

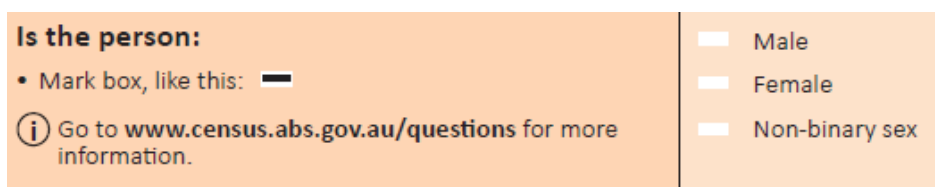
Information Paper on Sex, Gender and Relationships in the Census

1. What is the difference between sex and gender?

- According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), the terms sex and gender are two distinct concepts, although often they are interrelated and used interchangeably:
 - Sex is understood in relation to sex characteristics, such as their chromosomes, hormones or reproductive organs. Sex recorded at birth refers to what was determined by sex characteristics observed at birth or infancy.
 - Gender is about social and cultural differences in identity, expression and experience.

2. Does the Australian Census ask people to identify their sexual orientation?

- The Census has never had a question on gender or variations in sex characteristics.
- The question the ABS asks on the paper and online Census form is: *Is the person: Male, Female, Non-binary sex* (see image of the question from the paper form below).



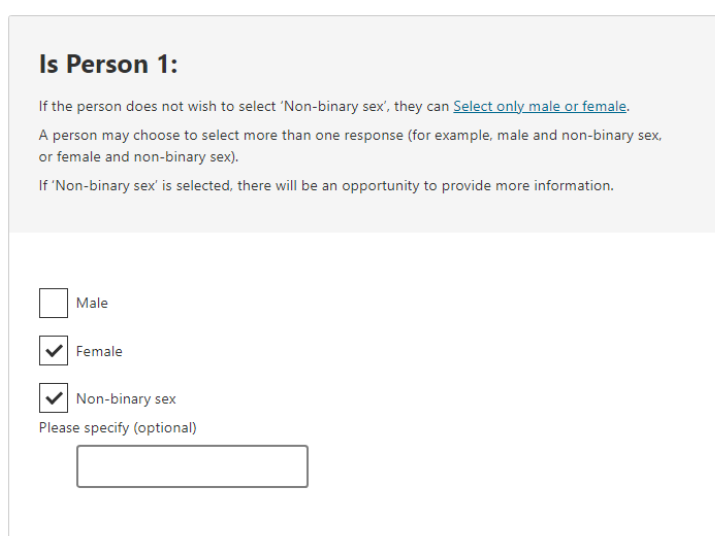
Is the person:

- Mark box, like this:

Go to www.census.abs.gov.au/questions for more information.

Male
 Female
 Non-binary sex

- However, the online version of the Census form also allows further information to be input when the 'Non-binary sex' option is selected (see image below). Note that a person may select more than one response.



Is Person 1:

If the person does not wish to select 'Non-binary sex', they can [Select only male or female](#).

A person may choose to select more than one response (for example, male and non-binary sex, or female and non-binary sex).

If 'Non-binary sex' is selected, there will be an opportunity to provide more information.

Male
 Female
 Non-binary sex

Please specify (optional)

3. How does the ABS report on the sex question?

- Here is how the ABS describes its reporting process:

“Data collected from the sex question will be reported in most Census data releases as ‘male’ or ‘female’ in order to maintain the quality of standard products at the small area level. Where a respondent has provided a male or female response and a non-binary sex response, the male or female response will be used to determine a binary sex variable. Otherwise, sex will be derived by a statistical process using random allocation.”

4. History of the sex question in the Australian Census

- Topics collected on the Census are decided by the Australian Parliament, under the *Census and Statistics Regulation*. The regulation states that the Census should collect data on sex.
- The question on sex has been asked at every Census (since 1911).
- The 2016 Census included an option, on both the paper and online forms to respond as ‘Other sex’. If the person wanted to identify as other than male or female, they were instructed to phone the Census Inquiry Service for information on how to do so on the Census form. To respond online, they were given specific login details to access an alternate form which allowed them to select ‘other’ and enter in information in a ‘please specify’ text box. To respond on a paper form, they were instructed to write on the right-hand side of the response area and these were checked manually to record a respondent’s ‘other sex’ category.
- In the 2021 Census a ‘non-binary sex’ option was added as an input category to the standard question on the online and paper forms. However, the output categories from this question are unchanged for 2021 (Male, Female). This means that any crosstabulations for Census data can presently only be reported using these two categories.

5. Does the ABS ask about same-sex relationships?

- The ABS does not specifically ask people a question in the Census about same-sex relationships but rather uses relationship information to determine whether a family are a same-sex couple family.
- The two questions used to determine same-sex families are Relationship in household (RLHP – see image to right) and Sex (SEXP).
- Using these two questions, the ABS creates an output variable called ‘Same-sex couple indicator’ (SSCF). This output variable was

What is Person 2's relationship to Person 1?

Examples of other relationships: Son-in-law, Grand-daughter, Uncle, Boarder.

[More information](#)

- Husband or wife of Person 1
- De facto partner of Person 1
- Child of Person 1
- Stepchild of Person 1
- Brother or sister of Person 1
- Unrelated flatmate or co-tenant of Person 1
- Other relationship to Person 1 (please specify)

first introduced in 2006, although same-sex couples have been counted within the family relationship output variables (RLHP or equivalent) prior to that, possibly since 1996.

