



SENATOR CLAIRE CHANDLER

Liberal Senator for Tasmania

Cr Clover Moore
Lord Mayor
City of Sydney
cmoore@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

Dear Lord Mayor

I have been contacted by supporters of the Sydney-based Feminist Legal Clinic about attempts by City of Sydney staff to censor statements by the Clinic in relation to women's sex-based rights.

In my view the demands contained within correspondence from the City of Sydney to the Clinic dated 24 July 2020 represent an egregious attempt at censorship and curtailing of free speech. The City's demands that the Clinic removes material the City doesn't like from its website, that they "*immediately cease hosting or promoting events, publishing social media posts, or distributing newsletters and other publications*" and the statement that Council officers will "*conduct regular reviews of material to ensure compliance*" and will withdraw the Clinic's eligibility for the accommodation grants program if it doesn't comply are Orwellian and authoritarian.

Further, the statement in the letter that "*the City is of the view that the Feminist Legal Clinic's affiliation with the Women's Sex Based Rights movement*" promotes an "agenda" which is not acceptable to the City of Sydney, suggests that your city does not respect freedom of association, nor the rights of women and girls to appropriate single-sex services. I trust that this is not actually the City's position.

I note that the City of Sydney's correspondence states that the City will not support any activities that are considered to discriminate on the basis of sex, or contribute to the inhibition of human rights generally. It would be appropriate for Councillors to reflect on how the City's own correspondence may limit the human rights of those involved in the Clinic, particularly the rights to freedom of opinion and expression, including the right to hold opinions without interference and to impart information and ideas through any media (UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 19), and the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association (Article 20).

I am sure that you and your fellow councillors are aware of ongoing debate around the world about how self-identification of gender creates a potential conflict of rights with the rights of women to appropriate sex-based facilities and services. Regardless of personal views about how to manage this conflict of rights, I hope you will agree that it is not appropriate to use a threat of

withdrawal of funding to prevent people or groups on either side of this debate from expressing their views.

I look forward to your timely response and hope that the threat of censorship and withdrawal of funding eligibility for the Feminist Legal Clinic is withdrawn.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Chandler', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Senator Claire Chandler
Liberal Senator for Tasmania