

OPEN LETTER TO FEDERAL MPS



To all members of federal parliament,

We write as a broad coalition of women's groups, LGBTIQ+ organisations, and allies committed to equality to express our strong opposition to any proposals that would weaken the legal protections for women and LGBTIQ+ people under Australia's anti-discrimination laws.

The Sex Discrimination Act 1984 was a landmark moment for women's rights. In 2013, protections were extended to LGBTIQ+ people, reflecting decades of shared advocacy and strengthening the Act as a whole.

Redefining "sex" in the Act, or removing gender identity as a protected attribute, would strip protections from transgender Australians and weaken safeguards for women more broadly. It would render entire groups of people invisible in law and trigger a cascade of damaging consequences.

These include dismantling 40 years of established case law, creating significant inconsistency with state and territory anti-discrimination laws and undoing decades of progress on equality for women and LGBTIQ+ people.

Australian anti-discrimination law has never treated sex as a fixed biological category. Instead, it recognises how discrimination against women has long operated through sexism, misogyny, gender stereotyping, and expectations about how women and men should live and their roles in society. Landmark cases have relied on this broader understanding, as do the recent Respect@Work reforms which address sexism in the workplace.

For decades, Australian governments have recognised transgender people in law and allowed amendments to identity documents. These protections have coexisted with women's rights without evidence of safety issues or systemic failures.

At a time when women and LGBTIQ+ people continue to face discrimination and violence, Australia should be strengthening protections, not weakening them.

These proposals are also unworkable in practice. They ignore the reality of gender diversity and people born with variations of sex characteristics, and would inevitably lead to increased scrutiny of people's bodies, identity documents and appearance in workplaces, schools, and when accessing everyday services and facilities.

We all share an interest in a fair society where everyone can participate in public life with safety and respect. We urge you to reject any attempt to weaken our nation's anti-discrimination framework and continue advancing equality, dignity and fairness for all Australians.

Organisations that have signed this open letter:

- 1.ACON
- 2.ACT Mental Health Consumer Network
- 3.Albany Pride Inc
- 4.Anglicare Southern Queensland
- 5.ANTRA
- 6.ASHM Health
- 7.Asian Australian Alliance
- 8.AusPATH
- 9.Australian Council of Social Service
- 10.Australian Lawyers for Human Rights
- 11.Australian Multicultural Women's Alliance (AMWA)
- 12.Australian Services Union
- 13.Australian Services Union NSW / ACT
- 14.Australian Women's Health Alliance
- 15.Basic Rights Queensland
- 16.BEING - Mental Health Consumers
- 17.Blak Pride WA
- 18.Busselton Pride Alliance Inc.
- 19.Centre for Social Research in Health and Social Policy Research Centre, UNSW Sydney
- 20.Chosen Family Pty Ltd
- 21.Community Living Association Inc
- 22.Council of Australasian Catholics - C.A.C.
- 23.Dykes On Bikes Sydney
- 24.Emily's List Australia
- 25.Equal Voices
- 26.Essential Research and Communications Group
- 27.Fair Agenda
- 28.Family Planning Tasmania
- 29.Fitzroy Legal Service
- 30.Free to be You Newcastle Parents of Gender Diverse Young People
- 31.Gay Dads Western Australia
- 32.Grata Fund
- 33.Headspace Rockhampton
- 34.Human Rights For All
- 35.Hunter Gender Alliance
- 36.Independent Education Union
- 37.Inner City Legal Centre
- 38.International Planned Parenthood Federation
- 39.International Women's Development Agency
- 40.Justice and Equity Centre
- 41.Kristen Hilton Advisory
- 42.LGBTI Legal Service
- 43.LGBTIQ+ Health Australia
- 44.Living Proud
- 45.Meridian
- 46.Midsumma
- 47.Minus18

48. National Foundation for Australian Women
49. National Mental Health Consumer Alliance
50. National Network of Incarcerated & Formerly Incarcerated Women & Girls
51. No Milk
52. Open Doors Youth Service
53. Out For Australia
54. OUTinPerth
55. Parents for Trans Youth Equity (PTYE)
56. People With Disability Australia
57. Perth Pride Shed
58. Positive Attitude Inc
59. Pride Cup
60. Pride in Law
61. Q+Law
62. QLEWN
63. QTrans
64. Queensland Council for LGBTI Health
65. Queers in Property
66. Rainbow Catholics Interagency Australia
67. Rainbow Families Australia
68. Rainbow Futures WA
69. Rainbow Giving Australia
70. Rainbow Western
71. SA Rainbow Advocacy Alliance
72. Sexual and Reproductive Health Australia
73. Sexual Health Society of Queensland
74. Sisters Inside
75. SHINE SA
76. Switchboard
77. Switchboard Victoria
78. Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras
79. Team Rainbow Inc
80. The Wesley Centre
81. Thorne Harbour Health
82. Trans Justice Canberra
83. Trans Justice Project
84. Trans.au
85. Transcend Australia
86. Transfolk WA
87. Transgender Victoria
88. Twenty10
89. Unions Tasmania
90. UnionsWA
91. United Workers Union
92. Victorian Pride Centre
93. Victorian Pride Lobby
94. Victorian Trades Hall Council
95. Women With Disabilities Australia
96. Womens Electoral Lobby
97. Women's Health Victoria
98. Women's Legal Services Australia
99. Working with Women Alliance
100. Youth Pride Network
101. Zoe Belle Gender Collective