



22 July 2021

Hon. Michael Sukkar MP
Assistant Treasurer, Minister for Housing,
Minister for Homelessness, Social and
Community Housing
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

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Dear Mr Sukkar,

RE: LGBTQIA+ Australians have been left out of the 2021 Census

As you would know, Census 2021 is the Australian Government's key opportunity to understand what the community needs - particularly in relation to health and mental health services, education, and community and social services. I therefore find it astounding that the Government has not included questions about sexual orientation and gender identity. As a result of this decision, the Government cannot understand the needs of LGBTQIA+ people, and the community will miss out on vital services, simply because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

This is a matter of serious concern, as it will result in a service gap that constitutes discrimination of the LGBTQIA+ community. Every person is born free and equal in dignity and rights and is entitled to the rights and freedoms in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights without distinction of any kind.¹ With special consideration on the Principles on the Application of International Human Rights Law in Relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (the 'Yogyakarta Principles'), it is essential that Governments acknowledge that sexual orientation and gender identity are integral to every person's dignity and humanity and must not be the basis of discrimination or abuse.²

Most LGBTQIA+ Australians will have a horror story about not being able to access health and mental health services, education, and community and social services. Research indicates that LGBTQIA+ people are more likely to experience discrimination, bullying and abuse and are significantly more at risk of suicide, self-harm and mental health impacts as a result.³ Yet without the necessary data to steer service delivery, the Government cannot ensure the LGBTQIA+ community have access to required services, ensuring that human rights are enjoyed without discrimination.

¹ United Nations General Assembly Resolution 217 A(III), 10 December 1948 (UDHR) Article 1, 2

² Yogyakarta Principles, Principle 2.

³ National LGBTI Health Alliance, Statistics at a Glance, available at: <https://lgbtihealth.org.au/statistics/?fbclid=IwAR2Z3wcmxboxQSZ9sqO1A7xzLkbyrqDDikMuFZkCS8It9H5vw7foavpSEDY>.



Beyond this, including questions in the Census that adequately capture the diversity in gender identity and sexual orientation is an important act of recognition of LGBTQIA+ people and their lives, recognition that has surely been lacking.

Regrettably it is too late to include the required questions in the 2021 Census that would ensure the rights of LGBTQIA+ people are protected, but I urge you to listen to the concerns of LGBTQIA+ communities, and commit to including the LGBTQIA+ community in the next Census, and to roll-out other demographic studies in the meantime.

For further information, or to discuss and organise a meeting, please contact Ry Atkinson at ry.atkinson@amnesty.org.au or 0423 270 124.

Yours sincerely,

Sam Klintworth
National Director
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