

**CULTURE, TOURISM, EUROPE AND EXTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**CENSUS (AMENDMENT) (SCOTLAND) BILL**

**SUBMISSION FROM DOUGIE BLACKWOOD**

**Census questions relating to gender**

1. The proposed amendment suggests that within the next and succeeding census we ask all of the residents of Scotland for gender and sexual orientation with the caveat that answering the question is not mandatory. Regardless of whether an answer or not it is within the nature of many respondents to answer all of the questions asked of them.
2. Why do we want this information to be gathered? Is there any need for it to be known; what use can be made of it other than prurient curiosity? Those that march and proclaim their difference are in the minority and most who are different wish that information to remain private.
3. We are all aware that there are a significant number of people that are still undecided about their sexuality. I recently had a forty something man with a child tell me that he planned to become a woman. It will not help when the media raise this into an ISSUE just prior to the census, as they will. Those who are still undecided struggle and wrestle with the problem, sometimes for many months until they finally decide on a way forward. Those people may be driven into crisis by being prematurely asked to jump one way or another
4. Remembering that the form is completed by one person on behalf of all people residing overnight within the address listed on the form it will place great difficulty on those households where there is some doubt about the sexual position of one or more of the occupants.
5. In my view it is no business of the state, nor for anybody else, to ask questions of a most intimate nature of those among us that may be more vulnerable than the rest.