

From: [Tracie O'Keefe](#)
To: [Committee, MHSP \(REPS\)](#)
Subject: RE: Public Hearing Invitation - Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Committee - Sydney [SEC=OFFICIAL]
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FAO Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

Thank you for inviting me to speak at the hearing on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention on behalf of Sex and Gender Education (Australia), Monday 26.7.2021.

During the hearing two particular questions were asked so here is addition information for the committee:

1. **What besides minority stress drives people from sex and/or gender diverse (SGD) group to suicide?**

The World Health Organization's statistics for Australia in 2016 were a rate of completed suicides of 5.7 deaths per 100,000 people in the general population. When we compare that against Australian studies of SGD groups that show suicidal thoughts can run up to 70% and attempts of up to 45-50% of that population, we can see they are the most vulnerable groups to suicide in Australia.

Other studies show, however, that the rate of psychopathology in SGD groups runs at the same rate as the general population of 5% so we are not looking at these groups having a greater susceptibility to psychopathological-driven suicidation.

Therefore, what we are really seeing statistically and from community reporting is a social phenomenon where people from SGD groups are driven to suicidation by the pressures of discrimination, isolation, social exclusion, rejection in the workforce, housing, medical system and ensuing poverty.

2. **What laws need changing?**

The Australian legal system is based on common law and inherited colonial Anglo Saxon Christian values, even though Australia has never had an official religion. It is heteronormative and cisgendered-favoured to the extent that it is frequently intersex, trans and gender diverse phobic.

Australia still allows non-emergency, non-consensual surgery on intersex children to alter their genitals that frequently causes medical and life problems later in life, which is clearly sexual assault.

Many people cannot get official documents that reflect their lived identity.

In some states people who transition from their natal registered sex and gender are refused identity-appropriate documents unless they have genital surgery, which may not be medically safe for them, they cannot afford or they simply do not want to undergo such life-threatening procedures.

The Sex Discrimination Act has a clause in it that allows religious people and organisations to discriminate against people from SGD groups. This allows them to be excluded from education, work, housing, medical treatment and services on religious grounds. It elevates religious privilege and demeans and disadvantages people from SGD groups. The clause must be removed from all legislation.

Australian laws, state and federal, must all be brought into line to remove all discrimination against people from SGD groups to dramatically reduce social disadvantage, minority stress and suicidation.

The laws presently being review and formed that run the danger of increasing discrimination:

Sex Discrimination and Fair Work (Respect at Work) Amendment Bill 2021
Online Safety Bill 2020 (short title – Online Safety Act, 2020
(Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts)

Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill
2020 introduced into NSW

Australian Religious Discrimination Bill: December, 2019

Thank you for your kind time and attention.

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