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The Hon Alan Tudge MP
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Sunday 6 June 2021

By email: alan.tudge.mp@aph.gov.au

Dear Minister

Gender Affirmation Guidelines Undermining Academic Freedom

FLC is a not for profit community legal service based in Sydney that works to advance the human rights of women and girls. We have been contacted by academics who are concerned by the imposition of a "[Gender Affirmation Guideline](#)" on university staff and students at the University of NSW. We are aware that similar oppressive measures have been adopted by other major universities around the country.

We are writing to you as the Minister for Education and Youth responsible for these tertiary institutions. It is very concerning to see one of Australia's leading universities publishing a document which conflates and confuses the concept of biological sex with that of socially constructed notions of gender identity. It is also disturbing to see them refusing to uphold women's rights to sex specific facilities and opportunities and thereby failing in their duty of care to prioritise the safety and well-being of their female students. Furthermore, this document may well unwittingly encourage some young people to take harmful action which they may later deeply regret. Our work with individuals who have detransitioned indicates that the risks associated with a heavy-handed gender affirmation approach are considerable.

Your Facebook post of 7 April 2021 indicates that you are committed to the protection of freedom of speech on university campuses. While this "Gender Affirmation Guideline" may have been introduced with the best of intentions, in practice it has the effect of curtailing academic freedom and preventing much needed discussion and debate on a topic of significant public interest. Indeed, it effectively mandates that staff embrace contentious gender ideology under threat of disciplinary proceedings if a student complains that they have not been sufficiently supported in their gender affirmation.

We note that this guideline defers to the authority of ACON's Transhub Glossary for guidance as to "correct terminology and language". We are aware that ACON is involved in setting an agenda in NSW in a variety of contexts that is significantly harmful to the human rights of women and children. We note this organisation is affiliated with international groups such as ILGA, which receive considerable funding to advance trans ideology and the sex industry. We attach a recent media release which reflects on its other priorities. It is disturbing that ACON is now dictating the language and actions to be adopted by the state's leading academics.

We would appreciate hearing from you as soon as possible about what your office is doing to ensure this guideline, and others like it, are withdrawn from universities and other educational institutions. Please do not hesitate to contact the writer on 0402 467476 if further information is required. We are happy to meet with you and expand on our concerns if required.

Yours faithfully



Anna Kerr
Principal Solicitor