- With amendments to the *Marriage Act 1961* coming into effect on 9 December 2017, enabling all couples to legally marry, the 2021 variable included same-sex couples in a registered marriage.

6. Key National Statistics 2021 *

- There were 78,424 same-sex couples living together. In comparison, in 2016, there were 46,767 same-sex couples – an increase of around 68 per cent in the 5 years to 2021. In 2011, there were 33,714 same-sex couples.
- Same-sex couples accounted for 1.4 per cent of all couples living together in 2021.
- In 2021, just over 30 per cent (23,914) of same-sex couples were in a registered marriage.

7. Key Catholic Statistics 2021 *

- In 2021, there were 2,325,912 Catholics living in a couple relationship. Of these:
 - 83.7 per cent (1,946,759) were in an opposite-sex registered marriage.
 - 15.4 per cent (358,429) were in a de facto opposite-sex relationship.
 - 0.3 per cent (6,514) were in a same-sex registered marriage.
 - 0.6 per cent (14,210) were in a de facto same-sex relationship.
- The state-wise breakdown of these figures (see Table 1 on the next page) reveals that the largest proportions of Catholics in a same-sex couple relationship are located in NSW (7,989) followed by Victoria (5,299) and Queensland (3,992).
- Diocesan figures are presented in Table 2. Melbourne has the highest number of Catholics in same-sex couple relationships (4,413), followed by Sydney (3,921) and Brisbane (3,174).

* **Source:** *ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2016-2021 (data retrieved using TableBuilder Pro as part of the ACBC National Catholic Census Project).*

Notes:

1. Due to the ABS policy of the randomisation of Census data, low figures in the diocesan table may not be reliable.
2. For the same reason, reporting these figures at the parish level is not advisable.

More detailed information on the above topics can be found on the ABS website:

<https://www.abs.gov.au/census/guide-census-data/census-dictionary/2021/variables-topic/population/sex-sexp>

<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/standards/standard-sex-gender-variations-sex-characteristics-and-sexual-orientation-variables/latest-release>

<https://www.abs.gov.au/census/guide-census-data/census-dictionary/2021/variables-topic/household-and-families/same-sex-couple-indicator-sscf>

<https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/same-sex-couples-living-together-australia>

<https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/non-binary-sex-2021-census>

Table 1: Relationship as Reported by Individuals in Couple Relationships by State

	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	Other Territories	Total
Husband, wife or partner as reported, opposite-sex couple	689,966	522,232	360,022	110,344	191,445	27,454	11,758	33,389	135	1,946,759
De facto partner as reported, opposite-sex couple	121,578	90,630	77,021	17,893	35,242	5,767	4,220	6,049	39	358,429
Husband, wife or partner as reported, same-sex couple	2,425	1,603	1,272	337	612	99	34	131	0	6,509
De facto partner as reported, same-sex couple	5,564	3,696	2,720	634	1,021	197	101	280	0	14,216
Not applicable	988,199	717,618	520,438	146,646	268,536	37,528	23,091	47,718	223	2,749,990
Total	1,807,730	1,335,784	961,469	275,849	496,847	71,045	39,208	87,566	396	5,075,907

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2021 (data retrieved using TableBuilder Pro as part of the ACBC National Catholic Census Project).

Note: Figures in the above table may have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data. No reliance should be placed on small figures within cells.

Table 2: Relationship as Reported by Individuals in Couple Relationships by Diocese

	Husband, wife or partner as reported, opposite-sex couple	De facto partner as reported, opposite-sex couple	Husband, wife or partner as reported, same-sex couple	De facto partner as reported, same-sex couple	Total Catholics in couple relationships
Sydney	217,351	39,557	963	2,958	260,829
Armidale	13,657	3,235	57	68	17,017
Bathurst	22,293	4,995	51	134	27,473
Broken Bay	82,383	12,685	229	434	95,731
Lismore	37,297	7,692	115	211	45,315
Maitland-Newcastle	55,445	12,067	170	366	68,048
Parramatta	127,788	16,398	389	696	145,271
Wagga Wagga	21,789	4,114	51	86	26,040
Wilcannia-Forbes	8,918	2,276	28	33	11,255
Wollongong	78,195	13,476	272	455	92,398
Canberra & Goulburn	58,349	11,157	219	406	70,131
Melbourne	405,105	68,403	1,277	3,136	477,921
Ballarat	33,994	6,571	86	205	40,856
Sandhurst	32,758	6,526	96	134	39,514
Sale	50,373	9,126	152	222	59,873
Brisbane	259,581	53,662	996	2,178	316,417
Cairns	19,619	5,015	60	147	24,841
Rockhampton	34,761	7,855	86	165	42,867
Toowoomba	22,331	4,339	63	86	26,819
Townsville	23,736	6,148	69	142	30,095
Adelaide	101,955	16,066	302	605	118,928
Port Pirie	8,439	1,843	32	32	10,346
Perth	160,354	27,903	491	867	189,615
Broome	1,417	986	5	15	2,423
Bunbury	22,894	4,278	82	94	27,348
Geraldton	6,811	2,089	28	39	8,967
Hobart	27,454	5,767	99	197	33,517
Darwin	11,710	4,204	34	103	16,051
Total	1,946,757	358,433	6,502	14,214	2,325,906

Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing, 2021 (data retrieved using TableBuilder Pro as part of the ACBC National Catholic Census Project).

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