

# 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.LGBTI Legal Service
- 42.LGBTIQ+ Health Australia
- 43.Living Proud
- 44.Meridian
- 45.Midsumma
- 46.Minus18

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