicultural Council</p> <p>S47F, The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne</p> <p>S47F, LGBTIQ+ Health Australia</p>
Apologies	S47F	<p>S47F, Switchboard Victoria</p> <p>S47F, LGBTIQ+ Health Australia</p> <p>S47F, School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Melbourne</p> <p>S47F, Health Equity Branch, DoHAC</p> <p>Black Lorikeet Cultural Brokering</p> <p>S47F, SMART Recovery Australia</p> <p>S47F, ACT Government Office for LGBTIQ+ Affairs</p> <p>School of Sociology, Australian National University</p> <p>S47F, BlaQ Aboriginal Corporation</p>
ABS Presenters and observers	<p>Denise Carlton</p> <p>S47F</p> <p>Sybillie McKeown</p> <p>S47F</p> <p>Duncan Young</p>	<p>Program Manager Population Statistics Branch</p> <p>Director, Census Content Development</p> <p>Program Manager, Social Characteristics and Place Branch</p> <p>Director, Social Characteristics Section</p> <p>General Manager, Census and Population Division, ABS</p>
Minutes	Social Characteristics Section, ABS	



<p>Summary of Action Items</p>	<p>Action 1: The ABS to circulate details of the subgroups to EAC members to allow for ongoing nominations.</p> <p>Action 2: ABS to take EAC feedback from this meeting to the next sub-group meeting for discussion alongside Round 4 test results.</p>
<p>Agenda Item #1</p>	<p>Welcome and introductions</p> <p>The Chair welcomed members and commenced the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country. Apologies were noted and new members and attendees introduced themselves.</p> <p>EAC members endorsed the minutes from the last meeting and the Chair provided a report on the status of the six action items:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ABS has added, or is in the process of adding, representatives for people with a disability (S47F), youth (Minus18 have been invited) and Tasmania (a representative is currently being sought). 2. ABS circulated an updated Terms of Reference ahead of the meeting with updates in track changes to reflect feedback received at the first meeting. 3. Youth is a cross-cutting cohort relevant to all sub-groups, so ABS would like to consider Youth as an area of focus in each of the sub-groups. 4. Equality Australia, LHA, IHRA and ACON are speaking at Agenda item 3 to recognise the longstanding contribution of LGBTIQ+ organisations working with the ABS. 5. ABS provided EAC members with two updates on testing in early October and early November. 6. ABS are still welcoming members to nominate for a sub-group if they have not already. <p>The Chair highlighted the summary of sub-group activity circulated to members ahead of the meeting. The ABS will circulate details of the subgroups to EAC members to allow for ongoing nominations.</p> <p>Actions</p> <p>Action 1: The ABS to circulate details of the subgroups to EAC members to allow for ongoing nominations.</p>
<p>Agenda Item #2</p>	<p>Terms of Reference, membership and co-chair</p> <p>EAC members endorsed the Terms of Reference that were updated to reflect feedback received at the first meeting.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed (S47F) LGBTIQ+ Health Australia as Co-Chair of the EAC, and noted (S47F) was an apology for today's meeting but had worked with the Chair on finalising the agenda.</p>
<p>Agenda Item #3</p>	<p>Overview of the history of contributions of LGBTIQ+ organisations working with the ABS</p> <p>Intersex Human Rights Australia, LGBTIQ+ Health Australia, ACON and Equality Australia each provided a summary of their organisation's experience in working with the ABS.</p> <p>Their history of contributions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engagement for the 2016 Census commencing in 2014; • discussions and advocacy on 2021 Census content decisions by Government; • participation in the Gender Statistics Advisory Committee and contributing to the development of the Standard for Sex, Gender Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation, 2020 (2020 Standard);



