



## Crossing the line:

Lived experience of sexual violence among trans women of colour from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds in Australia

*Key findings and future directions*

ANROWS

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ORGANISATION FOR WOMEN'S SAFETY  
*to Reduce Violence against Women & their Children*

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ANROWS Research to policy and practice papers are concise papers that summarise key findings of research on violence against women and their children, including research produced under ANROWS's research program, and provide advice on the implications for policy and practice.

This is an edited summary of key findings from ANROWS research "Crossing the line: Lived experience of sexual violence among trans women of colour from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in Australia". Please consult the ANROWS website for more information on this project and the full project report: Ussher, J. M., Hawkey, A., Perz, J., Liamputtong, P., Marjadi, B., Schmied, V., Dune, T., Sekar, J.A., Ryan, S., Charter, R., Thepsourinthone, J., Noack-Lundberg, K., & Brook, E. (2020). *Crossing the line: Lived experience of sexual violence among trans women of colour from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds in Australia* (Research report 14/2020). Sydney: ANROWS.

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ANROWS research contributes to the six National Outcomes of the *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022*. This research addresses National Plan Outcome 4—Services meet the needs of women and their children experiencing violence.

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

ANROWS acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land across Australia on which we work and live. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present, and future, and we value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, and knowledge. We are committed to standing and working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, honouring the truths set out in the [Warawarni-gu Guma Statement](#).

### **Acknowledgement of lived experiences of violence**

ANROWS acknowledges the lives and experiences of the women and children affected by domestic, family and sexual violence who are represented in this report. We recognise the individual stories of courage, hope and resilience that form the basis of ANROWS research.

Caution: Some people may find parts of this content confronting or distressing. Recommended support services include 1800 RESPECT—1800 737 732 and Lifeline—13 11 14.

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# Crossing the line: Lived experience of sexual violence among trans women of colour from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds in Australia

## BACKGROUND

- Sexual violence is a pervasive and damaging experience in many women's lives.
- Trans women experience higher rates of sexual violence than cisgender women, with trans women of colour at highest risk.
- The experiences and needs of trans women in relation to sexual violence remain poorly understood by many healthcare providers, legislators, police and policymakers. The experiences and needs of trans women of colour and those from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities are the least understood.
- The absence of culturally competent information and knowledge about transgender experience, accompanied by misinformation, can lead to stigma, prejudice and discrimination, resulting in unmet needs for trans women. This can have serious consequences for trans women's physical and psychological wellbeing.

## KEY FINDINGS

- There are positive implications for trans women's overall health and wellbeing when trans women feel included and accepted.
- Trans women of colour from CALD backgrounds, as well as women who identify as lesbian, bisexual or queer, may experience additional prejudice and discrimination due to the intersection of gender, sexuality, social class, race and religion.
- Support in gender transitioning, through facilitation of access to hormone therapy, reduces the risk of transphobic violence.
- CALD trans women's experiences of gender-based sexual violence are comparable with those of non-CALD trans women and cisgender women, however trans women also experience transphobic violence.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Conduct further awareness-raising and education for healthcare providers, legislators, police and policymakers, as well as the general public, in relation to transgender experience and gender transitioning.
- Challenge societal attitudes which support, condone or trivialise sexual violence against women, including violence against trans women.
- Ensure policy and practice documents and clinical guidelines use language that is inclusive of gender and sexuality diversity when discussing sexual violence against women.

# Trans women of colour experiencing sexual violence are often overlooked

In the era of the #MeToo movement, the social justice campaign which serves to empower women to voice experiences of sexual violence, there is a growing awareness that for many women, sexual violence is everywhere. Sexual violence is so normalised in women's lives that many do not report it, or fear the consequences of making a complaint. Women who report sexual violence are frequently disbelieved—one quarter of Australians are unaware that false allegations of sexual assault are rare (Webster et al., 2018)—exposed to attack within the legal system, and face negative social and relational consequences. Some women are more likely to be subjected to sexual violence, more likely to have their complaints dismissed, and more likely to be socially ostracised for making a complaint. Trans women of colour living in Australia, from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, are one such group, but they are often overlooked in national statistics or research on sexual violence against women.

## A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

Trans women depicted in this research used a range of terms to describe their gender identity, including "non-binary transfeminine", "genderfluid", "transgender female", "female", "sistergirl", "genderqueer", "woman", "trans woman" and "fa'afafine". While acknowledging this variation, this research uses the term "trans woman" which emerged as a generic term used to describe the participants' sense of community and commonality with others with a similar gender identity, and the term "women" when reporting findings. Sexual identity of research participants included straight (heterosexual), gay, lesbian, queer, bisexual, pansexual, asexual and fluid. For non-heterosexual identities, the research employs the term queer and the acronym LGBTIQ+ to refer to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer communities. The research uses women of colour to refer to the ethnic identities of the trans women interviewed as it was preferred by participants. The term CALD is used to describe culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to distinguish between white, Anglo-Australians and culturally and linguistically diverse Australians.

# Trans women experience higher rates of sexual violence than cisgender women

International research indicates trans women are at higher risk of sexual violence than cisgender women (James, 2016; National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 2014, 2015, 2016). In Australia, a recent survey of trans and gender diverse people that asked participants “Have you ever been forced or frightened into doing something sexually that you did not want to do?” reported that 53.2 percent had experienced sexual violence compared to 13.3 percent of the broader Australian population (Callander et al., 2019). Trans women of colour face discrimination and violence on the basis of the intersection of their gender and racial identities and, for some, their sexual identities as queer women. However, there is an absence of Australian research investigating the experiences of sexual violence among trans women of colour.

The experiences and needs of trans women in relation to sexual violence remain poorly understood by many healthcare providers, legislators, police and policymakers, with the experiences and needs of trans women of colour from CALD backgrounds being the least understood. The absence of culturally competent information and knowledge about transgender experience, accompanied by misinformation, can lead to stigma, prejudice and discrimination, resulting in unmet needs for trans women. This can have serious consequences for trans women’s physical and psychological wellbeing. Trans women of colour from a CALD background, as well as women who identify as lesbian, bisexual or queer, may experience additional prejudice and discrimination, due to the intersection of gender, sexuality, race and religion.

## THE ANROWS RESEARCH PROJECT

“Crossing the line: Lived experience of sexual violence among trans women of colour from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds in Australia” by Professor Jane M. Ussher, Dr Alex Hawkey, Professor Janette Perz, Professor Pranee Liamputtong, Dr Brahmaputra Marjadi, Professor Virginia Schmied, Dr Tinashe Dune, Jessica Aasha Sekar, Samantha Ryan, Rosie Charter, Jack Thepsourinthone, Dr Kyja Noack-Lundberg and Dr Eloise Brook

The research was conducted by researchers based in the Translational Health Research Institute at Western Sydney University, with practice expertise provided by the Gender Centre. The project aim was to increase understanding of the lived experience of being a trans woman of colour living in Australia, in relation to gender transitioning and experiences of sexual violence. The project used a sequential mixed methods design and a feminist intersectional approach to address this aim. The research design, data collection and analysis, and outcomes from the findings were underpinned by principles of integrated knowledge translation, which included input from an advisory group and trans community stakeholders, integrating lived experience into the knowledge production and translation process.

Study methods included:

- thirty-one interviews with trans women of colour, and follow-up interviews with 19 women which included photovoice<sup>1</sup>
- analysis of thirty-nine online forum threads, with 480 unique posters and 950 comments, in relation to discussion of trans sexual violence
- a national survey exploring sexual violence and women’s responses to violence that included:
  - trans women, i.e. assigned male at birth (n=180), 15 percent of whom were CALD
  - cisgender heterosexual women (n=1249), 8 percent of whom were CALD
  - cisgender lesbian, bisexual or queer women (n=866), 13 percent of whom were CALD.

Quotes appearing in this paper come from interviews and surveys with women carried out as part of the study, and also appear in the full report.

See [anrows.org.au](http://anrows.org.au) for the full report.

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<sup>1</sup> Photovoice is an empowering qualitative method used in community participatory research, where participants are asked to express their points of view or represent their communities by photographing scenes that highlight their experience. The photos and accompanying narratives (which can be viewed in the full research report) aim to help policymakers and practitioners better understand trans women.

# Key findings

## Gender transitioning is a complex process

Thematic analysis of interview and photovoice data suggested that gender transitioning<sup>2</sup> is a complex process that takes place over time, with awareness of the desire to transition often starting in childhood or adolescence. While transitioning is not a linear process, all women described it as an experience of finding their true self, with positive consequences for health and wellbeing. Women described expression of their feminine or trans identity as a process of embodied agency, involving the adoption of feminine appearance, often accompanied by hormone therapy. Although expression of femininity often took a lot of labour, it was associated with pleasure and self-expression.

During the process of gender transition, many women experienced transphobic sexual harassment and assault, which they had not experienced previously. Passing as a woman resulted in social acceptance and reduced the risk of transphobic violence. However, some women found it difficult to pass if they did not meet narrow definitions of white hetero-femininity. Many women developed their own version of femininity, subverting the hetero-feminine beauty ideal, with some women making no attempt to pass. The intersection of femininity, cultural identity and sexual identity was often expressed through culturally specific clothes, jewellery or makeup.

Women who experienced support and acceptance of their feminine expression and identity from family, friends and work colleagues reported a positive experience of gender transitioning. However, many women described a difficult journey towards social acceptance, experiencing intersecting racism and transphobia in public, as well as within work spaces and the queer community. Rejection and attempts to prevent gender transitioning from family members was common. In combination, these sometimes led to women feeling isolated, invisible and unsupported.

Narratives from trans women in this research demonstrate the important role that family, partners, friends, healthcare professionals, the wider LGBTIQ+ community and the workplace all have on trans women's identity, sense of belonging and self-esteem. It reveals positive implications for women's overall health and wellbeing when women feel included and accepted.



*Literally the experience was this, I went in. I sat down. I explained to her that I have been presenting female for a long time now. I'd like to go forward and start HRT [hormone replacement therapy]. And she was like, "Okay, cool. I'm not in a position to question your experience." That's a quote from her. And I was like, "That's really positive to hear. I think I'm in the right place."*

(Dora)

<sup>2</sup> The term gender affirmation is increasingly being used in place of gender transition. As the participants in this study described a process of gender transition, this is the term the research has employed.

## Experiences of migration can intersect with sexual violence

Sexual violence often commenced in childhood and, for some trans women, motivated them to migrate.

Many trans women of colour seek to leave their country of origin to escape violence, persecution, family abuse or rejection, and economic disadvantage related specifically to their gender identity (Alessi, Kahn, Woolner, & Van Der Horn, 2018). Some trans women also report migrating in order to access better healthcare, education and employment, and to experience gender affirmation without fear of violence (Cerezo, Morales, Quintero, & Rothman, 2014; Munro et al., 2013). For some interview subjects, migration facilitated publicly transitioning, particularly for women who came from countries where being gender diverse or transgender was not accepted.



*In Argentina ... I didn't have the courage to come out because I was in a really violent household ... So I think I had it in me that I couldn't come out like I was lost. So to me, going to Australia, was the exit, like the paradise, freedom, you know what I mean?*

(Sofia)

Across all studies examined in this research, there was acknowledgement of the lack of migration services that are both trans *and* culturally competent. As a result, many trans women of colour feel locked out of broader migrant services due to perceptions of transphobia in the broader migrant community. Trans women who are migrants or refugees may be let down by immigration services, and encounter barriers additional to those already experienced by cisgender migrant and refugee women (see also Vaughan et al., 2016).

## Sexual violence is a common experience for trans women of colour

The interview, online forum and survey data all demonstrated that sexual violence is a common experience for trans women. This included both sexual harassment and sexual assault, occurring in both the public and private domains. Trans women of colour reported similar experiences to trans women from non-CALD backgrounds, exacerbated by racism within both society at large and queer communities (Cyrus, 2017; Giwa & Greensmith, 2012). Notions of a broad and supportive LGBTIQ+ community may therefore have little meaning for trans women of colour.



*Queers don't organise violent gangs to go round bashing people, but they do exclude people from communities which results in the death of people who don't—who no longer have access to their social networks or they feel like they can't rely on their community.*

(Dinaz)

## Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment that served to cross people's boundaries included trans women being objectified and positioned as other, being stared at, or having their gender commented upon in the public domain. This often resulted in women being hypersexualised or outed as trans or as a man, which could lead to social exclusion, or a situation of danger for the woman. Many women were deliberately misgendered in their interactions with others, or were subjected to transphobic and derogatory comments, including being mocked, insulted, laughed at, and threatened with physical or sexual violence. The intersection of gender, cultural identity, and sexual identity was evident in accounts of combined sexism, racism, homophobia and transphobia, sometimes from strangers, and sometimes within the queer community.

Sometimes women were uncertain as to whether verbal harassment was directed at them as women, experiencing "catcalling" similar to that reported by cisgender women, or was transphobic abuse because they were trans women who don't pass as women. The fear of being murdered was shared by many trans women, who described feeling anxious about presenting as a woman in a social context. Catcalling could be a confidence booster for some trans women, however it also has a dangerous undercurrent.



*For me, one of the most common and, like, ignored sexual violence is catcalling, because it's not just guys telling you, "Hey beautiful", "Hey this, hey that", or calling you names, or saying sexual stuff to you. It's the feeling that you get when guys actually do that because for me as a trans woman, I feel like if the guy is trying to hit on me and if they found out later on that I'm trans, they're going to be mad at me and my life is going to be in danger.*

(Jennifer)

The pervasiveness of verbal violence in the lives of trans women meant there were very few places where the women were safe from abuse.

## Sexual assault

Physical and sexual assault which served to cross bodily boundaries included women being beaten up, spat upon, and groped, as well as subjected to online violence and forced sex/rape, usually in the public domain. There were also accounts of violence and sexual assault in the context of the family when women were younger; when dating new partners, where fetishisation can also occur; and within intimate relationships. Complexities surrounding disclosure of trans identity when beginning an intimate relationship with a cisgender man were associated with risk of violence.



*I think because a lot of people do want to hurt us ... they feel guilty about finding us hot, they want to have sex with us but then they also have a lot of internalised homophobia, transphobia, a lot of cis straight dudes find trans women hot, and then they get the gay fear when they are engaged in sex.*

(Dinaz)

Some women worked as sex workers, one of the few occupations open to them, and reported experiencing sexual violence from clients, reflecting earlier research by Fletcher (2013). Trans women who were sex workers were more vulnerable in contexts where sex work is criminalised or has implemented a licensing system, such as Queensland.

## Sexual coercion

The research highlighted unrealistic sexual expectations that cisgender men have of trans women, often associated with fetishisation. As one community stakeholder explained: “There is a huge rift between how trans bodies function and how trans women experience pleasure and how they are depicted in pornography.” Frequently trans women described having limited agency and being coerced into sexual acts by boyfriends. For example, Dinaz said they<sup>3</sup> had a boyfriend who “would just always pressure me into doing things that I didn’t really want to do ... that were painful, which I’m not really into or ... engage in risky sex”.

## Responses to sexual violence: Self-protection, resilience and agency

In the interviews, sexual violence was found to have negative impacts on trans women of colour, including fear, anxiety, depression, self-harm and self-blame. However, the women adopted a range of responses and strategies for coping with the threat of sexual violence, as well as for dealing with the consequences of sexual violence that has occurred, demonstrating agency and resilience.

*In terms of confidence, even if it’s a false sense of confidence ... if I’m walking down the street and people are staring ... or whatever sometimes, I will literally either look at them death glare, then being like “Don’t fuck with me”.*

(Sam)

Some women adopted a psychological strategy of rationalisation and normalisation of violence as a means of defence against the psychological impact of abuse. For other trans women, choosing to view the sexual harassment directed at them as stemming from them passing as cisgender women meant it could serve to be gender affirming. Behavioural responses to violence included hypervigilance in the public sphere, not going out in public, and the avoidance of intimate relationships.

*I have learnt to move around the world as a minority person and now as a woman, keeping myself small and quiet and so on, that’s the way I avoid [sexual violence] as much as possible.*

(Emma)

Women also adopted a range of positive strategies to make meaning of their experiences and to facilitate coping, further demonstrating agency and resilience. These included naming sexual violence, seeking out the positives in their experiences, self-acceptance,

<sup>3</sup> Participant’s preferred pronoun.

prioritising the self, talking about sexual violence, and seeking support from health care professionals and the police.

## Trans women of colour need support to address sexual violence in their lives

Taking agency to actively seek support from others in response to sexual violence was important for many women. Drawing on interviews, this research found that trans women of colour sought support from informal support networks including friends, family members and other members of the transgender community, both face to face and online. When support was not provided from these informal networks, women described ongoing psychological distress and isolation.

Support from healthcare professionals can be central to resilience and survival following sexual violence. Support in gender transitioning, through facilitation of access to hormone therapy, reduced the risk of transphobic violence. Women described positive support following experiences of sexual violence from GPs, clinic nurses, psychologists and psychiatrists, LGBTIQ+ community support workers and physiotherapists. This support served to alleviate distress and facilitate coping and resilience. Being accepted as a trans woman was a key element to this support, with women's chosen names being used, not their previous "dead names".



*I really appreciated that the person who collected my blood was very knowledgeable. I guess "woke" [culturally competent] for lack of better word and just knew what to do and how to reconcile the records with my current details and so on, and didn't make a big deal of it.*

(Elizabeth)

Some of the women described negative experiences associated with seeking support from healthcare professionals following sexual violence, with individuals and services being described as transphobic or disrespectful to trans women of colour. As a result, many women felt that formal support after sexual assault that was available to cisgender women was not accessible or adequate for addressing their concerns and needs.



