

LGBTIQ+ Health Australia – Answer to Question on Notice from Senator Thorpe

How important is it that your community be consulted on legislation that affects you, what does this meaningful engagement look like to you in terms of impact and outcome?

LHA provides the following response:

Consultation on legislation affecting LGBTIQ+ communities is critical. As discussed in the hearing, the health issues for the different groupings covered by the term 'LGBTIQ+' can be extremely diverse, complex and relevant to particular sub-populations.

No one mechanism of consultation is sufficient, and a range of processes are required. The following are key areas where consultation in its broadest sense is critical for meaningful engagement:

- Sustainable funding for and continued engagement is required with LGBTIQ+ Health Australia (LHA) as the national peak organisation working to promote the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ people and communities. LHA is uniquely placed with a diverse membership that spans across states and territories, and includes LGBTIQ+ community-controlled health organisations, LGBTIQ+ community groups and state and territory peak bodies, service providers, researchers, and individuals.
- Australia has a strong network of LGBTIQ+ community-controlled health organisations, that work with and understand the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ people. All of these are under-resourced and ill equipped to respond to increasing demand. Many rely on one-off short-term project funding, which is not sufficient to develop strong, resilient organisations. Sustainable LGBTIQ+ community-controlled health organisations are essential for effective engagement, specifically targeted engagement with specific specialist organisations.
- The Australian Government has established an Expert Advisory Group to advice on its development of Australia's first 10-year national action plan for the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ people (Action Plan). The national consultation and co-design process currently underway provides a solid foundation to develop the Action Plan and provide ongoing engagement.
- The Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS) at LaTrobe University, the leading Australian research centre on sexuality, gender, health and human relationships, runs two flagship research projects that are currently unfunded. Private Lives is a series of national surveys of the health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer Australians. Writing Themselves In is the largest national study series exploring the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ young people in Australia. These projects provide the only current national evidence-based data on LGBTIQ+ populations.
- In 2020, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) updated the Standard for Sex, Gender, Variation of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables, 2020 (2020 Standard). The purpose of the 2020 Standards is achieve consistent collection and dissemination of data relating to sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and sexual orientation. The 2020 Standard still needs to be consistently embedded in government data sets, research and service level data, coroners court data to ensure crucial data on LGBTIQ+ communities is captured. The standard needs to be adopted for the next National Census in 2026, with any identified updates.