



A Gender Agenda
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Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

30 August 2023

Senate Inquiry into Murdoch Media – Private Members Bill

Dear Secretary,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Standing Committee regarding the Murdoch Media Inquiry Bill 2023. A Gender Agenda welcomes the opportunity to respond to the proposed bill. A Gender Agenda offers our submission to highlight the impact of media reporting as it currently exists on the trans, gender diverse and intersex communities of the ACT. We endorse the submission provided by Transgender Victoria (TGV).

A Gender Agenda is a community organisation that aims to support the needs of the trans, gender diverse and intersex populations of the Australian Capital Territory and surrounding areas. We provide this support through peer navigation and community engagement, social and professional networking, training and education, and advocacy. We aim to ensure that all intersex, trans and gender diverse people are healthy and nurtured, visible and respected, and included in all aspects of Australian life.

Trans, gender diverse and intersex people are a natural part of the diverse experiences of humans. However, due to stigma, discrimination, prejudice and misinformation, these communities are disproportionately represented in statistics regarding poor mental health outcomes, suicide, and violence (including domestic, family and intimate partner violence). For intersex, trans and gender diverse young people, safety in schools and workplaces, and access to health care contribute significantly to these experiences. As is highlighted by various sources, analysis of media since 2020 has shown an increase in negatively biased reports about the trans community – an increase that correlates with an increase in experiences of anti-trans hatred and violence¹. Despite adjudications by the Australian Press Council against such media reporting, similar media disinformation has continued to spread, with regular reports and stories over 2023 that were factually inaccurate, or blurred lines between opinion and factual reporting, focussing on the trans and gender diverse community.

¹ 2023 [“Fuelling Hate: Abuse Harassment Vilification and Violence Against Trans People In Australia”](#) Trans Justice Project and Victorian Pride Lobby August 2023



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A Gender Agenda welcomes the call for an inquiry into the press treatment of marginalised communities, as proposed by Senator Hanson-Young's bill (see section 7 – Terms of Reference). Specifically, the treatment of trans, gender diverse and intersex people at the hands of the media over recent years has had a direct and tangible impact on our communities. The consistent and negative reporting of issues affecting trans and gender diverse young people, generally by NewsCorp owned media, but not in any way only by these news outlets, has fuelled fear and distress in the community we serve. The impact of negative media on the health and wellbeing of marginalised communities is well documented, and the recently released *Fuelling Trans Hate* report highlights the impacts specifically on the trans community in relation to dis and misinformation as spread through the media². Similarly, following such media activity, negative and transphobic responses to our social media activities increases, as does other sources of transphobia and anti-trans discrimination.

Press standards seeking to ensure the accurate reflection of fact or opinion in media seem to be routinely ignored, and this has been outlined in other documents and reports. Within A Gender Agenda's community, the negative impact of the anti-trans sentiment in the media has been keenly felt. Reports of feeling unsafe in relation to the media have been made. Angst around how particular issues (positive and negative) will be taken up in the media, and the adverse impact this might have on community has also been reported, including in relation to positive events and achievements. Likewise, the impact of the anti-trans sentiment in the media has been reported as negatively effecting the experiences of people with intersex variations, particularly as people conflate the experiences of intersex people with those of the trans community.

A Gender Agenda firmly believes the trans, gender diverse and intersex communities of Australia, along with all marginalised communities, deserve to thrive. These communities need to be afforded the dignity and respect afforded all other communities, and media reporting is called on to do better to protect and uphold the human rights of all people. We therefore fully support the mechanisms offered in the bill to ensure that media is actively responsible for the impact of their reporting on marginalised communities. While a disproportionate amount of negative reporting is produced by NewsCorp affiliated press, it is not true to state that these outlets are solely responsible. We would therefore support that an inquiry involve media in general in Australia, ensuring that all media is held to account with regard to the Australian Press Council's Principles and Standards, in a way that ensures the dignity and respect for the human rights of trans, gender diverse and intersex people is central.

Kind regards,

Vik Fraser

Executive Director

² 2023 "[Fuelling Hate: Abuse Harassment Vilification and Violence Against Trans People In Australia](#)" Trans Justice Project and Victorian Pride Lobby August 2023

