



Feminist Legal Clinic Inc.

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Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash
Attorney-General
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By Email: senator.cash@aph.gov.au

Monday 16 August 2021

Dear Attorney-General

The harm caused by extreme gender ideology

Feminist Legal Clinic Inc. is a community legal service that works to advance the human rights of women and girls through a combination of targeted casework, community legal education and law reform work. We would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Attorney General and also for a voting record that suggests consistent courage in opposing extreme and harmful transgender ideology.

In addition to our domestic violence advocacy work and coordinating a support service in the Sydney Family Court, our service also takes on discrimination cases. In this capacity, we are now regularly contacted by women who are defending claims against them as a result of having commented on the reality of physiological differences between the sexes. We are concerned that women are being sacked, censored or otherwise disciplined for defending women's sex-based rights, whether on social media, on the sporting field or at work. Indeed, our own tenancy with the City of Sydney Council has recently been terminated as a result of our refusal to censor our website on this increasingly important topic.

Prior to lockdown, our service also hosted a support group for "Australian Parents Questioning Gender" and during these meetings we have heard many distressing stories about the harm done to children when fast tracked onto puberty blockers which are almost invariably followed by cross sex hormones and often surgical interventions, justified as "gender affirmation". Our service also provides rare support for women who have detransitioned, including one client who lives with the regret of having had a mastectomy and hysterectomy by 21 years of age following only a single consultation with a psychiatrist. We have put her in touch with a suitable law firm who is preparing a medical negligence claim on her behalf.

Aside from the rising numbers of detransitioners, you may be familiar with the various international developments that would seem to herald a reversal in the affirmation approach being taken to children presenting with gender dysphoria. These include the *Bell v Tavistock* High Court case and the Cass Review in the UK, changed treatment guidelines issued by COHERE in Finland and the Karolinska Institute in Sweden and words of caution from the clinical pioneers of the original Dutch protocol upon which the affirmation model was originally based.

Recent research conducted by clinicians from the Gender Clinic at our own Westmead Children's Hospital in Sydney record high rates of adverse childhood experiences and comorbidities in those presenting with gender dysphoria which suggest a need for ongoing therapeutic work rather than the hasty hormonal interventions which characterise the current affirmation approach. Other research records the exponential increase of gender dysphoria in children, particularly girls, which would appear to spread as a social contagion.

Despite the changed recommendations from those who first advocated the affirmation model, in Australia there is still active promotion of "gender transition" for those who do not conform to sex stereotypes and encouragement for confused and distressed children to use puberty blockers, chest binding, cross sex hormones and even surgeries. The media, schools and universities, hospitals and health services, including government websites, continue to disseminate material that conflates biological sex with socially constructed concepts of gender and to perpetuate the myth that it is possible to change sex. In allowing this narrative to go unchecked, our public institutions are breaching their duty of care to the many young people who will end up maimed and sterilised. Unfortunately, many individuals, including health professionals and journalists, have invested their hopes and credibility in a flawed model and are having difficulty changing course.

We appreciate that due to extensive censorship and the skewed media reporting taking place some members of government, and the public generally, may be unaware of recent international developments and research indicating the harmful impact of unbridled trans ideology on children. As Australian country contact for the international Women's Human Rights Campaign (WHRC), please let me know if there is any way we can support you with raising awareness of the very real harm caused by ill-advised recommendations based on flawed science. We would be happy to meet with you or your colleagues, put you in touch with well-informed health professionals or provide more detailed briefing notes or case studies if desired. We urge you to consider how you and the government can limit the fallout from this emerging medical scandal. My number is 0402 467476 if required.

Yours faithfully



Anna Kerr
Principal Solicitor