

**Submission  
No 76**

**ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AMENDMENT (RELIGIOUS FREEDOMS AND  
EQUALITY) BILL 2020**

**Organisation:** Twenty-Ten Association

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The Twenty-Ten Association  
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2008

To the Joint Select Committee on the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill 2020

August 21st, 2020

Re; Submission from The Twenty-Ten Association

The Twenty-Ten Association, known as Twenty10 inc. GLCS NSW, opposes the proposed Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill 2020. We are grateful for the opportunity to make this submission to the Joint Select Committee.

**Twenty10's vision is a world where people of all genders, sexualities and intersex variations are equal, affirmed, secure and connected. They experience positive health outcomes and live in a society without discrimination, oppression or violence.**

All of the work that we do is underpinned by this vision. The proposed Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill undermines this vision and exposes many Australians to harmful discrimination and lack of equitable access to the primary needs of all members of our society and community. The Bill includes a number of provisions which go beyond typical Federal discrimination protections. Privileging religious interests of some Australians over the interests of all other Australians, including LGBTIQ+ people, is extremely harmful and will have adverse effects on these populations, with dire effects on young LGBTIQ+ people who already experience a wide range of barriers that their cisgendered, heterosexual peers do not. Additionally, as a NSW based organisation, we oppose this Bill as it will see the freedom of religion be prioritised above all other rights and freedoms when applying NSW's existing anti-discrimination laws.

A person's faith or religion is not mutually exclusive to their sexuality, gender or intersex status. Many religious Australians maybe cisgendered and heterosexual, but many are not. The young people that access Twenty10, as well as the adults, teachers, workers, parents and caregivers are from diverse geographic, socio-economic, cultural and religious backgrounds. Many service users are Aboriginal or from Torres Strait Islands. This Bill also proposes to prioritise or offer hierarchy to some dominant religious beliefs over other minority faiths, including colonised religions over diverse spiritualities and beliefs of First Nations peoples. The human rights of all of these people with diverse beliefs, genders and sexualities need to be protected, equally.

Re; Submission from The Twenty-Ten Association (continued)

Twenty10 is Australia's largest and longest running LGBTIQ+ organisation working primarily with 12-25 year olds. Based in Chippendale, Twenty10 offers support to people all over New South Wales, and Nationally via QLife, Australia's free, all ages LGBTIQ+ phone and web peer support service.

Twenty10 offer a broad range of support services for young people. We are a specialist homelessness service, offering transitional housing to 18-25 year olds. We are also a targeted early intervention service- working to eliminate homelessness in young LGBTIQ+ people. The programs we deliver include case management, counselling, a health clinic run in partnership with the Kirketon Road Centre; a legal clinic run in partnership with the Inner City Legal Centre and an alcohol and other drugs support service in partnership with the Burton St Centre, St. Vincent's Hospital. We have a Drop In space where young people can access free food, clothing and other essentials and we deliver a broad range of psychosocial support groups in inner Sydney and Western Sydney.

Twenty10's intake, information and referral line is staffed to assist young people, other services, parents and carers, teachers and support staff with accessing the support services they require. We are inundated with requests for support and information. Our counselling service is 100% booked at all times- the moment a place becomes available, it is filled. It is a similar story with our housing. The demand on our services outweighs our capacity to supply. **This bill threatens to exacerbate minority stress LGBTIQ+ communities already experience and as a result, experience higher rates of homelessness, poor mental health outcomes, self harm, suicidal ideation and suicide.**

Research shows us that a disproportionate number of LGBTI people already experienced poorer mental health outcomes than the broader community and have higher risk of suicidal behaviours than their peers.

**The National LGBTI Alliance Snapshot of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Statistics for LGBTI People (2020)** identified that compared to the general population, **LGBTI young people aged 16 to 27 are five times more likely to have thoughts of suicide. Those who experience abuse and harassment are even more likely to have thoughts of suicide.**

- 16% of LGBTI young people aged 16 to 27 reported that they had attempted suicide
- 42% of LGBTI young people aged 16 to 27 reported having thoughts about suicide
- 33% of LGBTI young people aged 16 to 27 reported having self-harmed
- 41% reported thoughts of harming themselves.

**LGBT people are twice as likely to be diagnosed and treated for mental health disorders compared to the general population.** Some communities and identities are even higher.

