

**Submission
No 50**

EQUALITY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (LGBTIQA+) BILL 2023

Organisation: Twenty10
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Mr Clayton Barr MP

Chair of NSW Committee on Community Services

sent by email to: communityservices@parliament.nsw.gov.au

The Twenty Ten Association (Twenty10) submission to the inquiry into Equality Legislation Amendment (LGBTIQA+) Bill

Dear Chair,

Twenty10 are grateful for the invitation to make a submission to the NSW Committee on Community Services Inquiry into the Equality Legislation Amendment (LGBTIQA+) Bill 2023 (NSW) (the Equality Bill). Our submission provides information and insight into the realities for young LGBTIQA+ people in NSW as we experience it in our direct service provision, and is evidenced in Australian research, and how the Equality Bill will can affect positive change in the lives of young LGBTIQA+ people in NSW, as well as LGBTIQA+ people of all ages.

Twenty10 welcomes and supports the Equality Bill. This Bill will see young people, families and the broader LGBTIQA+ community experience better protections and equality in NSW, as they do in many other States and Territories across Australia. Our organisational vision is a world where LGBTIQA+ live free from discrimination and oppression and experience positive health and wellbeing outcomes and feel secure, connected, and celebrated. This Equality Bill gives up hope for the future of young LGBTIQA+ people in NSW and aligns with our vision for LGBTIQA+ people in this state.

About Twenty10

Twenty10 is Australia's largest and longest running support service for young (12-25 years) people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, asexual or have innate variations in sex characteristics, commonly known as intersex. Alongside being a community housing provider and specialist homelessness service, Twenty10 also offer free counselling, case management, psychosocial support groups, events and a range of other wrap around support services for young LGBTIQA+ people, their families and the communities that support them. We are also the NSW State partner for the national peer led phone and web-based peer support service, Qlife and deliver vital learning and development programs, building capacity in mainstream services, government and other businesses in LGBTIQA+ affirming practice.

The realities for young LGBTIQA+ people in NSW

Every day, Twenty10 sees first-hand, the harmful impacts of discrimination, stigma, harassment, and violence that young LGBTIQA+ people face in NSW. We see the barriers to safer, inclusive health care, social services support, housing, and education environments that young LGBTIQA+ people face. We see young people choose to not attend school or medical appointments, sleep rough rather than seek crisis accommodation and go without



necessities rather than access government social services, as a direct result of NSW's outdated laws and legislation. The impacts of these ongoing, harmful experiences cannot be underestimated. Poor mental health outcomes and suicidality remain at alarmingly high rates compared to non LGBTIQ+ young people, and the demand on Twenty10's services remain at an all-time high.

Currently, NSW is the only jurisdiction in Australia which requires trans and gender diverse people to undergo surgery to update their legal documents to reflect their gender. This can create unnecessary barriers to health care, housing, and employment. If someone's ID does not match their gender identity, they run the risk of having to reveal their gender assigned at birth, not being able to access appropriate and safe housing and not being able to complete everyday tasks like enrolling in study, applying for a rental property or opening a bank account – without the possibility of stigma, harassment or violence.

At Twenty10 we see young people fleeing family and domestic violence, who require crisis accommodation- who may not be able to be housed in gender appropriate housing because their legal paperwork does not match their gender. This can result in a young person remaining at home in an unsafe environment or ending up homeless or sleeping rough. These instances pose a safety risk to young LGBTIQ+ people on every level. It's also important to recognise that affirming one's gender does not involve medical or surgical intervention for all trans or gender diverse people- and is not accessible to others. The Equality Bill will see an end to unnecessary, unwanted and inaccessible surgical requirements to have someone's paperwork reflect their gender identity.

Similarly, NSW remains the only jurisdiction where any private school can expel a student (or teacher) because they are gay, lesbian, or transgender. Twenty10 regularly hear from students, or families and friends supporting students who are experiencing crippling bullying and harassment due to their gender or sexuality in private and / or faith-based school settings. This can result in young people reducing their contact hours with school, dropping out of school and in the worst-case circumstances, self-harm or die by suicide. The Equality Bill will better protect LGBTIQ+ people in education settings, which is necessary for all young people to be able to focus on their education, feeling safe in learning environments and feeling affirmed in who they are to move on their next stage in life. We are compelled to ensure this opportunity is afforded to all young people in NSW.

As a direct service provider for young LGBTIQ+ people, and with contact with the families and communities that care and support young LGBTIQ+ people, we cannot recommend enough that the NSW Government pass this proposed *Equality Legislation Amendment (LGBTIQ+) Bill*. The recent bipartisan support for the *Conversion Practices Ban Act 2024* instilled great hope for LGBTIQ+ communities in NSW. Before us is another opportunity to reduce the systemic, external levers of discrimination, which will contribute to reduced instances of bullying, harassment, and violence.



Whilst this submission does not address all proposed legislative amendments of the proposed Equality Bill, Twenty10 supports the Bill in its entirety and has endorsed a more detailed submission from Equality Australia.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide this submission, and we look forward to being able to share any further supporting information.

Yours sincerely,

Jain Moralee,

CEO, The Twenty Ten Association