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing support in peer review of analysis on the 2021 Census non-binary sex data; • supporting ABS household surveys that implemented the 2020 Standard; • conciliation of the complaint to the AHRC in relation to the 2021 Census; • contributing to the 2026 Census topic consultation process. <p>The ABS acknowledged and thanked Intersex Human Rights Australia, LGBTIQ+ Health Australia, ACON, Equality Australia – and the many other LGBTIQ+ organisations and individuals - for their contribution and support over the years. The ABS reiterated its commitment to working in continuing to work in partnership.</p>
<p>Agenda Item #4</p>	<p>Update on testing LGBTIQ+ topics for Census: S47F</p> <p>ABS presented on the findings from recent cognitive testing rounds and the changes made to question design for the upcoming fourth round of testing. The ABS acknowledged the guidance provided by the Sexual orientation and Variations of sex characteristics subgroups when refining these two questions.</p> <p>Members discussed the refinements to the questions and the complexities that the sub-group meetings have been navigating in developing a question that is understood by LGBTIQ+ and non LGBTIQ+ populations. They provided advice on the question design for Variations of Sex Characteristics, Sexual Orientation and Country of birth of parents for ABS consideration prior to the next round of testing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A suggestion was made to consider simplifying the instructional text for Variations of Sex Characteristics. This may help people who are not familiar with the topic, particularly those who have lower English literacy (e.g. migrant communities), as well as translating the instructions into other languages. • There was discussion on the appropriateness of the terms "identify" and "identifies" in the sexual orientation question design, with a number of members recommending that these should not be used. • The use of the term 'birth parent' in the instructional text of the country of birth of parents question was highlighted as a difficult term for surrogacy, families created through assisted means and for those adopted with unknown biological parents. It was recommended this be reconsidered. <p>Actions Action 2: ABS to take EAC feedback from this meeting to the next sub-group meeting for discussion alongside Round 4 test results.</p>
<p>Agenda Item #5</p>	<p>Overview of plans for the Census test in September 2024: Duncan Young</p> <p>ABS provided members with an overview of the timelines and scope for the Census major test in September 2024, as well as the test sample areas and next steps.</p> <p>The test will include recommended census topics, as well as question changes, and occurs after ABS has made recommendations to Government on topics. Relevant subgroups will be convened as required in the lead up to, and following the test, to support development, evaluate findings and provide recommendations.</p>
<p>Agenda Item #6</p>	<p>Key activities and milestones during 2024 for the EAC: S47F</p> <p>ABS outlined anticipated activities and milestones during 2024 for the EAC, with three meetings planned for 2024 (early, mid and late) supported by out of session email updates and subgroup meetings.</p>



	<p>The next EAC meeting is anticipated in early 2024 in either February or March.</p> <p>The Assistant Minister for Competition, Charities and Treasury the Hon Dr Andrew Leigh MP will meet with the EAC in relation to his responsibilities with topics for the 2026 Census. This meeting will take place before the ABS makes topic recommendations to Government (mid-2024).</p>
Agenda Item #7	Other business + Close of meeting <p>The Chair thanked members for their valuable input and advice and closed the meeting.</p>

Released under FOIA Act



Responses to question from meeting chat – December LGBTIQ+ Expert Advisory Committee for the 2026 Census

Questions raised in the Teams Chat	Responses provided during the meeting
Have you reached out to PRIDE WA etc?	We aren't seeking to have every S&T represented - but rather a good spread of experience and expertise. Tas has been suggested due to their work in adopting the ABS standards into their administrative / government systems.
Is the non-binary analysis available for us to read?	Non-binary sex in the 2021 Census Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au) Analysis of non-binary sex responses Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au)
Having worked through the 4 rounds, and tweaked the questions, do you go back and test them with the starting groups that the questions still work equally well?	Not generally - people are only involved in one testing round. We rely on later testing rounds (and larger public tests) to assure we haven't introduced any issues with our changes.
Can the census have separate sexual orientation identity and attraction questions?	S47E
What is the current thinking about including gender, sexual orientation and intersex status on the special short form?	No decisions are made about the SSF until we have made a recommendation to Government. We will then assess which topics to include on the form, in consultation with key stakeholders (in 2021 this included our Homelessness Statistics Reference Group and key Gov departments). We will discuss with EAC this time

