



Women's Human Rights Campaign

Women sidelined by peak sporting organisations

Women appear to have been sidelined by the announcement of 8 peak national sporting organisations to commit to new guidelines for the inclusion for transgender people in their sports.

" These Australian national sporting organisations have failed to consult meaningfully with women on this issue or to consider the impact of these guidelines on fairness and safety in women's sport. It is disappointing after the recent findings by World Rugby and the IOC recognising that biological males have significant physiological sporting advantages" says Kath Deves, spokesperson for Save Women's Sport Australasia,

"AFL have signed up to these "inclusive" measures while they still prohibit females over the age of 14 years from competing in the men's league out of concern for "player welfare". It is hypocritical to then allow male-bodied persons to play in the women's league which will increase the risk of injury to female players and further reduce female participation."

According to Anna Kerr of Feminist Legal Clinic Inc. "Women who attempt to speak out about this unfairness are being actively silenced, as we have seen with the treatment of Senator Claire Chandler and journalist Beth Rep. We are already receiving complaints of sporting associations subjecting women to unsafe conditions playing against aggressive males and when women complain they are accused of discrimination and it is they who are excluded. It is only a matter of time before we see negligence claims being made for injuries arising out of this breach of duty of care. "

"Unfortunately, the Guidelines issued in 2019 by the Australian Human Rights Commission effectively undermined the clear exemption under section 42 of the *Sex Discrimination Act* for "participation in any competitive sporting activity in which the strength, stamina or physique of competitors is relevant." says Kerr.

The Women's Human Rights Campaign (WHRC) is a group of volunteer women from across the globe dedicated to protecting women's sex-based rights as articulated in the Declaration on Women's Sex-Based Rights which has over 12,000 signatories and is supported by 265 organisations across 122 countries. Article 7 of Declaration on Women's Sex-Based Rights requires that "to ensure fairness and safety for women and girls the entry of boys and men who claim to have female 'gender identities' into teams, competitions, facilities, or changing rooms, interalia , set aside for women and girls should be prohibited as a form of sex discrimination".

For further comment, please contact:

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