

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Question No. 12

Senator Barnett asked the following question at the hearing on 25 May 2009:

In relation to the Commission's report launched in March 2009, *Sex files: the legal recognition of sex in documents and government records*, did the Commission consult with churches and Christian organisations? Did the Australian Family Association make a submission to the investigation?

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

Sex Files is the concluding paper of the sex and gender diversity project, which aimed to give people who are sex and gender diverse an opportunity to articulate their key human rights concerns. Therefore, the majority of the responses and participants in the project were people who were sex and gender diverse.

The Commission publicised the project on its website, and distributed flyers and postcards at medical centres and universities, inviting any interested parties to respond. The website explained how to respond to a short issues paper on the human rights of sex and gender diverse people, and how to participate in an online blog about some specific human rights issues.

While the Commission did not actively seek responses from churches and Christian organisations, the website information was publicly accessible. The project received one formal written response from a well-known Christian organisation that offers a support service for families with sex and gender diversity issues. It also had one informal response from a local branch of a Christian organisation who wanted to promote the project in that group. Some of the sex and gender diverse people who responded to the blog and the issues paper also identified as Christian. The Australian Family Association did not make a response to the project, either through a formal written response, informal contact or via the online blog.