*[I] cannot access women's sexual assault services because I'm transgender. And the other straight women will be afraid that I'm a perpetrator.*

(Fiona)

Negative experiences with police and the legal system were also experienced by many of the participants in this study, who reported feelings of judgement, blame, mistrust and a lack of acknowledgment that sexual violence had occurred. A lack of formal response in collecting DNA or other samples after sexual assault was also reported by some of the women in this study, which they attributed to being trans women of colour, or a sex

worker. At the same time, experiences of violence from police were reported by some of the participants, including physical violence and sexual harassment, revealing a strained relationship between trans women of colour and the police.



*I'd never look at a police officer and feel safe, never will.*

(Amanda)

## Sexual violence is an issue for all women

Experiences of sexual violence of CALD trans women are comparable with those of non-CALD trans women and cisgender women. The comparative survey component of this research invited women who had experienced sexual violence to describe the nature of their experiences. With the online survey accessed by 2663 people, even after eliminating ineligible respondents (for example, people assigned male at birth, who identified as male), the final sample size was significant: 2295 people with a completion rate of 86 percent. Trans women represented 7.9 percent of the sample, and were further categorised into non-CALD (6.7% of total sample) and CALD (1.2%) groups. The smaller sample size of CALD trans women is perhaps owing to the survey being only conducted online (rather than orally) in English.

The overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that they had experienced sexual harassment and over two thirds of respondents reported that they had experienced a sexual assault since the age of 16, including trans women and cisgender women, across sexual identities and cultural backgrounds.

### Sexual harassment

The majority of women reported that they had experienced sexual harassment on multiple occasions. CALD trans women reported more frequent sexual harassment than other women. Strangers were the most common perpetrators of sexual harassment for all women, with CALD trans women reporting the highest rate of sexual harassment by a stranger compared to other groups of women. CALD trans women were also more likely to report being harassed outside the home or in public spaces than other women.

### Sexual assault

While half of the CALD trans women who responded to the survey reported having experienced sexual assault since the age of 16, this was lower than it was in the proportion of women who did not identify as CALD or were cisgender women. The majority of women who reported sexual assault had experienced it more than once, however CALD trans women were found to be twice as likely as other groups of women to report having been sexually assaulted 10 or more times. CALD trans women were also more likely to report having been assaulted by a stranger and more likely to report being assaulted both outside and in the home, compared to other women.

The majority of women across groups reported that self-support was their primary mode of coping with sexual harassment or assault, with self-support highest in CALD trans women. CALD trans women were more likely to report no support compared to other groups of women. No trans women reported support from police or justice agencies. Friends were the greatest source of support for all women.

The majority of women reported having made changes to their day to day lives as a result of experiencing sexual harassment or sexual assault. This included being hypervigilant; avoiding men; avoiding sex and intimacy; avoiding going out in public, particularly at night; modifying their appearance; and learning self-defence. The majority of women also reported negative impacts of sexual harassment and assault, including psychological and physical consequences.



Gabriella, *Selfie with bun*

# Implications for policymakers

All Australians need to challenge societal attitudes that support, condone or trivialise sexual violence against women, including trans women.

Building upon existing LGBTIQ+ health strategies across the majority of Australian states and territories, this research makes the following recommendations:

- Conduct community-wide, multi-faceted sexual violence prevention activities to encourage cultural change across all communities, promoting respect for gender, sexuality and cultural diversity, with zero tolerance to sexual violence for all women.
- Challenge societal attitudes which support, condone or trivialise sexual violence against women, including violence against trans women.
- Educate healthcare providers, legislators, police and policymakers, as well as the general public, to increase knowledge about transgender experience and gender transitioning.
- Enhance programs of sex education within school settings to include components on healthy relationships and sexual violence, which are inclusive of gender and sexuality diversity.
- Train those working to prevent sexual violence against women, and those providing support to women subjected to sexual violence, to be aware of and responsive to the needs and experiences of gender diverse women, including trans women of colour and those who are sexuality diverse.
- Ensure policy and practice documents and clinical guidelines use language that is inclusive of gender and sexuality diversity when discussing sexual violence against women. This means being inclusive of transgender and non-binary gender identities, as well as queer identities.
- Ensure healthcare providers, legislators, police and policymakers are knowledgeable about the implications of the intersection of gender, sexuality, race, and other categories of difference (such as age, social class and religion) in the experiences of sexual violence for trans women of colour from a CALD background.
- Provide additional support for trans women of colour who have experienced sexual violence to report incidents of sexual violence to the police, and to navigate court processes.
- Recognise the vulnerability and needs of trans women who are sex workers when addressing sexual violence, including violence prevention, police response and support for women. As a first step, fully decriminalise sex work in every Australian state and territory.
- Properly resource future research to include community interviewers in a range of languages, and surveys translated into the first language of participants which are administered orally, so that the experiences and impact of sexual violence for trans women who do not speak English can be collected.

# Implications for practitioners and service providers

This research project has produced a practice guide for practitioners and service providers that can be found at [www.anrows.org.au](http://www.anrows.org.au), on the project page.

## Sexual violence prevention and support services

Ensure services to support women who have experienced sexual violence, and information about services providing such support, are accessible, visible and inclusive to trans women and those who are sexuality diverse, with attention paid to the needs of trans women of colour from CALD backgrounds. This includes:

- reviewing intake and other forms so that they are inclusive of gender, sexuality and race
- training staff about gender and sexuality diversity, how to use gender neutral pronouns, and how not to misgender people, and building confidence about how to handle misgendering someone
- reviewing broader service aims/models of care to consider whether or not the service is or can be inclusive of trans women, and then taking steps to operationalise the outcome of the review.

Sexual violence prevention and support programs need to engage with, and be co-designed by, multicultural women's services and LGBTIQ+ services as well as women leaders from CALD and queer communities. Inner City Legal Centre (ICLC) in New South Wales provides a working example of this model with their free, statewide, specialist legal service for transgender people. Operating since 2018, this service is guided by an advisory committee of trans people and transgender organisations. Service provision includes working with interpreters when required by clients with a CALD background. The ICLC also runs a sex worker-specific legal service conducted in partnership with the Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP) that facilitates access to justice for transgender sex workers.

## Migrant services

Ensure that migrant services are accessible, visible and inclusive to trans women and those who are sexuality diverse. This might include signage that indicates trans people are welcome, reviewing forms to make them inclusive of gender and sexuality, and providing staff with training on gender and sexuality diversity including appropriate use of preferred pronouns.

## Healthcare and general practitioners

Provide trans affirmative care, including use of correct pronouns, staff trained in cultural safety, non-gendered bathroom facilities, and trans and gender diverse-specific literature and health resources. Support gender transitioning and, through the facilitation of access to hormone therapy, reduce the risk of transphobic violence.

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Please note that there is the potential for minor revisions of this paper.

Please check the online version at [www.anrows.org.au](http://www.anrows.org.au) for any amendment.

ANROWS

# ANROWS

AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION FOR WOMEN'S SAFETY

*to Reduce Violence against Women & their Children*



## Section 22

**From:** Section 22  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 30 August 2023 8:33 AM  
**To:** Section 22  
**Cc:** Section 22  
**Subject:** New report on abuse, vilification of trans people in Aus [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**Security Classification:**  
OFFICIAL

Hi Team,

The Trans Justice Project and the Victorian Pride Lobby released their report on Abuse, Harassment, Vilification and Violence against Trans People in Australia.

You can read it here: <https://transjustice.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Fuelling-Hate-Anti-Trans-Abuse-Harassment-and-Vilification-WEB-SINGLES.pdf>

The report found that **1 in 2 trans participants experienced anti-trans hate**, and **1 in 10 experienced anti-trans violence**. It also found that anti-trans hate is intensifying over time, with 8 in 10 participants reporting an increase in online anti-trans hate since 2020, corresponding with disinformation promoted by politicians and media outlets. Additionally, 7 in 10 participants reported an increase in the two months preceding the survey coinciding with the tour of anti-trans lobbyist Kellie-Jay Keen.

## Section 22

a/g Senior Policy Officer - Respect@Work Implementation  
Sex Discrimination team

### Australian Human Rights Commission

GPO Box 5218, Gadigal Land (Sydney) NSW 2001

## Section 22

[W www.humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au)

**Human rights: everyone, everywhere, everyday**



I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land I work, the Gadigal peoples of the Eora Nation (Commission Office) Section 22 and pay my respects to their Elders, past and present.

## Section 22

**From:** Section 22  
**Sent:** Monday, 11 September 2023 10:06 AM  
**To:** Section 22  
**Subject:** Recent reports on anti-LGBTQ harassment [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Attachments:** Fuelling-Hate-Anti-Trans-Abuse-Harassment-and-Vilification-WEB-SINGLES-1-1.pdf; Understanding-Threats-and-Harassment-Targeting-Drag-Shows-and-the-LGBTQ-Community.pdf

**Security Classification:** OFFICIAL

Hi team,

Hope you've all had a good weekend! Just thought I'd circulate a few reports I was reviewing last week.

The first one is a report by the Trans Justice Project covering the rise in Anti-Trans experiences in Australia, it was published last month.

The second is by the Institute of Strategic Dialogue, covering the global rise in anti-LGBTIQ threats and harassment, and the key actors, tactics and narratives involved in Aus, France, the UK and the US. It was published in late June.

If it would be helpful, I can put together a short summary of each report too 😊

Warm regards,

Section 22  
Advisor on SOGI

### Australian Human Rights Commission

GPO Box 5218, Sydney NSW 2001

Section 22 | [W humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au)

### Human rights: everyone, everywhere, everyday

I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land I work, the Gadigal peoples of the Eora Nation (Commission Office Section 22) and pay my respects to their Elders, past and present.



# Fuelling Hate

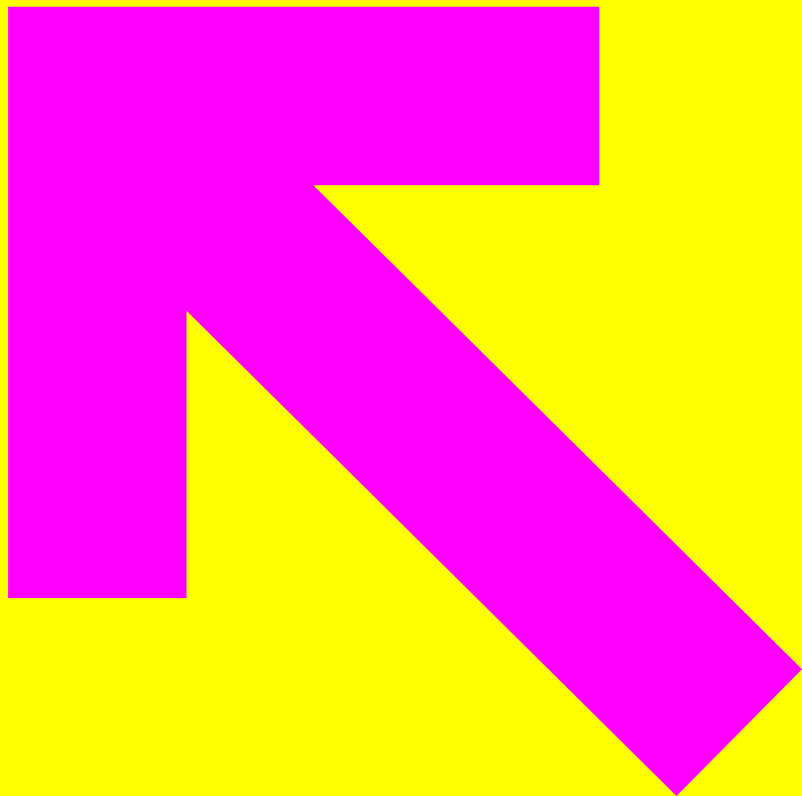
Abuse, Harassment, Vilification and  
Violence Against Trans People In Australia

 **Trans  
justice  
project.**

  
Victorian Pride Lobby

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## Acknowledgement of Country

The Trans Justice Project and Victorian Pride Lobby would like to recognise the enduring sovereignty of First Nation peoples across the continent. This report was written on the lands of the Kulin Nation to whose Elders the project team pays their sincere respect.

We also wish to pay respect to Sistergirl and Brotherboy communities across this continent. Always was, always will be, Aboriginal land.



## Thanks from the Project Team

This report would not have been possible without the cooperation and goodwill of trans people, their families, friends and communities. The project team would like to thank all participants for their expertise, time and trust.



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# About the Report

In April 2023, Trans Justice Project and the Victorian Pride Lobby engaged researchers and advisors to investigate the prevalence and possible escalation of transphobia in Australia. We investigated transphobia by asking about abuse, harassment, vilification and violence, which we summarise as anti-trans hate.

We divided the survey into questions about what people had seen and experienced online and in-person. The survey was open to anyone aged 18 and over from any state or territory. It ran for nine days from 17 to 25 April 2023. It was promoted on social media by project team members, community-controlled organisations, civil society groups and community members.

The survey took 3 minutes on average and had an average completion rate of 85%. The survey received 3099 responses, excluding 40 bad-faith responses which are omitted from the primary analysis. This makes it the largest ever project of its kind and one of the most extensive samples of trans Australians ever collected.

# Support Services

The contents of this report may be confronting or distressing for trans people, their families and friends. If you or someone you know is in an emergency and needs assistance now, **call triple zero (000)**.

You can also find support through the following services:

Service	Focus	Contact	Operating hours
<b>Emergency</b>	Emergency assistance	<b>000</b>	24 hours, 7 days a week
<b>Beyond Blue</b>	Depression and anxiety support	<b>1300 22 4636</b>	24 hours, 7 days a week
<b>Lifeline</b>	Crisis and mental health support with suicide prevention services	<b>13 11 14</b>	24 hours, 7 days a week
<b>QLife</b>	Free LGBTQ peer support and referral	<b>1800 184 527</b>	3pm to midnight everyday
<b>Switchboard Victoria and Tasmania</b>	Free LGBTQ peer support and referral	<b>1800 729 367</b>	10am to 5pm everyday

## Executive Summary

The Trans Justice Project and the Victorian Pride Lobby present *Fuelling Hate*, the largest-ever project investigating anti-trans hate in Australia and one of the largest samples of trans Australians ever collected. Regrettably, we found that anti-trans hate is rampant in Australia. In the 12 months preceding the survey:



**9 in 10**

of all participants  
witnessed online  
anti-trans hate



**1 in 2**

trans participants  
experienced  
anti-trans hate



**1 in 10**

trans participants  
experienced  
anti-trans violence



We also found that anti-trans hate is intensifying over time, with 8 in 10 participants reporting an increase in online anti-trans hate since 2020, corresponding with disinformation promoted by politicians and media outlets. Additionally, 7 in 10 participants reported an increase in the two months preceding the survey coinciding with the tour of anti-trans lobbyist Kellie-Jay Keen.

---

Trans people experience a range of online hate, such as deliberate misgendering, hate speech, bullying, doxing, stalking, threats of violence and sexual assault, death threats, incitement to commit suicide and incitement to genocide. They also experience a variety of in-person hate, including workplace bullying, street-based harassment, harassment relating to using bathrooms, stalking, physical and death threats.

Additionally, 1 in 10 trans people experienced anti-trans violence, including physical and sexual assault, which likely represents several thousand anti-trans hate crimes in the last 12 months. We hope these grave findings can help inform efforts to promote the safety and well-being of trans people across Australia.

# Key Findings

## 1

### Anti-trans hate is widespread, both online and in-person


We found that in the last 12 months:

 **94% of all participants** saw online anti-trans abuse, harassment or vilification

---

 **52% of all participants** saw anti-trans abuse, harassment or vilification in-person

---

 **49% of trans participants** experienced online anti-trans abuse, harassment or vilification

---

 **47% of trans participants** experienced in-person anti-trans abuse, harassment or vilification

---

## 2

### Anti-trans hate is escalating, both online and in-person

We also found that compared to 2020:

 **85% of all participants** saw significantly more online anti-trans abuse, harassment or vilification

---

 **39% of all participants** saw more or significantly more in-person anti-trans abuse, harassment or vilification

---

 **40% of trans participants** experienced more or significantly more online anti-trans abuse, harassment or vilification

---

 **34% of trans participants** said they had experienced more or significantly more in-person anti-trans abuse, harassment or vilification

---

## Key Findings

3 🔍

### Hate toward trans people spiked during the period coinciding with the national tour of anti-trans lobbyist Kellie-Jay Keen

We further found that in the two months preceding the survey:

👁️ **68% of all participants** saw more or significantly more online anti-trans abuse, harassment or vilification

---

👁️ **30% of all participants** saw more or significantly more in-person anti-trans abuse, harassment or vilification

---

⚠️ **31% of trans participants** experienced more or significantly more online anti-trans abuse, harassment or vilification

---

⚠️ **23% of trans participants** experienced more or significantly more anti-trans in-person abuse, harassment or vilification

---

4 ⚠️

### Anti-trans violence is prevalent

Finally, regarding violence we found that:

👁️ **15% of trans participants** experienced anti-trans violence in the last 12 months

---

👁️ **13% of trans participants** experienced more or significantly more anti-trans violence in the last 12 months

---

⚠️ **11% of trans participants** experienced more or significantly more anti-trans violence in the two months preceding the survey

---

# Background

The current wave of anti-trans hate in Australia was preceded by several key events, such as the moral panic around Safe Schools, the marriage equality postal survey and targeted disinformation campaigns from media outlets and anti-trans lobbyists.

