

**Submission
No 19**

EQUALITY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (LGBTIQA+) BILL 2023

Organisation: NSW Gender Centre

Date Received: 12 April 2024



12 April 2024

Mr Clayton Barr MP
Chair of NSW Committee on Community Services
communityservices@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Chair,

GENDER CENTRE submission to the inquiry into Equality Legislation Amendment (LGBTIQA+) Bill

Thank you for the invitation to submit to the NSW Committee on Community Services Inquiry into the Equality Legislation Amendment (LGBTIQA+) Bill 2023 (NSW) (the Equality Bill).

The Gender Centre is the oldest ongoing trans-specific service in Australia and possibly the world. The GC is renowned for its comprehensive support and services for the transgender and gender diverse (TGD) community. It operates as a peak state-wide multidisciplinary centre, recognised for its broad range of specialised services aimed at facilitating the exploration of gender identity and assisting in the alleviation of gender dysphoria. The Centre is deeply committed to supporting trans and gender expressive individuals throughout their journey, enabling them to explore and live their authentic sense of self.

Our submission focuses on the aspects of the Equality Bill relevant to trans people and their families, although we also support the provisions providing protection to the many other groups covered in the bill.

Overview of our position on the Bill

The Gender Centre endorses and supports this legislation. This Bill will move NSW in line with other important advancements made for trans people and their families in Australia, updating NSW legislation would ensure that trans and gender diverse (TGD) people are able to live and prosper, just like the wider community of NSW.

We are especially relieved for changes for the recent enactment of the Conversion Practices Ban Act 2024, and continue to be hopeful that NSW might see other important changes to support TGD people and their families.

www.gendercentre.org.au

10 Lilydale St Marrickville NSW 2204
(P O Box 266 Petersham NSW 2049
Telephone (02) 9519 7599 Fax (02) 9519 8200
A .B.N. 60 374 877 609



Services for the trans
and gender diverse community

Important aspects of the Bill relevant to TGD people and families

Having identification that accurately reflects our identities without harsh and unnecessary legal restrictions means the difference between living and surviving for TGD people. NSW is the only state in Australia that still mandates surgical intervention on reproductive organs for trans and gender diverse people, even though surgical intervention is beyond the financial means of the great majority of trans people, there are currently less than 10 surgeons available in Australia, and many in the community consider surgical intervention as entirely unwanted and unnecessary. Having relevant identification however is extremely necessary. Every time a TGD person has to complete a job application, enrol for education, or open a bank account, they are open to invasive questions and are reliant on someone else's professionalism or good-will not to discriminate or harass them.

The Bill proposes that individuals aged 16 and older are able to update their gender marker with the endorsement of an adult who has known them for at least 12 months, and under 16-year-olds can do so with the support of their parent(s) or through approval from NCAT. These changes strike an important balance between the needs of children and young people to be validated in their identity, and the need to keep families engaged and supporting their young people.

The Gender Centre works with over a thousand NSW TGD families and we consider the work we do to nurture these families essential. Currently, the attempted suicide rate amongst 14 to 24-year-olds is 20 times the national average. Rates of anxiety and depression are also significantly elevated, occurring when trans children and young people are not validated in their identities. At the Gender Centre, we are privileged to see trans young people thriving amidst their loving, supportive families everyday. In our adult service, we bear witness to what happens when trans people are forced to survive with neither love nor support.

The Gender Centre is available to discuss any of the aspects of the Equality Bill that affect trans and gender diverse people, or any other issues raised in our submission.

Yours Sincerely,



Phinn Borg
Phinn Borg Executive Director
NSW Gender Centre

www.gendercentre.org.au

10 Lilydale St Marrickville NSW 2204
(P O Box 266 Petersham NSW 2049
Telephone (02) 9519 7599 Fax (02) 9519 8200
A .B.N. 60 374 877 609



Services for the trans
and gender diverse community