

CONSTITUENT QUESTION

House of Assembly

ASKED BY: Ella Haddad MP

ANSWERED BY: Hon Bridget Archer MP
Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing

QUESTION:

My question is from members of the LGBTQIA+ community. The Red Cross Lifeblood service has removed the abstinence requirement for blood plasma donations from gay and bisexual men and transgender women, which is a very welcome move. Lifeblood has indicated it will extend this reform to whole blood donations, but no timeframe has been provided for this change. The proposed screening questions for whole-blood donations fall short of global best practice, and lack the clarity and consistency seen in the UK, US and Canada. This will potentially discourage eligible donors. Given the critical need to maximise safe whole-blood donations, has the minister consulted with medical and community stakeholders before endorsing this approach? Will the minister seek a clear timeframe for implementing this reform, and ensure the screening process reflects international best practice to maximise the opportunity for much-needed blood donation?

ANSWER:

- Lifeblood coordinates the donation and supply of blood, plasma, and other biological products in Australia.
- It also provides plasma for fractionation to CSL Behring, Australia's sole blood fractionator.
- While Lifeblood is an independent organisation that proposes its own policy changes, considerations regarding Lifeblood's policies are part of national discussions to ensure consistency across all jurisdictions.
- I am advised the safety of blood and blood products remains a paramount consideration, and the introduction of Lifeblood's Gender Neutral Assessment will occur during 2026.
- This will see all potential blood donors asked the same questions using gender-neutral language, and has been approved by the Australian Government's Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and agreed to by CSL Behring as Australia's blood fractionator.
- I am advised in developing its policies regarding blood donation, Lifeblood draws on extensive scientific expertise to consider the current evidence and sets the risk policies it is willing to accept on such assessments.



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Date:

02 DEC 2025