- ↙ **Safe Schools**
- ↙ **The Marriage Equality Postal Survey**
- ↙ **Anti-Trans Disinformation**
- ↙ **Anti-trans Lobbying and Politics**
- ↙ **The International Context**
- ↙ **Moral Panic, Social Licence and Disinformation**



## Safe Schools

Safe Schools was a bi-partisan anti-bullying program that aimed to create supportive school environments for LGBTQ young people by providing training to teachers. In 2015, the Australian Christian Lobby (ACL),<sup>1</sup> launched a campaign accusing the program of ‘turning kids gay’ and ‘sexualising children’<sup>2</sup> resulting in targeted harassment of researchers.<sup>3</sup>

In 2016, Family First senator Bob Day referred to the scheme as a ‘gay lifestyle promotion program’ and called on the government to withdraw funding.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, then Liberal senator Cori Bernardi launched a petition to cut the program’s funding. He erroneously linked Safe Schools to ‘bondage clubs and sex toys’<sup>5</sup> and claimed it ‘indoctrinated kids’.<sup>6</sup>

Nationals MP George Christensen, another vocal critic, inflammatorily compared the program to ‘child grooming’.<sup>7</sup> Bowing to pressure, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull ordered an investigation into Safe Schools.<sup>8</sup> The Loudon review suggested minor changes but supported the program’s content, calling it ‘suitable, robust, age-appropriate, [and] educationally sound’.<sup>9</sup>

The program was defunded in 2016 and replaced by other programs in some states. In 2017, several cis celebrities published a letter calling for a new version of Safe Schools without the ‘controversy’,<sup>10</sup> widely criticised for pandering to conservatives and its lack of trans inclusion.<sup>11</sup>

1 Global Project Against Hate and Extremism, ‘Australian Christian Lobby (ACL)’ <<https://globalextrémism.org/australia/#acl>>

2 See ‘Australian Christian Lobby slams Safe Schools anti-bullying program’, The Sydney Morning Herald, 2015 <<https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/australian-christian-lobby-slams-safe-schools-antibullying-program-20151104-gkq6gr.html>>. There is no evidence whatsoever for the proposition that inclusive education or anti-bullying programs ‘turn kids gay’, see ‘Safe Schools Coalition: what is the Christian Right afraid of?’, The Conversation, 2016 <<https://theconversation.com/safe-schools-coalition-what-is-the-christian-right-afraid-of-55296>>.

3 ‘Safe Schools LGBTI program researchers ‘receiving abusive emails’ after Christian lobby campaign’, The Guardian, 2016 <<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/feb/24/safe-schools-lgbti-program-researchers-receiving-abusive-emails-after-christian-lobby-campaign>>

4 ‘Give the parents a say on sex program’: Senator Bob Day’, The Australian, 2016 <<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/education/give-the-parents-a-say-on-sex-program-senator-bob-day/news-story/3772a70f5645fe7a702ea6530743fce2>>

5 ‘Cory Bernardi email reportedly links Safe Schools to ‘bondage clubs and adult sex toys’, The Guardian, 2016 <<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/mar/22/cory-bernardi-email-reportedly-links-safe-schools-to-bondage-clubs-and-adult-sex-toys>>

6 ‘Turnbull orders review of Safe Schools LGBTI program after pressure from Cory Bernardi’, The Guardian, 2016 <<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/feb/23/turnbull-orders-review-safe-schools-lgbti-program-after-pressure-from-cory-bernardi>>

7 ‘Safe Schools is like child grooming, says Nationals MP George Christensen’, The Guardian, 2016 <<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/feb/25/safe-schools-is-like-child-grooming-says-nationals-mp-george-christensen>>

8 ‘Safe Schools: Malcolm Turnbull requests investigation into program helping LGBTI students’, ABC News, 2016 <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-02-23/turnbull-requests-investigation-into-safe-schools-program/7192374>>

9 ‘The reality of Safe Schools’, The Guardian, 2016 <<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/dec/14/safe-schools-roz-ward-life-saving-support-queer-theory-classroom>>

10 ‘Celebrities lobby Malcolm Turnbull for Safe Schools 2.0 - without the ideology’, The Sydney Morning Herald, 2017 <<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/celebrities-lobby-malcolm-turnbull-for-safe-schools-20--without-the-ideology-20170501-gvw6nw.html>>

11 ‘Sorry Celebs, LGBTIQ Australians Deserve A Lot More Than “Tolerance”’, Junkee, 2017 <<https://junkee.com/lgbtiq-tolerance-safe-schools/104104>>



## The Marriage Equality Postal Survey

The moral panic around Safe Schools coincided temporally and thematically with the 2017 marriage equality postal survey. The postal survey was a national, non-compulsory survey proposed by the sitting Coalition government as a compromise between different elements within the party.

The first 'No' campaign television advert featured a woman who had previously lobbied against Safe Schools. She claimed that her son's school told him that 'he could wear a dress' and that such measures would become 'widespread and compulsory'.<sup>12</sup> The school debunked the claim, saying 'it never happened'.<sup>13</sup>

Indeed, the 'No' campaign explicitly tied marriage equality to fears about 'radical gay sex education' [sic] in schools.<sup>14</sup> One anonymous pamphlet claimed that marriage equality would lead to trans people raping women in bathrooms.<sup>15</sup> Nazi groups actively campaigned,<sup>16</sup> circulating posters that linked marriage equality to paedophilia<sup>17</sup> and child abuse.<sup>18</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the public legitimisation of homophobic and transphobic views took a tremendous toll on LGBTQ people. Social media accounts were targeted with homophobic slurs<sup>19</sup> amid a spate of homophobic vandalism and attacks.<sup>20</sup> Verbal and physical hate crimes doubled after the announcement of the survey.<sup>21</sup>

Out of fear of tying the 'Yes' campaign to the moral panic surrounding Safe School, many 'Yes' campaign organisations, made a strategic decision to avoid these topics altogether.<sup>22</sup> While the strategy succeeded, many trans people criticised how this strategy prioritised the ability of cis people to marry over trans people and their rights.<sup>23</sup>

12 'Anti same-sex marriage campaign airs: "School told my son he could wear a dress"', News.com, 2017 <<https://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/relationships/marriage/anti-same-sex-marriage-campaign-airs-school-told-my-son-he-could-wear-a-dress/news-story/535dcae290582136cb2445f3869ff820>>

13 "It never happened": Principal denies mum's TV claim that son could wear a dress', The Sydney Morning Herald, 2017 <<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/it-never-happened-principal-denies-mums-tv-claim-that-son-could-wear-dress-20170830-gy6ygk.html>>

14 'Australia Same-Sex Marriage Vote Spawns Toxic Debate', NBC News, 2017 <<https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/australia-same-sex-marriage-vote-spawns-toxic-debate-n819666>>

15 'Homophobic anti-marriage equality material surfaces in postal survey campaign', The Guardian, 2017 <<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/aug/21/homophobic-anti-marriage-equality-material-surfaces-in-postal-survey-campaign>>

16 'Labor calls on PM to condemn neo-Nazi hate campaign in same-sex marriage debate', SBS News, 2017 <<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/labor-calls-on-pm-to-condemn-neo-nazi-hate-campaign-in-same-sex-marriage-debate/lpdcqp88m>>

17 'Antipodean Resistance Neo-Nazi group trying to sway Australia's same-sex marriage postal vote', ABC News, 2017 <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-09-05/neo-nazi-group-antipodean-resistance/8852682>>

18 'Neo-Nazis Are On The Frontline Of The Campaign Against Marriage Equality', Junkee, 2017 <<https://junkee.com/australian-neo-nazis-frontline-campaign-marriage-equality/119299>>

19 'Same-sex marriage survey: Facebook accounts targeted with homophobic slurs', The Guardian, 2017 <<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/sep/16/same-sex-marriage-survey-facebook-accounts-targeted-with-homophobic-slurs>>

20 'Rocks thrown through windows amid spate of homophobic attacks', The Guardian, 2017 <<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/sep/26/rocks-thrown-through-windows-amid-spate-of-homophobic-attacks>>

21 'Marriage equality survey marred by doubling in reported assaults', The Guardian, 2017 <<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2017/dec/05/marriage-equality-survey-marred-by-doubling-in-reported-assaults>>

22 'Marriage equality: yes, it's about gender', Overland, 2017 <<https://overland.org.au/2017/09/marriage-equality-yes-its-about-gender/>>

23 'Is it really a win for queer rights if we exclude our most vulnerable to achieve it?', The Guardian, 2017 <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/sep/06/is-it-really-a-win-for-queer-rights-if-we-exclude-our-most-vulnerable-to-achieve-it>>



## Anti-Trans Disinformation

Later, in 2019, The Australian launched a column dedicated to 'gender issues'. Early articles baselessly accused trans people of 'corrupting' and even 'castrating children'. The Australian published 68 articles regarding transgender people between June and August 2019 of which 98% were negative.<sup>24</sup>

The Australian repeatedly platformed the idea that trans people use their identity to gain access to women-only spaces to assault women, a transphobic myth for which there is no evidence. The outlet also argued that trans women have an unfair advantage in sports, which is also unsupported by evidence.<sup>25</sup>

The paper further promoted the so-called 'social contagion theory', a fringe conspiracy theory that trans people manipulate or trick people into 'becoming trans'. Articles warned of a 'surge' of young people seeking treatment due to 'pro-trans social media', 'online trends' and 'being coached'.

In response, the Australian Psychological Association released a statement refuting social contagion theory and supporting gender-affirming healthcare.<sup>26</sup> Many of the above stories were subject to a Press Council complaint relating to 45 articles over ten months.<sup>27</sup> The Press Council ruled that The Australian's coverage was unfair and caused substantial distress.<sup>28</sup>

In 2021, researchers analysed 1319 articles about trans people from the top 10 most widely read outlets and found similarly that media coverage was overwhelmingly negative.<sup>29</sup> They discovered that much of the same anti-trans rhetoric that first appeared in The Australian had found purchase in The Herald Sun, The Daily Telegraph, The Age and The Sydney Morning Herald.

24 'Here's Proof That Trans People Are The New Target Of 'The Australian's War On Queer People', Junkee, 2019 <<https://junkee.com/the-australian-trans-coverage/235282>>

25 'Elite sport is becoming a platform to target the trans community', The Conversation, 2019 <<https://theconversation.com/elite-sport-is-becoming-a-platform-to-target-the-trans-community-113347>>

26 'APS Refutes 'Social Contagion' Arguments', Australian Psychological Association, 2019 <<https://psychology.org.au/about-us/news-and-media/media-releases/2019/aps-refutes-social-contagion-arguments>>

27 "Substantial distress": Press watchdog rebukes The Australian for reporting on gender issues', The Sydney Morning Herald, 2020 <<https://www.smh.com.au/business/companies/substantial-distress-press-watchdog-rebukes-the-australian-for-reporting-on-gender-issues-20210903-p58oi7.html>>

28 Adjudication 1799, Australian Press Council, 2021 <<https://presscouncil.org.au/document/1799-complainant-8>>

29 'Transgender people in the Australian press: "Bombarded by outright harassment"', Sydney Corpus Lab, 2021 <<https://sydneycorpuslab.com/transgender-people-in-the-australian-press-bombarded-by-outright-harassment/>>



## Anti-trans Lobbying and Politics

More recently, high-profile anti-trans lobbyist Kellie-Jay Keen (who also goes by Posie Parker) completed a national speaking tour, holding anti-trans rallies in several capital cities. Among other things, Keen claims that trans women are sexual predators and describes being trans as a 'fetish'.<sup>30</sup>

Keen's tour was protested by hundreds of pro-trans community members in Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Hobart, Perth and Sydney. The anti-trans rally in Melbourne coincided with a demonstration by Nazis who held up a banner calling trans people 'paedo freaks' and performed the Nazi salutes while Keen spoke to the crowd.<sup>31</sup>

Independent researchers reported that Keen's tour in New Zealand sparked a 'massive increase' in online anti-trans hate, with one researcher describing it as 'genocidal'.<sup>32</sup> In Australia, there were anecdotal reports of an 'uptick' in anti-trans abuse around the time of Keen's tour, with journalists covering anti-trans issues facing an 'avalanche' of online abuse.<sup>33</sup>

Her tour was supported and partially financed by the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC).<sup>34</sup> Additionally, it was promoted and attended by a number of prominent anti-trans figures such as Katherine Deves, who gained prominence through the 2022 Federal Election.<sup>35</sup>

Shortly after her pre-selection as the candidate for Warringah, an online archive of her Twitter account was released to the media displaying several tweets degrading trans people and spreading anti-trans rhetoric.<sup>36</sup> She also claimed to have played a key role in developing trans-exclusionary legislation.<sup>37</sup>

Although she did not gain the support of her electorate, anti-trans rhetoric became a cornerstone of the election media landscape with a number of articles dedicated to repeating and exploring anti-trans rhetoric.<sup>38</sup>

30 'Kellie-Jay Keen's anti-trans rights campaign has become a headache for the Liberal Party. But the issue runs deeper than one MP', ABC News, 2023 <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-03-26/kellie-jay-Keenanti-trans-rights-liberal-party-debate/102142130>>

31 'Nazi salutes performed on steps of Victorian parliament as protesters clash over trans rights', SBS News, 2023 <<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/nazi-salutes-performed-on-steps-of-victorian-parliament-as-protesters-clash-over-transgender-rights/yr7gzkevn>>

32 'Spike in online hate toward trans community after Posie Parker visit - researchers', RNZ, 2023 <<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/487306/spike-in-online-hate-toward-trans-community-after-posie-parker-visit-researchers>>

33 'Newsrooms grapple with online safety as journalists face influx of anti-trans abuse', Crikey, 2023 <<https://www.crikey.com.au/2023/06/01/anti-trans-abuse-journalists-threats/>>

34 'Confusion over who paid for Kellie-Jay Keen's tour of Australia', OutinPerth, 2023 <<https://www.outinperth.com/confusion-over-who-paid-for-kellie-jay-keens-tour-of-australia/>>

35 'Trent Zimmerman joins Liberals calling for Scott Morrison to dump Katherine Deves over trans comments', The Guardian, 2022 <<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/apr/18/trent-zimmerman-joins-liberals-calling-for-scott-morrison-to-dump-katherine-deves-over-trans-comments>>

36 'PM's 'captain's pick' for Warringah Katherine Deves wipes social media accounts after transgender comments', News.com, 2022 <<https://www.news.com.au/national/federal-election/pms-captains-pick-for-warringah-katherine-deves-wipes-social-media-accounts-after-transgender-comments/news-story/e1b41b73c646a5494e64928bba8f3>>

37 'Katherine Deves claims key role in controversial bill to ban trans women from women's sport', The Guardian, 2022 <<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/apr/19/katherine-deves-claims-key-role-in-controversial-bill-to-ban-trans-women-from-womens-sport>>

38 See 'NSW Liberal candidate described campaign supporting LGBT youth as 'grooming tactic' used by 'gender extremists', The Guardian, 2022 <<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/apr/14/nsw-liberal-candidate-described-campaign-supporting-lgbt-youth-as-grooming-tactic-used-by-gender-extremists>>



## The International Context

The situation in Australia is emerging against a backdrop of escalating anti-trans and anti-LGBTQIA+ attacks globally. In the US, 566 anti-trans Bills have been introduced across 49 states aiming to restrict trans people's access to education, bathrooms, healthcare, legal protections and sports.<sup>39</sup>

This has coincided with bills banning drag shows<sup>40</sup> and the introduction of 'Don't Say Gay' Bills<sup>41</sup> restricting the freedom of LGBTQIA+ educators and students in many states. The US Supreme Court also recently repealed anti-discrimination protections for LGBTQIA+ people across the country.<sup>42</sup>

In the UK, there has been a coordinated attack on key institutions and organisations that support the trans community such as the youth suicide prevention service Mermaids.<sup>43</sup> Worryingly, anti-trans hate crimes recorded by police rose by 81% in 2019 against this backdrop of anti-trans campaigns.<sup>44</sup>

Furthermore, when Scotland moved to make it easier for trans people to change their legally recognised sex, the UK government vetoed the law using its veto powers over the Scottish government for the first time.<sup>45</sup> Regrettably, many elements of the above anti-trans moral panic is now spilling over into Australia.

In the months since Kellie-Jay Keen's tour there has been an escalation of attacks on LGBTQIA+ events, such as drag story time. In February, there was a bomb threat against a Sydney library holding a drag story time event<sup>46</sup> and by may at least 9 Victorian councils had called off similar events due to threats of violence<sup>47</sup> from the far right.<sup>48</sup>

39 2023 anti-trans bills tracker, Trans Legislation Tracker, 2023 <<https://translegislation.com/>>

40 'Tennessee Passed the Nation's First Law Limiting Drag Shows. Here's the Status of Anti-Drag Bills Across the U.S.', Time Magazine, 2023 <<https://time.com/6260421/tennessee-limiting-drag-shows-status-of-anti-drag-bills-u-s/>>

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## Moral Panic, Social Licence and Disinformation

These events provide the necessary theoretical and practical background for this research project. The moral panic around the Safe Schools program introduced anti-trans and far-right talking points into political and media discourse, many of which were recycled during the marriage equality postal survey.