Re; Submission from The Twenty-Ten Association (continued)

- 41.4% of homosexual/bisexual people aged 16 and over met the criteria for a mental disorder and had symptoms in the last 12 months
- 37.2% of LGBT people aged 16 and over reported being diagnosed or treated for any mental disorder in the past three years
- Lesbian, gay and bisexual people aged 16 and over are nearly six times more likely to currently meet the criteria for a depressive episode
- Transgender people aged 25 and under are nearly ten times more likely to be diagnosed with depression in their lifetime
- Gender diverse people aged 18 and over are nearly five times more likely to be diagnosed with depression in their lifetime
- 30.5% of LGBT people aged 16 and over have been diagnosed or treated for depression in the last three years
- 57.2% of transgender and gender diverse people aged 18 and over have been diagnosed with depression in their lifetime
- 74% of transgender and gender diverse people aged 14 to 25 have been diagnosed with depression in their lifetime
- 31.5% of homosexual/bisexual people aged 16 and over in Australia met the criteria for an anxiety disorder in the last 12 months
- 20.3% of LGBTI people aged 16 and over reported that they had been diagnosed with anxiety in their lifetime
- 39.9% of transgender and gender diverse people aged 18 and over have been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder in their lifetime
- 72.5% of transgender and gender diverse people aged 14 to 25 have been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder in their lifetime.

Twenty10 deliver LGBTIQ+ inclusivity training in workplaces all over the State; hospitals, universities, primary and specialist health services, the NSW Police Force, corporations and in schools- both to students and staff. The demand on this service is also at an all time high. Australians want their workplaces to be inclusive and free from discrimination - where all workers and students are afforded equal opportunities. **Places of learning and employment need to be safe spaces for all Australians, so that everyone may participate fully and benefit from equal economic participation in society. This Bill threatens this fundamental and necessary access to safe working and learning environments.**

The aim of the **'ACCESS 3 Study - Young people and the health system in the digital age' (2018)**, was to explore ways in which young people in NSW access, navigate and experience all levels of the health system, how digital technology is integrated into these processes, and to translate findings into practice and policy-relevant recommendations. The key findings of the survey found that while cost was the most frequently cited barrier to accessing health care for all groups of young people, that sexuality and/ or gender diverse participants reported significantly more barriers compared to other groups. These include perceived or experienced forms of discrimination which were prominent among interview participants, including age-related discrimination (being young), racism, and discrimination based on sexuality or gender.

Re; Submission from The Twenty-Ten Association (continued)

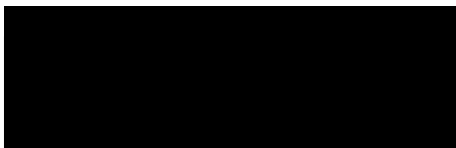
The sexuality and/or gender diverse group stood out as being significantly more likely to experience several barriers compared to the whole sample. **This Bill will only increase barriers to the healthcare system for young LGBTIQ+ people by prioritising the religious beliefs of a medical professional over the healthcare needs of young Australians. We need to ensure health services remain accessible to all.**

The public discourse when this Bill was first introduced and taken as an example, the public debate around matters involving Israel Filaou and Rugby Australia - had a tangible, highly negative impact on the communities Twenty10 work with and the people that engage in our services. Young people accessing our service including counselling, social support groups and those in our housing service - demonstrated and expressed additional anxiety, depression and deep feelings of being lesser than, not worthy of full participation in society and increased suicide ideation. Young people told us they drastically reduced or stopped their use of social media and the internet - which is one of the main ways they stay connected with friends, community and access information vital to their health and wellbeing.

Rates of contacts to phone and web support service QLife increased, and there was a distinct increase in abusive and offensive calls and web chat messages from people who utilised the opportunity to openly express discriminatory views about LGBTIQ+ communities and directly verbally attacked Twenty10 staff, volunteers and other young people. **'Statements of Belief' will override discrimination protections. This Bill threatens to protect and endorse those engaging in harmful dialogue, expressing hate-based opinions and enacting discriminatory behaviour. It permits harassment and vilification. This is not the future direction of Australia that values the protection of young people, celebrates diversity in all its forms and provides opportunities for all its citizens and those we welcome here.**

Any Bill that creates additional opportunities for discrimination or creates additional barriers for the communities we support and work with - and we say additional as there are already so many - will only contribute to serious and negative impacts on the lives of many Australians, both young and of all ages.

Yours sincerely,



Terence Humphreys and Jain Moralee on behalf of The Twenty-Ten Association  
Co-Executive Directors