Released under FOIA



MINUTES

LGBTIQ+ Expert Advisory Committee (EAC) for the 2026 Census

When	2:00pm to 4:30pm (AEST), 19 March 2024	
Chairs	<p>S47F ██████████, LGBTIQ+ Health Australia</p> <p>Bindi Kindermann, General Manager, People and Place Division, Australian Bureau of Statistics</p>	
Attendees	S47F ██████████	<p>S47F ██████████, Intersex Human Rights Australia</p> <p>S47F ██████████, Health Equity Branch, Department of Health</p> <p>Health Equity Branch, Department of Health</p> <p>Sex and Gender Section Attorney General's Department</p> <p>ACT Government Office for LGBTIQ+ Affairs</p> <p>S47F ██████████, The Kirby Institute, UNSW</p> <p>S47F ██████████, Equality Australia</p> <p>Royal Australian College of General Practitioner</p> <p>S47F ██████████, Australian Human Rights Commission</p> <p>Metadata, Information Management & Classifications Unit, AIHW</p> <p>School of Sociology, Australian National University</p> <p>S47F ██████████, The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne</p> <p>S47F ██████████, Policy, Strategy and Research ACON</p> <p>Equality Australia (delegate for Ghassan)</p> <p>LGBTIQ+ Health Australia</p>
Apologies	S47F ██████████	<p>S47F ██████████, East Metropolitan Health Service, WA</p> <p>S47F ██████████, Switchboard Victoria</p> <p>S47F ██████████, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health & Society, La Trobe University</p> <p>S47F ██████████, Diversity Council Australia</p> <p>S47F ██████████, School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Melbourne</p> <p>S47F ██████████, Health Equity Branch, DoHAC</p> <p>Black Lorikeet Cultural Brokering</p> <p>S47F ██████████, SMART Recovery Australia</p> <p>S47F ██████████, BlaQ Aboriginal</p> <p>S47F ██████████, Public Interest Advocacy Centre</p> <p>S47F ██████████, JC2 Athletics and disability advocate</p> <p>S47F ██████████, School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Melbourne</p>
ABS Presenters and observers	<p>Duncan Young</p> <p>Denise Carlton</p> <p>S47F ██████████</p> <p>Sybillie McKeown</p> <p>S47F ██████████</p>	<p>General Manager, Census and Population Division, ABS</p> <p>Program Manager Population Statistics Branch</p> <p>Director, Census Content Development</p> <p>Program Manager, Social Characteristics and Place Branch</p> <p>Director, Social Characteristics Section</p>
Minutes	Social Characteristics Section, ABS	



<p>Summary of Action Items</p>	<p>Action 1: ABS to investigate whether Statistics New Zealand Census can disclose information about their how the Variations of Sex Characteristics question performed in the 2023 Census.</p> <p>Action 2: ABS to provide EAC members with guidance on what information about the content review and development process can be shared with member networks and the public.</p>
<p>Agenda Item #1</p>	<p>Welcome and introductions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ABS Chair welcomed members and commenced the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country. S47F ██████████, LGBTIQ+ Health Australia was welcomed into the role of co-chair. Apologies were noted and new members introduced themselves. Minutes and actions from the December 2023 meeting were accepted as final. <p>December 2023 Actions:</p> <p>Action 1: Complete - The ABS to circulate details of the subgroups to EAC members to allow for ongoing nominations.</p> <p>Action 2: Complete - ABS to take EAC feedback from this meeting to the next sub-group meeting for discussion alongside Round 4 test results.</p>
<p>Agenda Item #2</p>	<p>Outcomes of cognitive testing of LGBTIQ+ topics for Census and summary of subgroup activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Census Content Director confirmed the topics of Sex (Sex at birth), Gender, Sexual Orientation and Variations of Sex Characteristics will be included in the 2024 Test and shared the final question designs. The decision to progress to the Test is a separate decision to the decision on what the ABS will recommend to Government (and separate to the Government decision on including a topic and separate to the passing of topics by Parliament). Census Content Director outlined plans to test changes for the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country of birth to include gender inclusive language in question wording and explanatory notes to further define how respondents can accurately report same sex or gender diverse parents. Relationship in household to include gender inclusive language in response options. Marital Status to include new response option of “de facto” relationships, broaden the scope of the response option ‘Separated’ and include additional instructional text. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EAC participants requested instructions about how to report widowed and in a de facto relationship. AIHW explained that they recently met with ABS about the proposed design of the Marital status question. The AIHW are supportive of the ABS exploring changes to the question in the 2026 Census, and interested in the outcomes of the 2024 Test. The current AIHW marital status data element can be found here: https://meteor.aihw.gov.au/content/766507 Census Content Director raised that there have been issues in testing related to data quality of the Variations of Sex Characteristics question.
<p>Agenda Item #3</p>	<p>Timeline for September Test, ABS recommendations and Government decisions</p> <p>The General Manager of Census provided an update about liaison taking place with the Department of Treasury related to the timing of the ABS’ recommendation to Government to allow sufficient time for Government deliberation and decision. Final timing and process will be determined by</p>