The decisions to pursue a trans-exclusive Safe Schools and to ignore anti-trans talking points effectively ceded space to anti-trans lobbyists. Though the postal survey was ultimately successful, the 'No' campaign successfully wedged the 'Yes' campaign, positioning trans people as acceptable targets for abuse, harassment, vilification and violence.

Media outlets capitalised on this development, concentrating these themes into a series of anti-trans narratives revolving around children's safety, women's safety, and fairness in sport which eventually became mainstream. In turn, Nazis and other anti-trans extremists exploited this hostile environment to recruit new members<sup>49</sup> and spread anti-trans hate<sup>50</sup>.

With this timeline in mind, the project team hypothesised that it should be possible to observe an increase in transphobia over the last few years and an additional spike in the months leading up to the survey. Researchers designed a survey tool to test these hypotheses and collect more detail regarding the nature, scope and prevalence of anti-trans hate.

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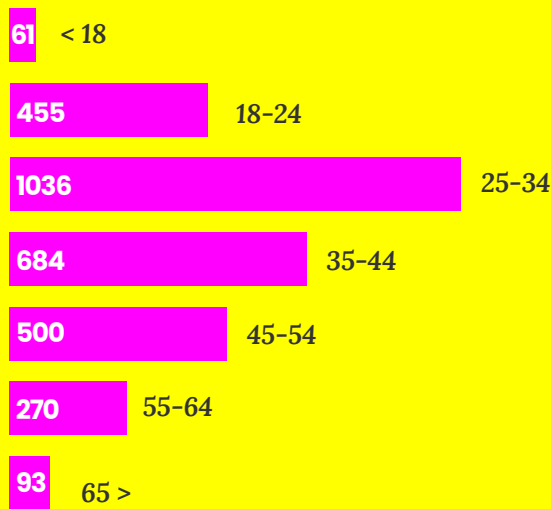
50 'Experts warn that anti-trans rhetoric is fuelling a major right-wing extremist threat', American Independent, 2021 <<https://americanindependent.com/transphobic-rhetoric-right-wing-extremism-threat-lgbtq-laws/>>

# Survey Demographics

## 3099 total participants

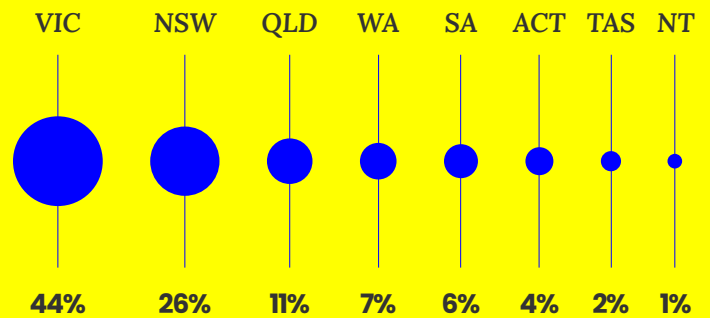
### Age

Number of participants by Age



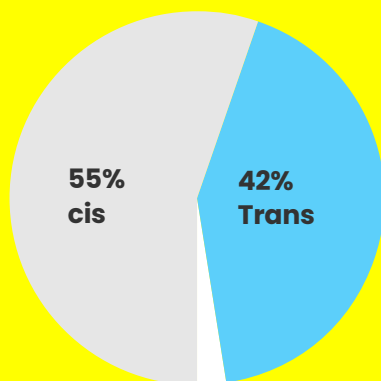
### Location

Participants by State



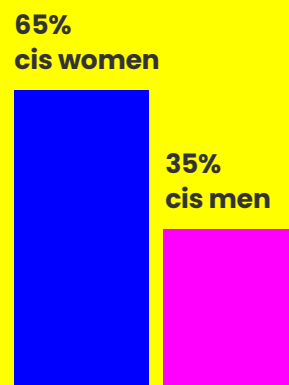
### Gender

All participants



**3% Illegible**  
for the purposes  
of the surveys

Cis participants



Trans participants

**50%** (657) **Non-binary**

**29%** (372) **Trans women**

**15%** (191) **Trans men**

**3%** (38) **Genderqueer**

**1.5%** (20) **Genderfluid**

**1%** (16) **Agender**

**1%** (9) **Sistergirls**

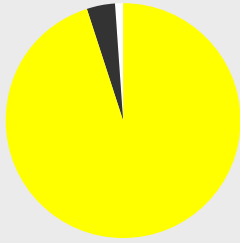
**0.5%** (6) **Brotherboys**

# Anti-Trans Hate in Australia



## Online Anti-Trans Hate

👁️ Seen in the last year:

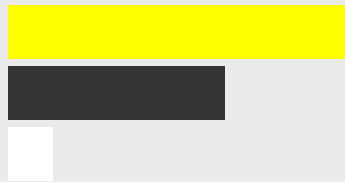


- 95% Yes
- 4% No
- 1% Unsure



## In-Person Anti-Trans Hate

👁️ Seen in the last year:

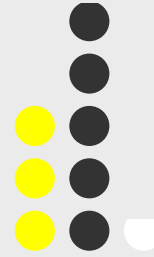


- 52% Seen
- 33% Not Seen
- 7% Unsure



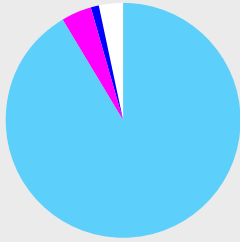
## Anti-Trans Violence

👁️ Seen in the last year:



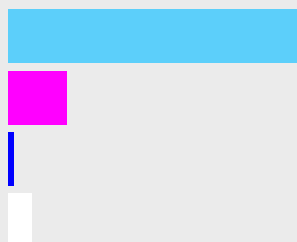
- 30% Yes
- 49% No
- 7% Unsure

👁️ Seen compared to 2020:



- 85% More or significantly more
- 4% About the same
- 1% Less or significantly less
- 3% Unsure

👁️ Seen compared to 2020:



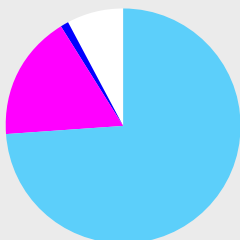
- 40% More or significantly more
- 8% About the same
- 1% Less
- 3% Unsure

👁️ Seen compared to 2020:



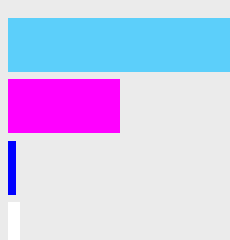
- 26% More or significantly more
- 2% About the same
- 1% Seen Less
- 1% Unsure

👁️ Seen in the two months prior to the survey:



- 68% More or significantly more
- 16% About the same
- 1% Less or significantly less
- 7% Unsure

👁️ Seen in the two months prior to the survey:



- 30% More or significantly more
- 15% About the same
- 1% Less
- 5% Unsure

👁️ Seen in the two months prior to the survey:



- 21% More or significantly more
- 9% About the same
- 1% Seen less
- 2% Unsure

# Trans People's Experiences



## Online Anti-Trans Hate Of 1309 trans participants

*In the last 12 months*

**49.2%**

**644 trans people** had experienced online anti-trans abuse, harassment or vilification

**41%**

**537 trans people** had not

**8.2%**

**108 trans people** were **unsure**

*Compared to 2020*

**40%**

**524 trans people** experienced **more** or **significantly more** online anti-trans hate

**5.4%**

**71 trans people** experienced around the **same** amount

**0.8%**

**10 trans people** reported experiencing **less**

**1.6%**

**20 trans people** were **unsure**

*Two months preceding the survey compared to the start of the year*

**31.2%**

**408 trans people** experienced **more** or **significantly more** online anti-trans hate

**13.9%**

**182 trans people** experienced around the **same** level

**1.2%**

**15 trans people** experienced **less**

**1.6%**

**21 trans people** were **unsure**

Open-text responses suggest that anti-trans hate is concentrated in online spaces such as social media platforms, comment sections (especially on news websites) and dating apps. Perpetrators were sometimes well-known anti-trans figures but were often anonymous.

Trans people described a wide variety of online anti-trans hate, such as:

Microaggressions (i.e. 'casual' transphobia)

Deliberate misgendering

Insults, ridicule, humiliation, intimidation and trolling

Defamation and hate speech (including slurs)

Pile-ons, doxing and stalking

Threats of violence and sexual assault

Death threats

Incitement to commit suicide

Incitement to commit genocide

Accounts, therefore, range from microaggressions to extreme violence. Threats tended to be graphic and severe, with some trans participants detailing threats of knife and gun violence.

**The frequency of threats was also notable, with one trans woman explaining that she had 'given up counting death threats because what is the point?'**

## Trans People's Experiences



### In-person Anti-Trans Hate

*In the last 12 months*

**47.9%**

**627 trans people** of trans participants reported **experiencing** anti-trans abuse, harassment or vilification in-person

**36.3%**

**475 trans people** said **none**

**8.2%**

**107 trans people** were **unsure**

*Compared to 2020*

**34.2%**

**448 trans people** said they had experienced **more** or **significantly more** anti-trans in-person hate

**9%**

**119 trans people** reported **around the same** level of anti-trans hate

**1.37%**

**18 trans people** reported **less** or **significantly less**

**2.14%**

**28 trans people** were **unsure**

*Two months preceding the survey compared to the start of the year*

**23.6%**

**309 trans people** reported **more** or **significantly more** anti-trans hate in-person

**18.7%**

**245 trans people** reported **around the same** level

**1.8%**

**23 trans people** reported experiencing **less**

**2.9%**

**38 trans people** were **unsure**

Trans people reported in-person anti-trans hate in various settings, including in the home, workplace, and street. Anti-trans hate in the home and workplace tended to be perpetrated by people known to the victim and involved more personalised abuse, such as deliberate deadnaming.

Street-based abuse and harassment tended to be perpetrated by individuals unknown to the victim. These involved one perpetrator or several, with many participants describing being harassed, chased or assaulted by groups of men, typically at night and when the victim was alone.

Trans people described a range of in-person hate, such as:

Microaggressions (e.g. 'dirty looks', stares, pointing)

Non-consensual picture taking

Deliberate misgendering and deadnaming

Workplace bullying

Harassment in public

Harassment in private venues (especially relating to bathrooms)

Stalking

Physical assault (e.g. spitting, grabbing, punching)

Sexual assault (e.g. rape)

Death threats

As with online anti-trans hate these range from microaggressions to extreme violence.

**Workplace bullying involved social exclusion, inappropriate touching, and vexatious complaints, while public harassment involved verbal assault in the street or on public transport, typically involving slurs.**

## Trans People's Experiences



### Anti-trans Violence

In the last 12 months	Compared to 2020	Two months preceding the survey compared to the start of the year
<p><b>16%</b> 209 trans people of trans participants had experienced anti-trans violence</p>	<p><b>13.3%</b> 174 trans people reported experiencing more or significantly more anti-trans violence</p>	<p><b>11.4%</b> 149 trans people reported experiencing more or significantly more anti-trans violence</p>
<p><b>66.5%</b> 870 trans people had not</p>	<p><b>1.6%</b> 21 trans people said they had experienced around the same amount</p>	<p><b>3.3%</b> 43 trans people reported around the same amount</p>
<p><b>5.7%</b> 74 trans people were unsure</p>	<p><b>0.2%</b> 3 trans people reported less or significantly less</p>	<p><b>0.4%</b> 5 trans people experienced less or significantly less</p>
	<p><b>0.6%</b> 8 trans people were unsure</p>	<p><b>0.7%</b> 9 trans people were unsure</p>

Trans people said many different kinds of anti-trans violence, including:

Spitting

Non-consensual touching

Grabbing, shoving, punching and kicking

Being chased or assaulted by groups of men

Assault with objects  
(e.g. bottles, chairs, lit cigarettes)

Assault with weapons (e.g. knives)

Sexual assault (e.g. rape)

Trans participants described physical assaults often involving spitting, grabbing, and punching. Several of these may have amounted to grievous bodily harm. For example, one trans woman recounted an instance of an attacker beating her over the back of the head with a tree branch and breaking several ribs.

A few participants described situations that may have amounted to attempted murder. For instance, one trans woman recounted how an assailant repeatedly tried to run her down with their car. Additionally, many trans people explicitly discussed violence perpetrated by police at length.

# Bad-faith Responses

## Demographics

A small minority of responses used anti-trans rhetoric, slurs, hate speech or otherwise voiced hostility toward trans people. Researchers identified 40 such bad-faith responses and excluded these from the primary analysis. However, these responses illuminate the perspectives of those who engage in anti-trans abuse, harassment, vilification and violence.

Of these 40 responses, the demographics of four were illegible for the purposes of the survey. Fifteen per cent (6) were aged 18-24, 10% (4) were 25-34, 27.50% (11) were 35-44, 30% (12) were 45-54, 5% (2) were 55-64 and 2.50% (1) was 65 and over. Fifty per cent (20) were cis women and 40% (16) were cis men.

Regarding state or territory of residence, 42.50% (17) lived in Victoria, 10% (4) lived in New South Wales, 10% (4) lived in Queensland, 7.50% (3) lived in the Australian Capital Territory, 5% (2) lived in South Australia, 2.50% (1) lived in the Northern Territory, and 2.50% (1) lived in Western Australia.

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**Interestingly, bad-faith participants submitted 80% (32) of their responses on just three of the nine days the survey was open and often only a few minutes apart. This concentration of responses suggests that the study was circulated among anti-trans networks on social media, either publicly or privately.**

Notably, these respondents tended to skip most questions on the survey, answering only the open-text questions with comments ranging from a few sentences to lengthy essays. Several included links to identical anti-trans resources, further indicating a calculated approach to taking the survey.

## Anti-trans perspectives

The content of these responses varied significantly but typically involved some level of disinformation. Interestingly, many revolved around or noted the anti-trans rally that coincided with a Nazi demonstration on the steps of the Victorian Parliament on 18 March 2023, with a handful of respondents identifying themselves as attendees.

For instance, one man aged 18-24 identified himself as a National Socialist Network (NSN) member who attended the Nazi rally. In his comments, he claimed to have engaged in physical anti-trans violence and repeatedly denigrated trans people as paedophiles.

This was a common theme among the bad-faith responses, with several asserting that LGBTQ organisations and people are 'grooming' or 'sexualising' children or otherwise using them to 'push agendas'. These comments emulate homophobic and transphobic tropes promoted by politicians and the media about Safe Schools and during the marriage equality postal survey.

Several submissions were further preoccupied with the idea of children undergoing surgical transition. In this context, it is essential to note that gender-affirming surgeries are generally unavailable to people under the age of 18. Indeed, these responses displayed a poor understanding of the science and laws around trans healthcare in general.

Many of these respondents appeared to take pleasure in engaging in anti-trans hate. When asked about relevant experiences, one man aged 18-24 said, 'I cause the hate most of the time'. Another man from the same age bracket stated, 'I'm always trying to up my levels of anti-trans hatred and further spread anti-trans sentiment'.

These comments ranged from mild to severe, with one middle-aged man writing, 'I spit on and laugh at those wankers [sic] every day'. The self-identified Nazi further stated that he regularly incites trans people to commit suicide, explaining that doing so 'feels awesome'.

## Bad-faith Responses

### Anti-trans rhetoric and DARVO

Many of these responses engaged in

## **DARVO (deny, attack, and reverse victim and offender),**

a common strategy used by abusers when someone exposes their abuse. These submissions tended to frame trans people as perpetrators and cis people, typically cis women, as victims of abuse and violence.

Many bad-faith respondents comprehensively denied the existence of transphobia in any form. For example, one middle-aged man claimed that all instances of anti-trans hate are 'made up'. Similarly, a middle-aged woman stated that there is '[no] vilification or hatred directed at trans people'.

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**Further, many of these participants took the survey as an opportunity to attack trans people. One middle-aged woman stated that 'trans ideology [sic] is an awful abusive cult' and compared gender-affirming healthcare to Nazi human experimentation. In another example, another man referred to trans people as a 'death cult'.**

Reversing the victim and offender was a common tactic. One older cis man stated that hate 'mostly comes from trans people and their allies against women'. Another respondent skipped nearly every question to write, 'I have seen violence by trans activists' and nothing else. Indeed, several responses framed trans people as inherently 'anti-women'.

---

**Among bad-faith respondents, this approach was popular with middle-aged to older cis women who often framed repercussions for engaging in anti-trans hate as 'attacks'. For example, respondents freely described deliberate misgendering and attending anti-trans rallies but understood these as 'merely stating an opinion'.**

These respondents described 'receiving hate', being 'yelled at' and 'pushed and jostled' while attending anti-trans events. Several cis women described feeling 'afraid' or 'terrified' by the presence of pro-trans rallygoers protesting the 18 March Nazi rally, though none reported any anxieties regarding the Nazi attendees.

# Results

We found compelling evidence that anti-trans abuse, harassment, vilification and violence are rampant in Australian society and intensifying over time. Nearly all respondents had seen anti-trans hate online and more than half had seen it in-person. Additionally, most reported a recent escalation of transphobia.

Virtually all participants saw anti-trans hate online in the last year, with a majority reporting an intensification since 2020 and in the prior two months.

Similarly, over half saw anti-trans hate in-person in the previous year, with around a third reporting a recent increase. Around a third of the sample witnessed anti-trans violence in the prior two months, with roughly a quarter reporting an increase in the last few months to years.

