

Subject: RE: ABC's coverage of transgenderism in young people
From: ABC Corporate_Affairs6 <Corporate_Affairs6.ABC@abc.net.au>
Date: 22/3/22, 1:12 pm
To: "anna@feministlegal.org" <anna@feministlegal.org>

Dear Ms Kerr,

Thank you for your email regarding the ABC News story, '[Young Australians are exploring gender more than ever before](#)'. I am responding on behalf of the ABC.

Your email was referred to Audience and Consumer Affairs, a unit which is separate to and independent of content areas within the ABC. Our role is to review and, where appropriate, investigate complaints alleging that ABC content has breached the ABC's editorial standards. These standards are explained in our Editorial Policies which are available here – <https://edpols.abc.net.au/policies/>. Impartiality standards are in section 4 and are interpreted in accordance with the accompanying principles. These note that the ABC aims to present, over time, content that addresses a broad range of subjects from a diversity of perspectives reflecting a diversity of experiences.

The story which is the subject of your complaint reported that more young people in Australia are exploring their gender and resources to help them are stretched. Audience and Consumer Affairs observe that this story presented the views and experiences of two young people who had had or were in the process of seeking help from a gender clinic. One young person was on a long wait list and has not yet had an appointment; the other young person received help from a gender clinic and ultimately decided that she was comfortable with her birth gender. She said the assistance she received from the gender clinic helped her to work through her thoughts and embrace her identity. The story also included the views of a paediatrician who works to help support transgender young people and their families. In view of the focus and scope of the story, Audience and Consumer Affairs are satisfied that it presented an appropriate diversity of views and was duly impartial. However, your comments and views about other lines of enquiry the ABC should pursue have been made available to ABC News.

Thank you for giving the ABC the opportunity to respond to your concerns.

Yours sincerely,

Kirstin McLiesh
Head, Audience and Consumer Affairs

To: Audience & Consumer Affairs
From: Anna Kerr (anna@feministlegal.org)
Subject: ABC's coverage of transgenderism in young people
Date: 21-Mar-2022 4:32

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by Anna Kerr (anna@feministlegal.org)

ABC program: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-03-14/takeover-young-australians-are-exploring-gender-more-than-ever/100890296>

Response required: Yes

Date of program: 14-Mar-2022

Contact type: Complaint

Location: NSW

Subject: ABC's coverage of transgenderism in young people

Comments: Dear Ms Buttrose

Re: ABC's coverage of transgenderism in young people

Feminist Legal Clinic Inc. is a community legal service based in Sydney that works to advance the human rights of women and girls. Our service is operated by volunteers and does not receive any corporate or government funding.

We refer specifically to the article by Jacqueline Howard published online by the ABC on 14 March 2022 titled Young Australians Are Exploring Gender More Than Ever Before. We are concerned that the biased and unbalanced nature of this report, like so much of the ABC's coverage on this topic, is contributing to an environment where children and young people, particularly girls, are being exposed to considerable harm.

This news piece generalises statistics provided only for the state of Victoria to the whole of Australia to claim that youth are seeking gender-related interventions 'more than ever before'. However, there is no discussion of the reasons behind why children are increasingly seeking these medical interventions. Research by Professor Dianna Kenny (2020) demonstrates that the rise in the popularity of these interventions among children is not taking place in a vacuum but is concentrated in areas proximate to gender clinics. Victoria, which has had the largest numbers and the largest increases, is also a state where the trans lobby has been particularly vocal and where the Safe Schools policy was first conceived and implemented.

The increasingly legalised denial of the material reality of sex in the form of self-identification laws, the saturation of social media with gender ideology and the capitulation of institutions like schools, academia, and the health professions to the demands of the aggressive trans lobby, have contributed to a cult-like culture which endorses medical experimentation on the bodies of children and other vulnerable people. Unfortunately, the ABC has consistently failed to provide coverage of this context, leaving it to right wing media to report on the persecution of feminist academics, health professionals and other activists who dare to question this oppressive and dangerous ideology. Instead, the ABC has chosen to increase content that uncritically celebrates transgenderism.

Howard's article cites a medical academic, Dr Ken Pang, who says the risks of puberty blockers are 'minor'. However, this does not accord with the findings of the interim report of the Cass Review into the Tavistock Gender Clinic in the United Kingdom or recent statements by the French National Academy of Medicine and Sweden's National Board of Health and Welfare released in the last month. These countries are rapidly changing course and no longer advocate the affirmation model of treatment for gender dysphoria in children. It is of great concern that none of these significant international developments are mentioned in Howard's article and have also failed to receive appropriate coverage by the ABC generally.

Gender ideology has done extensive damage to the hard-won rights of women and girls in Australia

and around the world. The notion of gender identity feeds on the sexist stereotypes and misogyny that girls battle as they grow into adulthood. It misleads girls into believing they can opt out of their structural oppression by simply identifying as male and making harmful alterations to their bodies. Our service is actively engaged in supporting young women who, like Keira Bell in the United Kingdom, have detransitioned and deeply regret the use of hormones and surgeries in pursuit of this impossible goal. They tell a very different story from that presented in Howard's article, which irresponsibly minimises the risks involved in these medical interventions.

Humans are a dimorphic species – they are either male or female, and the sex of each individual is immutable. The use of hormones and superficial cosmetic procedures cannot alter this fact, although it is likely to result in loss of sexual and reproductive function. In view of this reality, encouraging children to undergo the harmful and irreversible medical procedures recommended for 'transition' is unethical in the extreme and paves the way for litigation in the future.

We implore you to ensure the ABC publishes corrections and addendums where appropriate and commits to taking a more critical approach to the coverage of transgender issues in the future. Women and children deserve to be told the truth about this very dangerous ideology.

Please do not hesitate to contact me by email or on 0402 467 if more information is required.

Yours faithfully

Anna Kerr
Principal Solicitor

Network – ABC Online
RecipientName – Audience & Consumer Affairs
Referrer – Complaint

Please consider the environment before printing this e-mail.

The information contained in this email and any attachment is confidential and may contain legally privileged or copyright material. It is intended only for the use of the addressee(s). If you are not the intended recipient of this email, you are not permitted to disseminate, distribute or copy this email or any attachments. If you have received this message in error, please notify the sender immediately and delete this email from your system. The ABC does not represent or warrant that this transmission is secure or virus free. Before opening any attachment you should check for viruses. The ABC's liability is limited to resupplying any email and attachments.