	<p>Government.</p> <p>Key dates include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABS will present recommendations to Government in June • Government decision on Census topics (mid-2024) • September 2024 Test results will be shared with EAC • Passing the Census Regulations through Parliament (early-2025). <p>Concern about the performance of the Variations of Sex Characteristics question was reiterated. EAC members raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – an enquiry about sourcing intelligence from the NZ Census experience on the performance of this question. – a preference to consider these questions as a ‘batch’, to ideally have all of these questions included in the Census and avoid one or two being excluded. – the need to include communications and education in the roll out of these questions to support understanding of terms and concepts. <p>Action 1 – ABS to investigate whether Statistics New Zealand Census can disclose information about their how the Variations of Sex Characteristics question performed in the 2023 Census.</p>
<p>Agenda Item #4</p>	<p>Review of how the sub-groups have been operating and opportunities to improve</p> <p>The group reflected on the ten subgroup meetings convened since the commencement of the EAC.</p> <p>The focus for the first 6 months was on question design and development for the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sex and Gender • Sexual Orientation • Variations of Sex Characteristics • Country of Birth of Parents. <p>Feedback on the operation and effectiveness of the subgroups was positive overall.</p> <p>Key points of note include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timeliness of the advice has been helpful to the ABS. • The smaller groups allowed for in depth discussions. • Community expectations could be represented by members and heard by ABS. • Diversity of the group’s expertise allowed for broader knowledge sharing and learning. • Recognition of the political imperative to progress a question and navigate the complexity of the questions to arrive at a collectively agreed upon outcome. • Expertise was strong across each group. • Brought members along on the journey and gave an appreciation for the framework that the ABS is working within. • Benefit from the subgroups for the broader ABS work program. <p>The following suggestions were offered to help improve the experience moving forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to maintain balance and the right range of expertise in each group to facilitate valuable discussion. <p>Action 2 – ABS to provide EAC members with guidance on what information about the content review and development process can be shared with member networks and the public.</p>



**Agenda Item
#5**

Agreeing EAC preferred approach to meeting with the Minister

The Assistant Minister for Competition, Charities and Treasury the Hon Dr Andrew Leigh MP has agreed to meet with the EAC in relation to his responsibilities with topics for the 2026 Census.

This meeting will take place before the ABS recommends Census topics to Government. The timing will be the week after Easter (2-5 April) via Microsoft Teams.

S47C & S47E

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	S47C & S47E
Agenda Item #6	<p>Other business + Close of meeting</p> <p>S47F (Australia Human Rights Commission) shared a consultation that the agency is undertaking and encouraged members to participate:</p> <p>https://humanrights.gov.au/have-your-say/call-submissions-current-and-emerging-threats-tgd-human-rights</p> <p>The Chair thanked members for their valuable input and advice and closed the meeting.</p>

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Responses to question from meeting chat – December LGBTIQ+ Expert Advisory Committee for the 2026 Census

Questions raised in the Teams Chat	Responses provided during the meeting
Have you reached out to PRIDE WA etc?	We aren't seeking to have every S&T represented - but rather a good spread of experience and expertise. Tas has been suggested due to their work in adopting the ABS standards into their administrative / government systems.
Is the non-binary analysis available for us to read?	Non-binary sex in the 2021 Census Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au) Analysis of non-binary sex responses Australian Bureau of Statistics (abs.gov.au)
Having worked through the 4 rounds, and tweaked the questions, do you go back and test them with the starting groups that the questions still work equally well?	Not generally - people are only involved in one testing round. We rely on later testing rounds (and larger public tests) to assure we haven't introduced any issues with our changes.
Can the census have separate sexual orientation identity and attraction questions?	S47E
What is the current thinking about including gender, sexual orientation and intersex status on the special short form?	No decisions are made about the topics included on the Special Short Form, which is used to collect information from rough sleepers, until Government has made their decision. We will then assess which topics to include on the form in consultation with key stakeholders (in 2021 this included our Homelessness Statistics Reference Group and key Gov departments). We will discuss with EAC this time.

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