## Summary of Results: All Respondents



### Online hate

*In the last year*

**9 in 10**

saw anti-trans hate online

*Since 2020*

**8 in 10**

reported an increase in anti-trans hate online

*In the prior two months*

**7 in 10**

reported an increase in anti-trans hate online



### In-person hate

*In the last year*

**1 in 2**

saw anti-trans hate in-person

*Since 2020*

**1 in 3**

reported an increase in anti-trans hate in-person

*In the prior two months*

**1 in 3**

reported an increase in anti-trans hate in-person



### Violence

*In the last year*

**1 in 3**

saw anti-trans violence

*Since 2020*

**1 in 4**

reported an increase in anti-trans violence

*In the prior two months*

**1 in 5**

reported an increase in anti-trans violence



## Results

Similarly, around half of trans respondents experienced online anti-trans hate in the last year, with around a third reporting an escalation since 2020 and over the prior two months.

Nearly half experienced anti-trans hate in-person, with a third reporting an increase since 2020 and a quarter reporting one in the previous two months. Unfortunately, 1 in 10 trans participants experienced anti-trans violence in the last year, with a similar amount reporting an escalation since 2020 and in the prior two months.

### Summary of Results: Trans Respondents



#### Online hate

In the last year

**! 1 in 2**  
experienced  
anti-trans hate online

Since 2020

**↗ 1 in 3**  
reported an increase in  
anti-trans hate online

In the prior two months

**↗ 1 in 3**  
reported an increase in  
anti-trans hate online



#### In-person hate

In the last year

**! 1 in 2**  
experienced anti-trans  
hate in-person

Since 2020

**↗ 1 in 3**  
reported an increase in  
anti-trans hate in-person

In the prior two months

**↗ 1 in 4**  
reported an increase in  
anti-trans hate in-person



#### Violence

In the last year

**! 1 in 10**  
experienced  
anti-trans violence

Since 2020

**↗ 1 in 10**  
reported an increase  
in anti-trans violence

In the prior two months

**↗ 1 in 10**  
reported an increase  
in anti-trans violence



## Results

---

**These findings paint a grim picture of the prevalence and escalation of anti-trans hate in Australia. It is clear that transphobia wields a broad social licence and that it remains a common experience for many trans people. The results further suggest that anti-trans hate has intensified over the last few years and even more so in 2023.**

With 9 in 10 participants witnessing anti-trans hate online and 1 in 2 trans respondents experiencing it in the last year, it is evident that transphobia is routine in online spaces. This may be attributable to factors such as poor content moderation on social media platforms, anti-trans incitement in online media, and bad-faith actors spreading disinformation.

Of course, while anti-trans hate is most visible in online spaces, mainly social media and digital news media, a comparable number of trans people experienced abuse, harassment or vilification offline. This speaks to the relationship between online anti-trans hate and its real-world consequences.

Indeed, 1 in 2 of all respondents saw (and the same number of trans participants experienced) anti-trans hate in-person in the last 12 months before the survey. This demonstrates that anti-trans abuse, harassment and vilification are not confined to online spaces but are widespread in daily life. Contributing factors may include inadequate anti-vilification legislation, among much else.

Unfortunately, these real-world experiences of anti-trans hate often escalate to physical violence. Around 1 in 3 participants witnessed anti-trans violence in the last year while 1 in 10 trans people experienced it. Even an extremely conservative estimate suggests that this represents several thousand anti-trans hate crimes in the previous 12 months.

Importantly, findings also suggest that anti-trans hate is escalating over time. Overall, 1 in 3 participants reported an increase in anti-trans hate since 2020. A comparable number also reported an increase two months before the survey, coinciding with the speaking tour of anti-trans lobbyist Kellie-Jay Keen.

A relatively smaller number of trans participants reported a rise in anti-trans violence compared to other forms of anti-trans hate. This may indicate that the level of violence has remained relatively stable. Still, it may also suggest that violence is merely concentrated among trans people who present atypically or who are more often perceived to be trans.

## Summary of Findings



Anti-trans abuse, harassment, vilification and violence are rampant in Australia with virtually all participants reporting online anti-trans hate in the previous 12 months.



Participants reported an increase in anti-trans hate in the two years preceding the survey



Respondents reported an increase in anti-trans hate in the two months preceding the survey which coincides with the Australian tour of anti-trans lobbyist Kellie-Jay Keen



Around half of all respondents saw anti-trans hate in-person in the previous 12 months and a significant minority of trans participants experienced anti-trans violence in the same period



Trans people experienced a variety of online anti-trans hate, including deliberate misgendering, insults, hate speech, doxing, stalking, threats of violence and sexual assault, death threats, incitement to commit suicide and incitement to genocide



Trans people also experienced a range of in-person anti-trans hate, including workplace bullying, street-based harassment, harassment relating to the use of bathrooms, stalking, physical and sexual assault and death threats



Trans people further experienced anti-trans violence, including spitting, grabbing, punching, assault by groups, assault with objects and weapons, and sexual assault

# Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the Trans Justice Project and Victorian Pride Lobby recommend that State, Territory and Federal Governments work collaboratively to:



Introduce Federal and State anti-vilification laws to protect the entire LGBTQIA+ community from abuse, harassment, vilification and violence



Investigate community-led interventions to curb anti-LGBTQIA+ extremism and de-radicalisation approaches



Work together with social media companies to stop the spread of anti-trans disinformation and anti-LGBTQIA+ hate groups



Provide funding for research into the causes and impacts of anti-trans abuse, harassment, vilification and violence and strategies for addressing them



Strengthen media regulations to ensure greater accountability for news outlets that promote anti-trans disinformation



We hope that the grave findings in this report can help inform efforts to promote the safety and well-being of trans people across Australia

## Thank You

The project team would like to extend our sincere thanks to every person who contributed to the production of this report including everyone who took part in the survey, those who shared their stories with us, and all of the organisations and community members who helped to share the survey through their networks and friends.

Additionally, we want to extend our thanks to all of the people behind the scenes who advised on various aspects of the final report including legal advice, media, and policy development.



PROTECT TRANS RIGHTS



Trans justice project.

Victorian Pride Lobby



# **A Year of Hate: Understanding Threats and Harassment Targeting Drag Shows and the LGBTQ+ Community**

Tim Squirrell and Jacob Davey



Amman | Berlin | London | Paris | Washington DC

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## Executive Summary

**Internationally, rising hate and extremism pose an existential threat to human rights and democratic freedoms. LGBTQ+ communities are often the first group to come under attack, and understanding the contours of these assaults matters both for the protection of these communities and to be better able to safeguard human rights and democracy more broadly. In new research by the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, including four country profiles, we examine the trends in anti-LGBTQ+ hate and extremism with a particular focus on harassment targeting all-ages drag shows.**

Drag events by no means represent the entirety of LGBTQ+ communities, and opposition towards them does not encompass all attacks on LGBTQ+ people, nor does opposition to drag necessarily entail that an individual actor is attacking LGBTQ+ more broadly. However, due to the public association of drag with queer communities, analysing anti-drag mobilization does provide useful insight into the key actors engaged in anti-LGBTQ+ activism as well as the key narratives and tactics used to attack these communities. Given the increasingly hostile environment LGBTQ+ communities face, and the increase in violence targeting them, it is crucial to better understand the roots, causes, tactics and dynamics of anti-LGBTQ+ activism.

In recent years anti-LGBTQ+ hate and extremism has increased in many places. Statistics document increases in recorded hate crimes targeting the LGBTQ+ community in countries including the USA,<sup>1</sup> UK,<sup>2</sup> France,<sup>3</sup> Germany<sup>4</sup> and Canada.<sup>5</sup> Violence targeting the LGBTQ+ community is also increasing. The European International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA) found that violence against the LGBTQ+ community reached its highest point in a decade in 2022 in Europe and Central Asia.<sup>6</sup>

This violence can manifest in mass casualty attacks, such as that in Club Q, Colorado Springs, in 2022, which left five dead and 26 injured;<sup>7</sup> or in Bratislava in 2022, which left two dead.<sup>8</sup> This uptick in violence takes place against a steady 'background noise' of surging online hate, harassment and polarisation.

Hate targeting LGBTQ+ is often influenced by deeply-rooted prejudices. As with activity targeting other minority communities, it also follows global patterns which are shaped by inter-referential, transnational confluences of mobilisation from a range of actors. This can be seen, for example, in anti-migrant activism, where international networks have mobilised to oppose migration, and a base prejudice is exacerbated by opportunistic alliances and information manipulation tactics.<sup>9</sup> Activity targeting drag events in a range of different countries - mostly those tailored for child audiences, such as Drag Queen Story Hour (DQSH) events - demonstrates how this mobilisation works, and the attendant risks to those hosting, performing in or attending LGBTQ+ events in public.

Explanation of key trends in anti-LGBTQ+ mobilisation is key to enabling policy makers and law enforcement to identify and mitigate targeted hate, harassment and violence against LGBTQ+ people in more effective way. It is a key part of the broader research ISD carries out on hate, extremism and disinformation perpetrated by many different actors against a whole range of communities, all of which risk damaging democracy and infringing human rights. Understanding the interaction between on and offline hate targeting drag shows is a useful way of exploring the hate movements and actors targeting the LGBTQ+ community more broadly.

In this report, ISD analyses the narratives, themes, actors and tactics involved in anti-drag activism in the US, UK, Australia and France. It examines the footprint of 274 anti-drag mobilisations: 11 in Australia, 3 in France, 57 in the UK and 203 in the USA. Anti-drag activity was also found in Ireland, Finland, Sweden and Switzerland as well as other European countries during the reporting period, usually in isolated cases. Due to finite resources these instances were not analysed in depth, but would merit further research.

This research draws on ethnographic monitoring of over 150 Telegram channels, Twitter profiles and Facebook groups, as well as external resources such as news reports, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED) and Crowd Counting<sup>10</sup> and previous reports on anti-drag<sup>11</sup> by GLAAD and the Southern Poverty Law Center.<sup>12</sup>

## Key Findings

**This research has found substantial consistency globally in anti-LGBTQ+ activism, especially in relation to the tactics employed by actors, but also some key differences between geographies:**

- **Across all contexts analysed, mobilisation against drag events has resulted in loose coalitions of extremists, conspiracy theorists, local activists and fringe political actors to form.** Far-right groups, conspiracy theorists who rose to prominence during the COVID-19 pandemic, fundamentalist religious activists, and anti-LGBTQ+ influencers from the right of the political spectrum are driving much of this activism. Political figures in France, Australia and the US have supported anti-drag action, but only in the US are a substantial number of elected representatives of a mainstream party engaging in anti-drag rhetoric and action.
  - **These loose communities of anti-LGBTQ+ actors draw on a common narrative framework to denigrate LGBTQ+ people and justify their activity when mobilizing against drag events.** This framework draws on and relates to broader “save the children” narratives which have come to the fore in conspiracy theorist communities since the emergence of QAnon in 2017. This includes justifying sometimes extreme action by claiming it is necessary to prevent harm to children.
  - **The US has seen the largest number of protests against drag events, as well as the highest number of violent incidents associated with anti-drag activism.** It has also set trends for the narratives and tactics subsequently used elsewhere.
  - **Anti-LGBTQ+ actors globally have converged on a shared set of tactics.** These include doxxing; threats of violence; coordinated harassment campaigns against venues and performers; and sticker and flyer campaigns. However, despite regular threats against drag performances, only a minority of performances have been cancelled. In the largest dataset analysed for this study - the US - this amounted to 6.4% of all performances targeted online and offline.
  - **Offline mobilisation against drag performances, in the form of protests and vandalism, tends to be highly localised.** Typically, actions are organised in response to planned events, and offline mobilization is always accompanied by online discussion and coordination, such as direction from high-profile influencers to attend and protest an event.
  - **The greatest momentum of anti-drag protests is in the US.** It is the only country reviewed in which legislation has successfully been introduced to prevent drag performances. It is the only country in this data set in which there have been violent attacks against drag events, including the Club Q shooting and an attempted arson.<sup>13</sup> There also appears to be a greater degree of private organising amongst US groups, with protest organisers posting their final plans in public spaces to attract additional attendees but first building their plans in private or less public spaces. US protests often bring together disparate actors from across the ideological spectrum in a form of coalition-building that has become common to causes favoured by right-wing groups in recent years.
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## Glossary

### Anti-drag

Activity undertaken to oppose the hosting of drag shows. These are shows in which, typically, performers caricature or challenge gender stereotypes, often by dressing in clothing that is stereotypical of another gender, using exaggeratedly gendered mannerisms, or combining elements of stereotypically male and female dress.<sup>1</sup> Anti-drag activists normally oppose drag performances or performers appearing in front of minors at events such as all-ages drag shows and Drag Queen Story Hours.

### Anti-lockdown

The term “anti-lockdown” has come to stand in for a range of positions held by individuals who broadly oppose the implementation of restrictions on individual freedoms in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Anti-lockdown individuals or groups may advocate for alternative approaches, such as emphasizing individual responsibility or the prioritization of other societal needs alongside public health considerations.

### Anti-vaccine

The terms “vaccine sceptic” and “anti-vaxxer” cover a wide range of attitudes that are characterised by distrust of a specific vaccine or vaccines in general. Vaccine sceptics are not categorically opposed to vaccines, but have reservations of varying degrees about them. Certain vaccine sceptics accept some vaccines but reject others, sometimes including the COVID-19 vaccines. By way of contrast, anti-vaxxers are fundamentally opposed to vaccines. Their reasons range from suppositions derived from conspiracy theories to the deeply held belief that all vaccines represent a harmful intervention into the body’s biochemical processes.

### Christian nationalist

Christian nationalism has multiple definitions, but for ISD’s purposes it is understood to be an ideology that “idealises and advocates a fusion of Christianity and American [or Australian, or British] civic life” (Whitehead and Perry 2020:10). Christianity in this form is typically racialised (as white) and exclusionary (implying that other religions cannot or should not be part of the nation).

### Doxxing

Searching for and publishing the private data of individuals or organisations on the internet, usually with malicious intent.

### Drag Queen Story Hour (DQSH)

An event in which a drag performer (typically, though not always, a drag queen – usually a man dressed in female gendered clothes) reads books or tells stories, normally to children.

### Extremism

Extremism is the advocacy of a system of belief that claims the superiority and dominance of one identity-based ‘in-group’ over all ‘out-groups.’ It propagates a dehumanising ‘othering’ mind-set that is antithetical to pluralism and the universal application of human rights.

### Far-right

ISD’s definition of far-right is in line with far-right expert Cas Mudde who conceptualises “far-right” as an umbrella term that includes both radical right-wing and extreme right-wing actors. Mudde states that both radical and extreme right-wing actors believe that “inequalities between people are natural and positive,” but have differing attitudes towards democracy. Radical right-wing actors are not against democracy in principle, while extreme right-wing actors reject democracy as a form of government.

### Parents’ rights

In the context of this report, “parents’ rights” groups are organisations or collections of individuals who advocate for the rights of parents to direct the upbringing, education and care of their children.

### Save The Children

In this context, Save The Children (often stylised #SaveTheChildren) is a conspiracy theory offshoot of QAnon, claiming that there is a wide-reaching conspiracy by powerful individuals who are trafficking children for the purposes of paedophilia and ritualistic abuse.<sup>14</sup>

### **Sovereign Citizens**

The Sovereign Citizens movement comprises a highly heterogenous anti-government ideology that originated in the United States. Adherents are united in their belief that the U.S. government illegitimately rules over them. They live under the assumption that by declaring themselves sovereign, they are not obliged to abide with government legislation.

While it is an ideology that has manifested in many different forms, contemporary interpretations are frequently linked to conspiratorial and extremist beliefs. U.S. law enforcement agencies have labelled the movement a domestic terrorist threat. In recent years, anti-government sentiments in relation to imposed COVID-19 measures triggered a surge in popularity of Sovereign Citizens-related ideas in many national contexts.

### **White nationalism**

White nationalism is advocacy for a separate white society or white nation, also sometimes referred to as a white ethnostate. The Anti-Defamation League describes white nationalism as a euphemism for white supremacy; the term is now used to “refer to a form of white supremacy that emphasizes defining a country or region by white racial identity and which seeks to promote the interests of whites exclusively, typically at the expense of people of other backgrounds”.

### **White supremacism**

White supremacy is a system of belief that posits the superiority of whites over non-whites, and advocates that white people should be politically and socially dominant over non-white people. This can extend to a belief in the need for violence against, or even the genocide of, non-white people.

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## Key Actors, Tactics and Narratives

**Outlined below are overviews of the key actors, tactics and narratives identified through ISD analysis of protests against drag events for all-ages audiences in Australia, France, the UK and US.**

### Key Actors

Across all geographies, similar sets of actors are consistently providing the impetus for anti-drag action. This coalition building sees established extremist actors join forces with local activists, conspiracy theorists, partisan media, religious groups and more mainstream actors. Importantly, this follows patterns seen elsewhere, such as during mobilisation against COVID-19 restrictions<sup>15</sup> or against migration in Europe.<sup>16</sup> This demonstrates an opportunism that is now characteristic of extremist groups - beyond only those targeting LGBTQ+ communities - and is important as it highlights a potential vector whereby established extremist movements can influence broader swathes of the population.

Here it is important to flag that by no means all individuals or groups involved in anti-drag activity are extremists.<sup>17</sup> Some "parents' rights" groups such as Protect Texas Kids express intolerant attitudes towards LGBTQ+ people but do not meet ISD's threshold for extremism. However, convergences and coalition building are still important phenomena; these groups and the events they organise and attend represent vectors through which extremists can influence broader social movements.

### Far-right groups and actors

Characteristically, far-right groups and actors have sought to both seed a mainstream moral panic about drag performances, and to exploit existing protests to gain publicity and support for their broader aims.

Typical of far-right and white supremacist messaging is the claim that the acceptance of LGBTQ+ identities is indicative of "degeneracy" and a west in decline. While the manipulation of public opinion against drag performances can be opportunistic, members of these groups harbour genuine hatred for LGBTQ+ people of all identities.

In terms of the numbers attending, neo-Nazis and white supremacists are often the smallest groups present at drag protests, but they attract outsized media attention.

Attracting this media attention is often intentional, as these groups display symbols and make statements that deliberately court controversy. However, media coverage of anti-drag protests also tends to centre on these groups due to the extreme nature of their beliefs. This "oxygen of amplification" is actively sought by white supremacist groups.<sup>18</sup>

### Right-wing media and influencers

Some influencers from the right of the political spectrum, along with associated right-leaning media organisations, have sought to stoke anti-drag action. The most prominent of these actors are located in the US, including Chaya Raichik ('Lids of TikTok') and 'Gays Against Groomers'. Their content is exported to other geographies in the dataset, with the scale and extremity of anti-drag action in the US providing encouragement to movements elsewhere.

These individuals and organisations are typically producing content that appeals to their audiences, and may or may not genuinely believe the messages they are producing. With few exceptions (e.g. Turning Point UK, who have become active in organising and attending protests in the UK in 2023), these influencers tend to push anti-drag narratives online and may encourage or facilitate protest action, but do not turn up in person at events.

### Conspiracy theorists, including COVID-19 sceptics

During the COVID-19 pandemic, ecosystems of conspiracy theorists grew to hold sway over substantial audiences, with accompanying infrastructures on alternative tech platforms such as Telegram. While many of the actors involved in these groups have continued to share anti-vaxx and other COVID-related narratives, anti-LGBTQ+ activism has become a significant plank of the platform for some. The kinds of narratives these actors embrace are often overtly conspiratorial, seeking to portray LGBTQ+ people interacting with children as insidious indoctrination, possibly aided and abetted by the state.

### Radical right and conservative parties/politicians

In multiple geographies, both radical right and broader conservative parties and politicians have been active in pushing anti-drag rhetoric. In France, there was a political party, Union for the Family,<sup>19</sup> set up initially to protest equal marriage legislation whose

attention has now turned to drag performances. In Australia, Senator Ralph Babet of the United Australia Party, elected with the support of COVID-sceptic movements, is a vocal supporter of anti-drag action. The UK has thus far seen minimal involvement from elected politicians. In contrast, the US has seen a substantial number of anti-drag laws being introduced into State legislatures, and politicians such as Ron Desantis (Governor of Florida) have been active in advocating not only anti-drag laws, but also restrictions on gender affirmation and the teaching of LGBTQ+ identities and issues in schools.

### **Religious groups**

Historically, attempts to prevent the acceptance of LGBTQ+ identities have often been led by conservative religious groups. Religious groups and narratives are not at the forefront of anti-drag activism, but they are still represented in the ecosystem. In Australia, the conspiracy movement that grew during the pandemic has shifted towards religiosity since 2022, and those in the movement who have committed to anti-drag activism often use explicitly religious terminology, labelling LGBTQ+ people as “demonic” or “Satanic”. In the US, fundamentalist Christian rhetoric is represented both in the QAnon movement and in Christian groups such as the New Columbia Movement, who have appeared at anti-drag protests with banners protesting equal marriage. In line with its increasingly secular character, the UK has seen minimal involvement from religious groups in anti-drag activism.

### **“Parents’ rights” movement**

Across all geographies, groups purporting to be composed of parents concerned about children being exposed to “gender ideology” or drag performers have become major players in the anti-drag ecosystem. These groups typically use the “protecting children” narrative, as well as claiming that their rights as parents to control the information and identities which children are exposed to are being eroded.

There is significant overlap between these groups and other actors, particularly far-right activists seeking to legitimise themselves by framing their concerns as being from the perspective of parents who want to “protect children”.

Parents’ rights groups grew during the pandemic with opposition to vaccine mandates and schools’ COVID-19 measures, before renewing efforts to campaign on issues such as race and sexuality in school instruction, advocating for measures such as the banning of books about LGBTQ+ issues. Opposition to drag performances sits alongside this set of issues, wrapped into a single package of concerned parents protecting their children from insidious influences.

## Key Tactics

**Our analysis of anti-drag activity has identified a range of tactics used to target drag events, ranging from strategies commonly used in political activism to potentially violent activity designed to silence drag events.**

### Threats, Protests, Harassment and Violence

Anti-drag activists have deployed a range of tactics to attempt to have drag shows cancelled, make it harder to host them in future, and demonise those who are hosting or performing at them. These include:

- **Protesting at locations where drag events are being held**

Protests range from small gatherings of no more than a handful of people with signs, to much larger gatherings of multiple groups.

In some cases, these protests can escalate to disruption, intimidation and violence. Drag queen Sab Samuel, who ran a series of DQSH events in the UK in summer 2022, was cornered and blocked from driving away in his car by COVID-19 conspiracy theorist protestors who called him a “paedophile” and asked “Why are you grooming children?” As a result of this confrontation and aggressive protests, two subsequent DQSH events were cancelled.<sup>20</sup> Other UK events have been disrupted by protestors infiltrating the audience and proceeding to shout abuse at performers.

Protests have also been held at locations where events have been cancelled. When a restaurant in Sacramento, California, cancelled a drag show due to safety concerns after a local Proud Boys chapter circulated the event details, a group of Proud Boys still showed up to protest and attempted to force their way into the restaurant.<sup>21</sup>

- **Doxxing and harassing drag performers and hosts**

Some activists have sought to exert pressure on drag performers and venues by publishing their contact details (or urging their followers to do so) and requesting that their followers complain about upcoming events.

A UK drag performer told a court that a former councillor who protested an event and subsequently breached an injunction (restraining order) against him had portrayed him as a “groomer” online, which led to him losing work, receiving death threats and being targeted by paedophile hunters.<sup>22</sup>

Elsewhere in the UK, adherents to the Sovereign Citizen ideology<sup>23</sup> have attempted to make “citizen’s arrests” of drag performers, or explained to their followers how to do so.

- **Sending threatening messages to those performing at or hosting drag events, including death and bomb threats**

In some instances, these threats can lead to disruption or cancellation. One such instance saw an Illinois library cancel their drag bingo event celebrating National Coming Out Day due to mail and online threats.<sup>24</sup> In another example, a bomb threat was called in during a DQSH performance, resulting in a performance being delayed while the threat was dealt with.<sup>25</sup> A significant risk is that threats, alongside other tactics, create security risks that require substantial financial outlay to mitigate, making it difficult for all but the most secure or affluent venues to host drag events.

- **Vandalising locations hosting drag events**

Vandalism can function as a form of intimidation, making performers and hosts feel unsafe and in some cases forcing the cancellation of events. In the US, a bakery in suburban Chicago had its windows smashed and homophobic graffiti daubed on its walls.<sup>26</sup> Alongside other tactics such as threats, spurious complaints to law enforcement, and continuous picketing of the building, the bakery was forced to close and move to a different area.

- **Testifying at school meetings and legislative sessions**

A tactic that appears to have been adopted primarily in the US and Australia, some activists have taken to testifying at or disrupting public meetings. The aim for this action appears to be a mix of exerting pressure to cancel drag events and seeking to gain publicity. In one instance, around 190 protestors - including several high-profile influencers and livestreamers - attended a Monash City Council meeting and disrupted the proceedings, calling councillors “paedophiles” and calling for them to be sacked and arrested for promoting “sex in front of our children”.<sup>27</sup>

- **Encouraging email, call and mail campaigns to try to have events cancelled**

Some activists have sought to overwhelm libraries and other venues hosting drag events with communications asking to have events cancelled. These can both intimidate staff and make it difficult to function normally as a business or public service. One UK-based activist typifies this tactic, sharing the numbers of libraries on her Telegram channel and posting recordings of her phone calls with library staff, in which she would question them over their knowledge of DQSH events and sometimes become aggressive and confrontational.

In France, petitions appear to be a common mechanism for attempting to have events cancelled. La Furie Francaise, an identitarian group,<sup>28</sup> created a petition to protest a drag show in Toulouse; the link to this petition became the most-shared link in ISD's dataset tied to the event. Ideological fellow travellers such as representatives of Eric Zemmour's Reconquete party and former Generation Identity members were among the amplifiers.

- **Flooding websites with bad reviews, often accompanied with accusations of paedophilia and grooming**

The practice of "review bombing" is a low cost effort that requires only online mobilisation and can make the lives of business owners and public officials difficult. In Australia, activist Monica Smit encouraged her followers to target the Monash Library Service; they subsequently flooded its Facebook page with negative reviews, accusing the library of being paedophiles and groomers.<sup>29</sup>

- **Organising stickering and flyering campaigns**

Stickers and flyers can function as a form of intimidation, indicating to those in the area that there is active local support for (or opposition to) a cause. British white nationalist group Patriotic Alternative has encouraged its members to distribute leaflets to local areas to garner support for their protests. Likewise, in Perth, Australia, flyers were distributed prior to a long-running drag event, calling the event "grooming" and including photos of the scheduled performer dressed to perform in a nightclub, attempting to indicate the event would be unsuitable for children.

Notably, many of these tactics are used in conjunction with others, creating multiple threat vectors for would-be drag event hosts and performers.

### Legislation

Localising this dataset to the United States, anti-drag legislation has been advanced in a number of states. At time of writing, 43 bills have been introduced, 5 of which have been defeated, 3 passed into law, and 35 advancing to further stages of legislative scrutiny.<sup>30</sup> In another example, proposed legislation in Texas would defund public libraries that allow drag show story times for children.<sup>31</sup> This legislative approach echoes the narrative that drag shows are an inappropriate use of public resources, and threatens to undermine libraries that do substantially more than host drag story hours.

The language in these bills is often vague, meaning they can be interpreted to target trans people. For example, a Tennessee bill restricting "adult cabaret performances" in public or in the presence of children,<sup>32</sup> and banning them from occurring within 1,000 feet of schools, public parks, or places of worship, refers to drag performers as "male or female impersonators".<sup>33</sup> Given that separate legislation was passed in Tennessee (as well as states including Louisiana, Tennessee, Montana, Nebraska, Florida and Idaho) restricting gender-affirming care from being provided to minors, there are justified fears from the trans community that they may also be treated as "male or female impersonators" simply through their public appearance in a State which has institutionalised transphobia.

## Key Narratives

**Based on a narrative analysis of online content associated with 274 anti-drag protests, we have identified a set of shared narratives deployed by anti-LGBTQ+ actors. Better understanding these narratives is essential. It not only allows us to understand the ways in which anti-LGBTQ+ actors are mobilized towards a range of harmful activities, but also provides a baseline for activities pushing back against anti-LGBTQ+ activity, including communications campaigns and preventative programming.**

ISD's analysis of anti-drag mobilization has identified seven central narratives:

- “Protecting children”
- Framing drag as misogyny
- Conflation of drag performers and trans individuals
- Importing of US narratives and actors
- Wasting public resources
- LGBTQ+ identities as “ideology”
- Linking LGBTQ+ identities to Satanism

### “Protecting children”

The most extreme forms of protest appear to be justified using the “protecting children” narrative, with actors arguing that they are obligated to prevent children from being “groomed” by drag performers.

Anti-drag activists have sought to frame their actions in terms of “protecting children” from performances that they claim are inherently sexual and therefore inappropriate. This claim often involves references to the names of drag performers, which may be double entendre or veiled sexual references. Likewise, activists will link to adult performances by the same artists who are reading to children, claiming (incorrectly) that they will dress or behave in the same way around minors.

Drag performers are framed as ideological indoctrinators, seeking to “groom” children into LGBTQ+ identities, particularly trans identities. They are also framed as predatory, with some anti-drag actors such as Turning Point UK activist Calvin Robinson asking the rhetorical question, “Why [are] drag queens so keen to spend time with your children?”. More extreme

versions of this claim will argue that drag literally promotes “sex in front of children”.<sup>34</sup>

This narrative also seeks to engage parents in anti-drag activism by claiming that the acceptability of public drag performances – or the “trans agenda”, which is often conflated with drag (see below) - is an attempt to erode parental rights. This is sometimes framed in religious terms, with activists saying, “Don’t come near my children, don’t come near my faith,” implying that drag is anti-Christian and its acceptability is antithetical to Christian parents’ beliefs.

The anti-drag activist group Gays Against Groomers provide a useful summary of this narrative in a letter to a US location hosting a drag show. They write, “We firmly believe that public child drag unnecessarily exposes children to potential predators and strangers who will view a maturely dressed child as desirable prey.”

### Framing drag as misogyny

A narrative that is present primarily in the UK and Australia, with minimal notable representation in the US, portrays drag artists as misogynists due to the exaggerated caricatures of femininity they often portray. It is worth noting that drag’s relationship to gender and feminism is contested, and the question of whether drag may have misogynistic elements is a live debate.<sup>35</sup>

The gender critical group Women’s Rights Network attended an anti-drag protest in Glastonbury. This group promotes transphobic tropes and views DQSH as misogynistic and homophobic.<sup>36</sup>

In Australia, anti-drag Senator Ralph Babet, who was elected off the back of anti-lockdown and anti-vaccine movements, argued “It’s time for us to actively campaign against men playing ‘woman face’.”

### Conflation of drag performers and trans individuals

A notable theme across geographies was the consistent conflation of drag performers and transgender or gender non-conforming individuals. Drag events were often framed as indoctrination into “transgender ideology”, or attempts to groom children into becoming transgender.

In one instance, an organisation called the Family Education Trust created a letter template for people emailing libraries seeking to cancel drag

events. The template claims that DQSH events are “highly sexualised” and that their true purpose is “indoctrination in the transgender agenda.”

In a telling slip, an Australian anti-LGBTQ+ activist described a speech from One Nation politician Mark Latham as “a speech on homo- um, on transgenders [sic] and what they want to introduce into the schools.”<sup>37</sup> The claim this activist is making is that either gay or trans people want to introduce inappropriate ideological or sexual content in schools, but the notable part of the sentence is the slippage between the two groups he is apparently concerned about.

In France, drag performers are commonly referred to as transgender, often using transphobic slurs and hate speech, including at an event in which l’Oriflamme, a group described by news articles as “ultra-right”,<sup>38</sup> physically protested a DQSH event. In the French-language post below, a Telegram channel talks about the “reading of transgender stories by drag queens in front of children.”

### Importing of US narratives and actors

The United States is the site of the largest number of anti-drag actions, and the largest number of violent altercations and arrests resulting from these actions. Right-wing extremist movements and hate campaigns are typically internationalised, and anti-drag action is no exception. US actors’ rhetoric and content has been observed in multiple other countries.

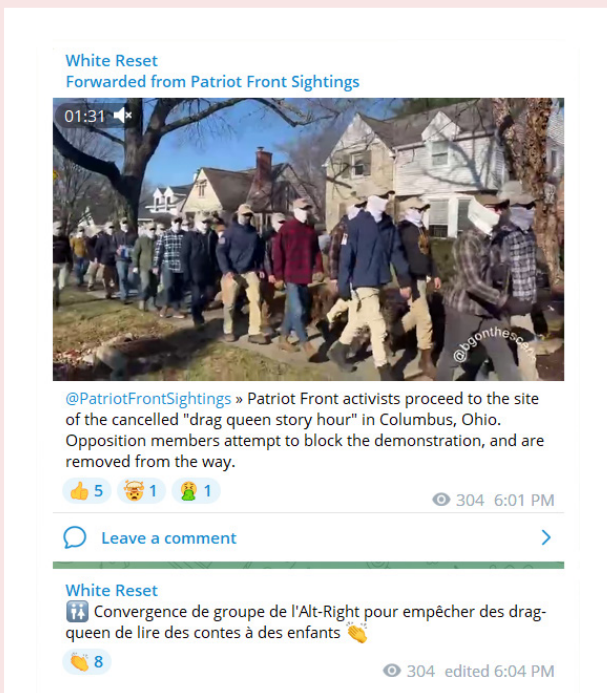
The recent popularisation of the “groomer” slur originates in the US,<sup>39</sup> however drag events in the US have been targeted by far-right groups since 2017,<sup>40</sup> and early articles condemning DQSH appeared in media outlets Breitbart News and the Daily Wire which are known to share right-leaning content. While anti-drag legislation thus far appears to remain a preserve of US State Legislatures, anti-drag rhetoric has become a key export, alongside major US players in the space.

French anti-drag activists have approvingly reposted content from Gays Against Groomers and Patriot Front, as seen in the figures below. Gays Against Groomers’ content has likewise been seen in the Telegram channels of UK anti-drag actors such as Danny ‘Truth Pills’.

**Figure 1** Example of a post conflating drag queens and transgender people. The translation of the following post: “Macron and LGBT propaganda at school. Emanuelle Macron is promoting LGBT propaganda in front of children. This extract is a reminder that the reading of transgender stories by drag queens in front of children and sex education at school promoting LGBT propaganda and gender theory are a direct reflection of the ideas of president Macron...”



Figures 2 and 3 French anti-drag activists repost content from US anti-drag action



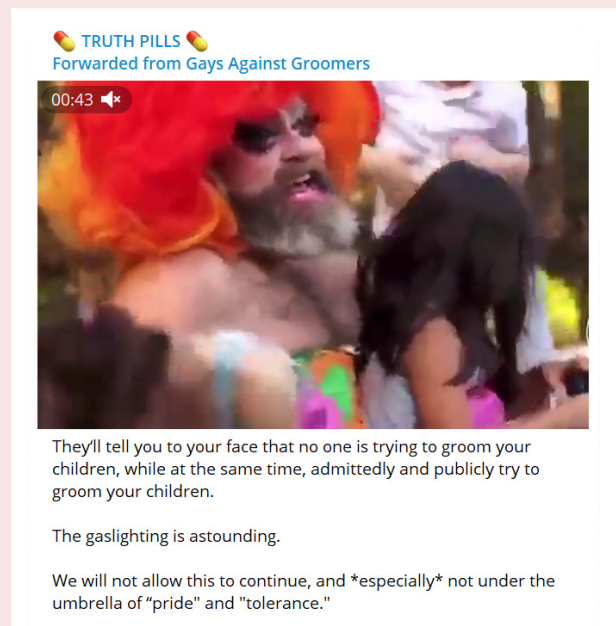
Perhaps the most influential anti-drag (and indeed anti-LGBTQ+) activist of the moment is Chaya Raichik, aka Libs of TikTok, whose tactics include highlighting events taking place across the US, resulting in her followers embarking on harassment, abuse and protest. Her content appears elsewhere, including a clip being posted by Australian senator Ralph Babet.

**Wasting public resources**

Many DQSH events are run in public spaces such as libraries and are sometimes funded by local councils as cultural enrichment activities. This has become a topic for anti-drag action, which claims that, for example, councils should be worried about "rates, roads and rubbish," rather than "spending your money to indoctrinate and groom children," to quote Australian senator Ralph Babet.

This narrative is present across multiple countries, with UK anti-drag activists complaining that DQSH events are "funded by public money," along with criticising the closure of libraries to the public during the events. Likewise in France, anti-drag actors often highlight the fact that events are taking place in public libraries, or

Figure 4 Gays Against Groomers appears in the Telegram channel of Danny 'Truth Pills'



that the organisations or festivals hosting the events are receiving public funding. In the US, even drag events that are not funded by public money are sometimes framed as if they are by actors seeking to have them cancelled.

The “wasting public resources” narrative has become a vector for activists to attempt to have events cancelled, with activists writing to libraries and councils with template complaints, as well as sending abuse and threats.

### **LGBTQ+ identities as “ideology”**

In the 1990s, the phrase “gay agenda” was used to frame the fight for equal rights and cultural acceptance of homosexuality as a form of political ideology which would inherently require a trade-off between the rights of LGB individuals and others (particularly people with strong religious convictions). The “agenda” itself is an empty signifier, adaptable to whatever form of cultural or legal acceptance might be in play. The term “gender ideology” has taken on a similar function, encompassing a range of demands such as the right to abortion, sexual orientation and gender identity, diverse families, education in gender and sexuality, HIV prevention and sex work.<sup>41</sup>

In anti-drag activism, framing LGBTQ+ identities as “ideology” allows some actors to separate gay individuals from many other people who fall in the queer spectrum. For example, one Australian activist claimed they were not against homosexuality, rather, “There’s a lot of people who are hiding behind the LGBT [sic] who are making the gays look bad.” These kinds of framing weave neatly into other narratives, particularly the conflation of trans people with drag, and the claim to be “protecting children” - i.e. from LGBTQ+/gender ideology.

### **Linking LGBTQ+ identities to Satanism**

Echoing the Satanic Panic of the 1980s and ‘90s,<sup>42</sup> along with more recent conspiracy theories emanating from QAnon and its offshoot Save The Children, some anti-drag activists have sought to link drag to Satanism. Primarily found in Australia, with some narrative elements present amongst US groups, this narrative is meant in both metaphorical and literal terms. Key examples include claims such as:

- “That is a demon not a man pretending to be a woman”
- “It even looks like a demon”
- “That person looks like its [sic] representing the Baphomet”

## Conclusion

**The year from May 2022 – May 2023 has been marked by escalating action against drag performances across the UK, US, France and Australia.**

Taken in their totality, these anti-drag actions spanning three continents paint a bleak picture for the freedoms of LGBTQ+ people to participate in public life. This picture becomes more concerning when paired with continuing attacks on the rights of transgender and LGBTQ+ people, both through legislation and broader attempts to slur them as “groomers” - paedophiles – and roll back progress on queer acceptance.

The “groomer” slur is the latest narrative emerging from fringe and extreme groups to become a mainstream part of politics. A 2019 ISD report charted the violent consequences of the mainstreaming of the ‘Great Replacement’ narrative,<sup>43</sup> which laundered the explicitly white supremacist ‘White Genocide’ conspiracy theory into the mainstream.<sup>44</sup> The Great Replacement inspired the 2019 Christchurch terror attack, which killed 51 people, and the bulk of right-wing terrorist attacks in the years since. Since that time, the ‘Great Replacement’ has been renamed ‘replacement theory’ and repeated on mainstream news.<sup>45</sup>

This research suggest that the anti-drag actions documented in this report show no signs of ceasing in the near future, and it is unlikely that they will de-escalate as the narratives used by anti-drag activism becomes more mainstreamed. However, it is important to acknowledge that where anti-drag protests have materialised in person, they have often been met by substantially larger counter-protests. While extremist activists may travel from afar to exploit tensions at public libraries, counter-protestors are typically drawn from local communities who are broadly tolerant and supportive of LGBTQ+ rights and identities. While anti-drag protests may be increasing in number and severity, they do not represent more than the view of a vocal and active intolerant minority.

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## Section 22

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**From:** Section 22  
**Sent:** Monday, 11 September 2023 3:41 PM  
**To:** Section 22  
**Subject:** RE: Recent reports on anti-LGBTQ harassment [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**Security Classification:**  
OFFICIAL

Hi everyone,

Here's a summary of the Institute of Strategic Dialogue's report, hope it's helpful (and it's on sharepoint!)

 [ISD Report Summary - understanding Anti-Drag mobilisation .docx](#)

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**From:** Section 22  
**Sent:** Monday, September 11, 2023 12:25 PM  
**To:** Section 22  
**Subject:** RE: Recent reports on anti-LGBTQ harassment [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi Section 22

If you do have capacity I'd be really grateful for a short summary.

Also just a good idea to save interesting articles in the sharedrive for future reference.

Thanks

Section 22

---

**From:** Section 22  
**Sent:** Monday, September 11, 2023 12:06 PM  
**To:** Section 22  
**Subject:** Recent reports on anti-LGBTQ harassment [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi team,

Hope you've all had a good weekend! Just thought I'd circulate a few reports I was reviewing last week.

The first one is a report by the Trans Justice Project covering the rise in Anti-Trans experiences in Australia, it was published last month.

The second is by the Institute of Strategic Dialogue, covering the global rise in anti-LGBTIQ threats and harassment, and the key actors, tactics and narratives involved in Aus, France, the UK and the US. It was published in late June.

If it would be helpful, I can put together a short summary of each report too 😊

Warm regards,

**Section 22**

Advisor on SOGI

### **Australian Human Rights Commission**

GPO Box 5218, Sydney NSW 2001

**Section 22**

| [W humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au)

### **Human rights: everyone, everywhere, everyday**

I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land I work, the Gadigal peoples of the Eora Nation (Commission Office) **Section 22** and pay my respects to their Elders, past and present.

## Summary of ISD report “A Year of Hate: Understanding Threats and Harassment Targeting Drag Shows and the LGBTQ+ Community”

*An analysis of the narratives, themes, actors and tactics involved in anti-drag activism in the US, UK, Australia and France between May 2022 and May 2023.*

Full report: [Understanding-Threats-and-Harassment-Targeting-Drag-Shows-and-the-LGBTQ-Community.pdf](#)

### Overview and Purpose:

Statistics document increases in recorded hate crimes and violence targeting the LGBTQ+ community across Europe, the US, UK and Asia.

Due to strong public association of drag with LGBTIQ+ communities, analysing anti-drag mobilization provides insight into the key actors engaged in anti LGBTQ+ activism as well as the key narratives and tactics used to attack these communities.

Understanding anti-LGBTQ+ strategies and tactics provides insights that can be used to better protect these communities, and to safeguard human rights and democracy more broadly.

### Key Findings:

- Anti-drag mobilisation is driven by a loose coalition of far-right extremists, right-wing influencers, conspiracy theorists, fundamentalist religious groups and fringe political actors.
- The common “save the children<sup>1</sup>” narrative framework used to justify anti-drag and anti-LGBTQ mobilisation is building on broader narratives that were brought into prominence by the spread of QAnon.
- Anti-LGBTIQ actors around the world are sharing tactics, including coordinated harassment of performers and venues, doxing, and coordinating highly localised offline mobilisation.

### Key Actors:

Coalitions follow patterns seen during mobilisation against COVID restrictions and migration in Europe, demonstrating opportunism of established extremists groups in finding vectors to influence broader social movements and expand reach to general populations.

#### Far Right Groups and Actors

Far-right and white supremacist messaging is the claim that the acceptance of LGBTQ+ identities is indicative of “degeneracy” and a west in decline. Messaging may be opportunistic but members harbor genuine hatred of LGBTQ+ people. Attend protests in small numbers but attract outsized media attention, the “oxygen of amplification”.

#### Rightwing media and influences

Most prominent actors located in the US, content has been exported to the geographies of the dataset. While they encourage or facilitate protest action, they do not attend in person.

#### Conspiracy theorists, including COVID 19 sceptics

portray LGBTQ+ people interacting with children as insidious indoctrination, possibly aided and abetted by the state.

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<sup>1</sup> In this context, Save The Children (often stylised #SaveTheChildren) is a conspiracy theory offshoot of QAnon, claiming that there is a wide-reaching conspiracy by powerful individuals who are trafficking children for the purposes of paedophilia and ritualistic abuse

### Radical right and conservative parties/politicians

Both radical and broader conservative parties are active in pushing anti-drag rhetoric, often pivoting from other causes (eg. Australia's Coalition for Marriage changing to Binary Australia). The US has seen a substantial number of anti-drag laws introduced in state legislatures.

### Religious groups

In Australia, the conspiracy movement that grew during the pandemic has shifted towards religiosity since 2022, and use explicit religious terminology, labelling LGBTQ+ people as "demonic" or "satanic".

### "Parents Rights" movement

Using the "save the children" narrative, far right activists legitimise concerns by framing themselves as concerned parents protecting their children from insidious influences. Major players across all geographies with significant overlap with other groups. Opposition to drag sits alongside a set of issues including sex education and racial history, "gender ideology" and access to books on LGBTQ+ issues.

## Key Tactics

Threats, protests, harassment and violence that can shut down events, make it harder to host them in future, and demonise those who perform and host events.

### Protesting at drag event locations

Ranging from small gatherings to larger gatherings of multiple groups, these projects can escalate to disruption, intimidation and violence, and can lead to events being cancelled due to fear of damage to people and property.

### Doxing and harassing performers, hosts

Publishing the contact details or personal addresses of drag performers, venue operators and people who speak out in support of drag shows (or encouraging their followers to do so), and requesting followers complain about upcoming events.

### Sending threatening messages including bomb threats and death threats

Combined with other tactics, threats create security risks that require substantial financial outlay to mitigate, making it difficult for all but the most secure or affluent venues to host drag events

### Vandalising locations hosting events

A form of intimidation, making performers and hosts feel unsafe and in some cases forcing the cancellation of events.

### Testifying at school meetings and legislative sessions

This tactic has been adopted in Australia, with activists testifying at or disrupting public meetings to exert pressure and gain publicity (eg. A Monash city council meeting saw over 160 protestors disrupt proceedings calling councillors "paedophiles".)

### Encouraging email, call and mail campaigns to get events cancelled

Overwhelming staff at libraries and other venues both intimidate staff and makes it difficult for the venue function as a service or business. In France, petitions are commonly used to attempt to get events cancelled.

**Flooding websites with bad reviews, accusations of paedophilia and grooming**  
“Review bombing” is low cost and only requires online mobilisation to make the lives of business owners and public officers difficult. Monash Library Service’s Facebook page was inundated with negative reviews at the request of activist Monica Smit.

**Stickering and flyering campaigns**  
Another form of intimidation, insinuating local support for the anti-drag cause. This tactic was used in Perth to protest an all-ages drag event.

*Notably, the above tactics are often used in conjunction with each other, creating multiple threat vectors for would-be venues and event organisers.*

**Legislation**  
This is localised to the US at the time of the report being written.

## Key Narratives

A set of shared narratives deployed by anti-LGBTQ actors, based on analysis of online content. Better understanding of these narratives is essential for providing a baseline for activities pushing back against anti-LGBTIQA messages and action, including communications campaigns and preventative programming.

**“Protecting children”**  
Used to justify the most extreme forms of protesting, as actors argue they are obligated to prevent children from being “groomed”.

Drag performers are framed as predatory, and/or ideological indoctrinators, seeking to “groom” children into LGBTQ+ identities, particularly trans identities. This narrative also seeks to engage parents in anti-drag activism by claiming that the acceptability of public drag performances – or the “trans agenda”, which is often conflated with drag - is an attempt to erode parental rights. This is sometimes framed in religious terms.

**Framing drag as misogyny**  
Present primarily in the UK and Australia, this narrative portrays drag artists as misogynists due to the exaggerated caricatures of femininity they often portray. The question of misogynistic elements in drag is a live debate within queer communities.

**Conflation of drag performers and trans individuals**  
conflation of drag performers and transgender or gender non-conforming individuals was a consistent narrative across all geographies. Drag events were often framed as indoctrination into “transgender ideology”, or attempts to groom children into becoming transgender.

**Importing of US narratives and actors**  
Rhetoric and content from US right wing extremist movements and hate campaigns has been observed in multiple other countries. The recent popularisation of the “groomer” slur originates in the US.

The most influential anti-LGBTQ activist is Chaya Raichik, aka Libs of TikTok. A clip of hers was posted by Australian Senator Ralph Babet.

### Wasting public resources

As many drag story-time events are held in libraries and sometimes funded by local councils, anti-drag activists claim, for example, that councils should be worried about “rates, roads and rubbish,” rather than “spending your money to indoctrinate and groom children,” to quote Australian senator Ralph Babet.

The “wasting public resources” narrative has become a vector for activists to attempt to have events cancelled, with activists writing to libraries and councils with template complaints, as well as sending abuse and threats.

### LGBTQ+ identities as “ideology”

The term “gender ideology” has taken on the function of an empty signifier, able to encompass a range of demands such as the right to abortion, sexual orientation and gender identity, diverse families, education in gender and sexuality, HIV prevention and sex work.

These kinds of framing weave neatly into other narratives, particularly the conflation of trans people with drag, and the claim to be “protecting children” - i.e. from LGBTQ+/gender ideology.

### Linking LGBTQ+ identities to Satanism

Anti-drag activists linking drag to Satanism is primary found in Australia and is meant both metaphorically and literally.

## Conclusion

May 2022 – May 2023 has been marked by escalating action against drag performances across the UK, US, France and Australia

The anti-drag actions documented in this report show no signs of ceasing in the near future, and it is unlikely that they will de-escalate as the narratives used by anti-drag activism, particularly the “groomer” slur, becomes more mainstreamed.

When paired with the continuing attacks on the rights of trans and gender diverse people, and LGBTQ+ people, through both legislation and attempts to slur them as paedophiles, there is serious concern for the freedoms of LGBTIQ+ people to participate in public life.

However, while anti-drag protests may be increasing in number and severity, they do not represent more than the view of a vocal and active intolerant minority. This has been demonstrated by the substantially larger counter-protests that are typically drawn from local communities who are broadly tolerant.

Section 22

**From:** Section 22  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 12 September 2023 9:24 AM  
**To:** Section 22  
**Subject:** RE: Recent reports on anti-LGBTQ harassment [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**Security Classification:**  
OFFICIAL

Good morning everyone 😊

Here's the second one.

[Trans Justice Report Summary - Anti-Trans Hate in Australia.docx](#)

Thanks!

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**From:** Section 22  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 12, 2023 9:25 AM  
**To:** Section 22  
**Subject:** RE: Recent reports on anti-LGBTQ harassment [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Amazing, thanks s 22! And congrats on your SharePoint success.

Section 22  
Policy Officer  
Sex Discrimination Team

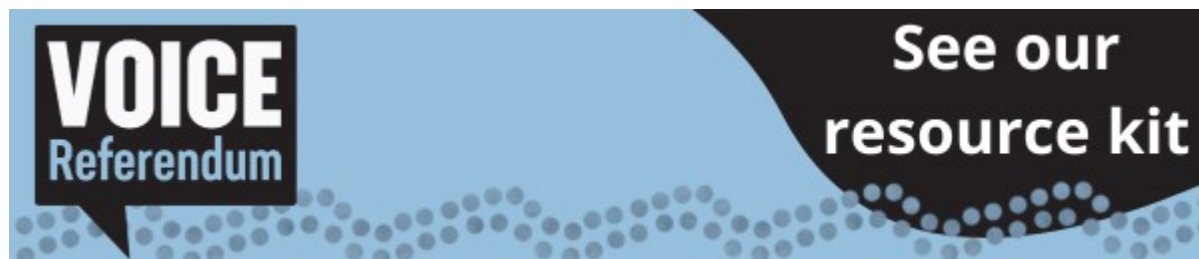
Section 22

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**Section 22**

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## Summary of Report: “Fuelling Hate: Abuse, Harassment, Vilification and Violence against Trans People in Australia”

An investigation and analysis of the prevalence and possible escalation of transphobia in Australia, using survey of 3099 people across Australia.

Full report: [Fuelling-Hate-Anti-Trans-Abuse-Harassment-and-Vilification-WEB-SINGLES-1-1.pdf](#)

### Key Findings:

Anti-trans hate is rampant and intensifying over time.

- 8 in 10 participants reporting an increase in online anti-trans hate since 2020, corresponding with disinformation promoted by politicians and media outlets.
- 7 in 10 participants reported an increase in the two months preceding the survey coinciding with the tour of anti-trans lobbyist Kellie-Jay Keen.
- Anti-trans abuse, harassment, vilification and violence are rampant in Australia with virtually all participants reporting they witnessed online anti-trans hate in the previous 12 months.
- Participants reported an increase in anti-trans hate in the two years preceding the survey
- Trans people further experienced anti-trans violence, including spitting, grabbing, punching, assault by groups, assault with objects and weapons, and sexual assault


### Summary of Results:

#### Trans Respondents




##### Online hate


In the last year

 **1 in 2**  
experienced  
anti-trans hate online

Since 2020

 **1 in 3**  
reported an increase in  
anti-trans hate online


In the prior two months

 **1 in 3**  
reported an increase in  
anti-trans hate online




##### In-person hate


In the last year

 **1 in 2**  
experienced anti-trans  
hate in-person

Since 2020

 **1 in 3**  
reported an increase in  
anti-trans hate in-person

In the prior two months

 **1 in 4**  
reported an increase in  
anti-trans hate in-person



##### Violence

In the last year

 **1 in 10**  
experienced  
anti-trans violence

Since 2020







 **1 in 10**  
reported an increase  
in anti-trans violence

In the prior two months

 **1 in 10**  
reported an increase  
in anti-trans violence

## Recommendations:

Based on the above findings, the Trans Justice Project and Victorian Pride Lobby recommend that State, Territory and Federal Governments work collaboratively to:

 <p>Introduce Federal and State anti-vilification laws to protect the entire LGBTQIA+ community from abuse, harassment, vilification and violence</p>	 <p>Investigate community-led interventions to curb anti-LGBTQIA+ extremism and de-radicalisation approaches</p>
 <p>Work together with social media companies to stop the spread of anti-trans disinformation and anti-LGBTQIA+ hate groups</p>	 <p>Provide funding for research into the causes and impacts of anti-trans abuse, harassment, vilification and violence and strategies for addressing them</p>
 <p>Strengthen media regulations to ensure greater accountability for news outlets that promote anti-trans disinformation</p>	 <p>We hope that the grave findings in this report can help inform efforts to promote the safety and well-being of trans people across Australia</p>

## Context:

The 2015 moral panic about Safe Schools introduced anti-trans and far-right talking points into political and media discourse, many of which were recycled during the marriage equality postal survey.

Right wing politicians and fundamentalist Christian lobbies have effectively spread anti-trans narratives revolving around children’s safety, women’s safety, and fairness in sport, which have been mainstreamed by conservative media and utilised by far-right extremist groups in recruitment efforts.

## Timeline:

### Safe Schools

In 2015, the Australian Christian Lobby launched a campaign linked LGBTIQ Education for children as indoctrination and ‘sexualising children.’ National MP George Christianson compared the program to “child grooming”.

### Marriage Equality Postal Survey

In 2017 the ‘No’ campaigners including far right activists tied marriage equality to paedophilia and child abuse, trans women raping women in bathrooms, claims that boys would be forced to wear dresses at school

#### Anti-Trans disinformation in Media

In 2019, The Australian created a “gender issues” column and published 68 articles between June and August, 98% of which were negative.

In 2021, a review of articles published about trans people from the top 10 most widely read outlets between Jan 2019 and Dec 2020 found 90% of the articles framed transgender people and issues negatively.

#### Anti-Trans Lobbying

In 2022, Liberal candidate Katherine Deves’ preselection led to media coverage of her anti-trans views, her role in developing trans-exclusionary legislation, and her description of campaign supporting LGBT youth as “grooming tactic” used by ‘gender extremists’.

In Feb 2023, Victorian Liberal MP Moira Demming’s inaugural speech conflated trans women using female change rooms with “sexual harassment and indecent exposure”.

In March 2023, high-profile anti-trans lobbyist Kellie-Jay Keen (aka Posie Parker) completed a national speaking tour, which was supported and partially financed by the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC). Her rally in Melbourne attracted the National Socialist Network, Australia’s largest neo-Nazi organisation, which brought a banner calling trans people ‘pedo freaks’

In May 2023, at least 9 Victorian councils cancelled Drag Storytime events due to threats from conspiracy theorists and the far right.

#### International:

In 2019, anti-trans hate crimes rose by 81% in the UK

In 2023, the UK used its veto power over the Scottish government for the first time to veto a law that would make it easier for trans people to change their legally recognised sex.

In the USA, 566 anti-trans Bills have been introduced across 49 states aiming to restrict trans people’s access to education, bathrooms, healthcare, legal protections and sports. The US Supreme Court has also repealed anti-discrimination protections for LGBTQIA+ people across the country.

**Section 22**

**From:** Section 22  
**Sent:** Monday, 18 September 2023 2:32 PM  
**To:** Section 22  
**Subject:** FW: Dis/misinformation - taking a strategic approach across the AHRC [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Attachments:** Section 22

**Security Classification:** OFFICIAL

As discussed today.

**Section 22**  
Director, Strategic Communications



**Australian Human Rights Commission**  
GPO Box 5218, Sydney NSW 2001

**Section 22** | [W humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au)

*The Commission supports flexible working arrangements, and I am sending this message at a time that is convenient to me and my work schedule. It is not my expectation that you read, respond, or follow up on this email outside your hours of work.*

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Gadigal peoples of the Eora Nation, and pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and future.

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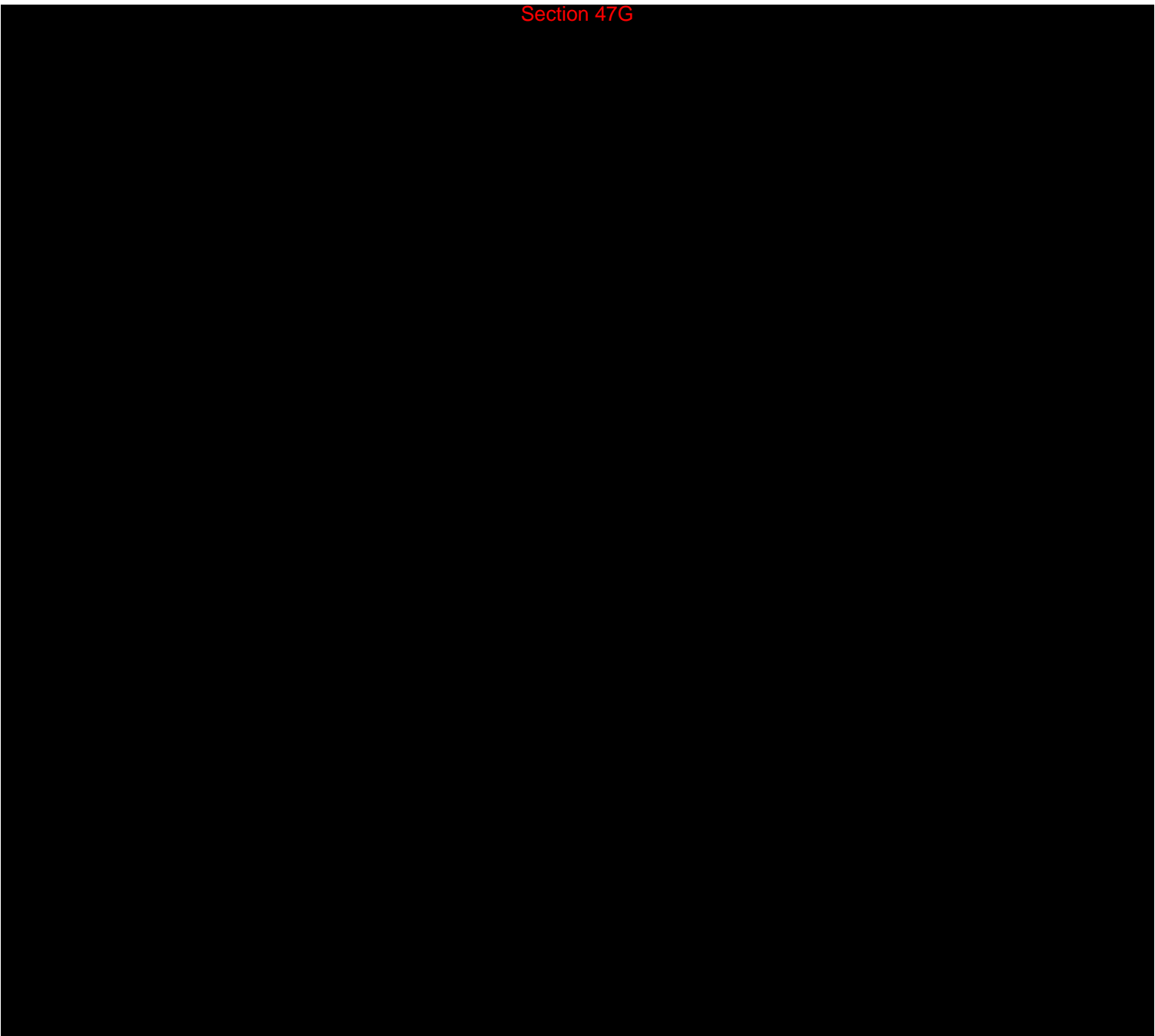
**From:** Section 22  
**Sent:** Monday, September 18, 2023 11:21 AM  
**To:** Section 22

Darren Dick **Section 47F**

**Section 22**

[Large redacted area]

**Cc:** Leanne Smith **Section 47F**  
**Subject:** Dis/misinformation - taking a strategic approach across the AHRC [SEC=OFFICIAL]



s 22





























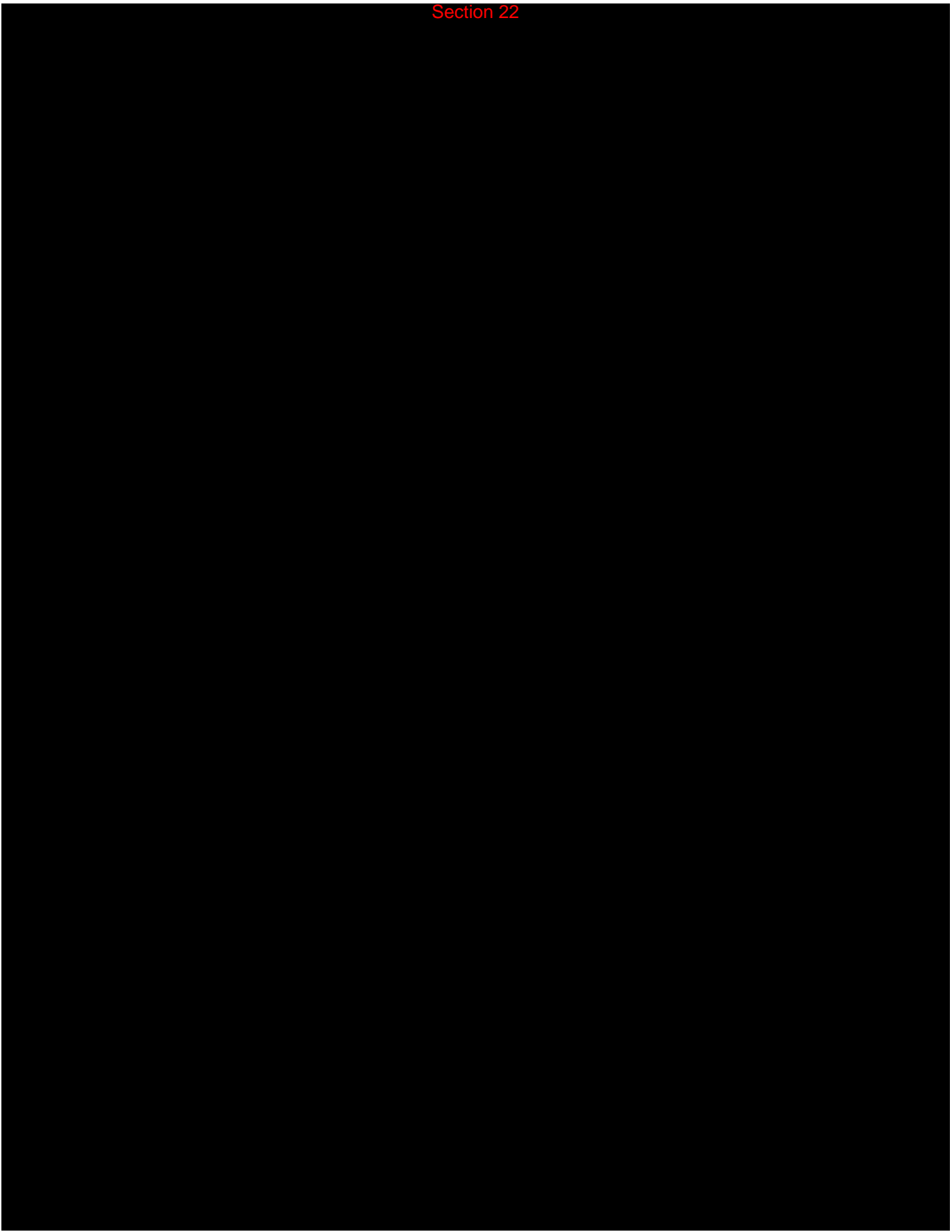


## Meetings in Perth

21<sup>st</sup> September:

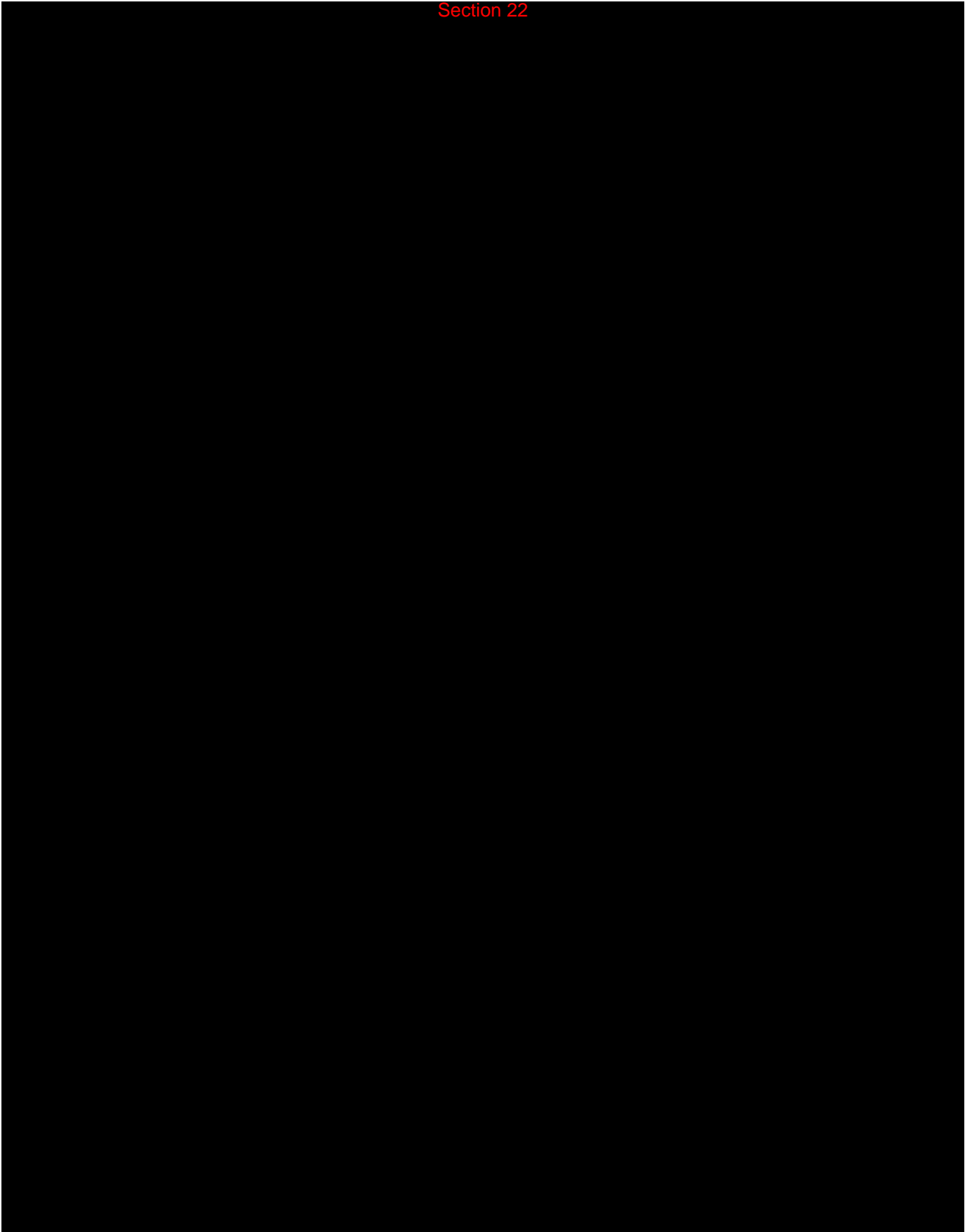
Section 22

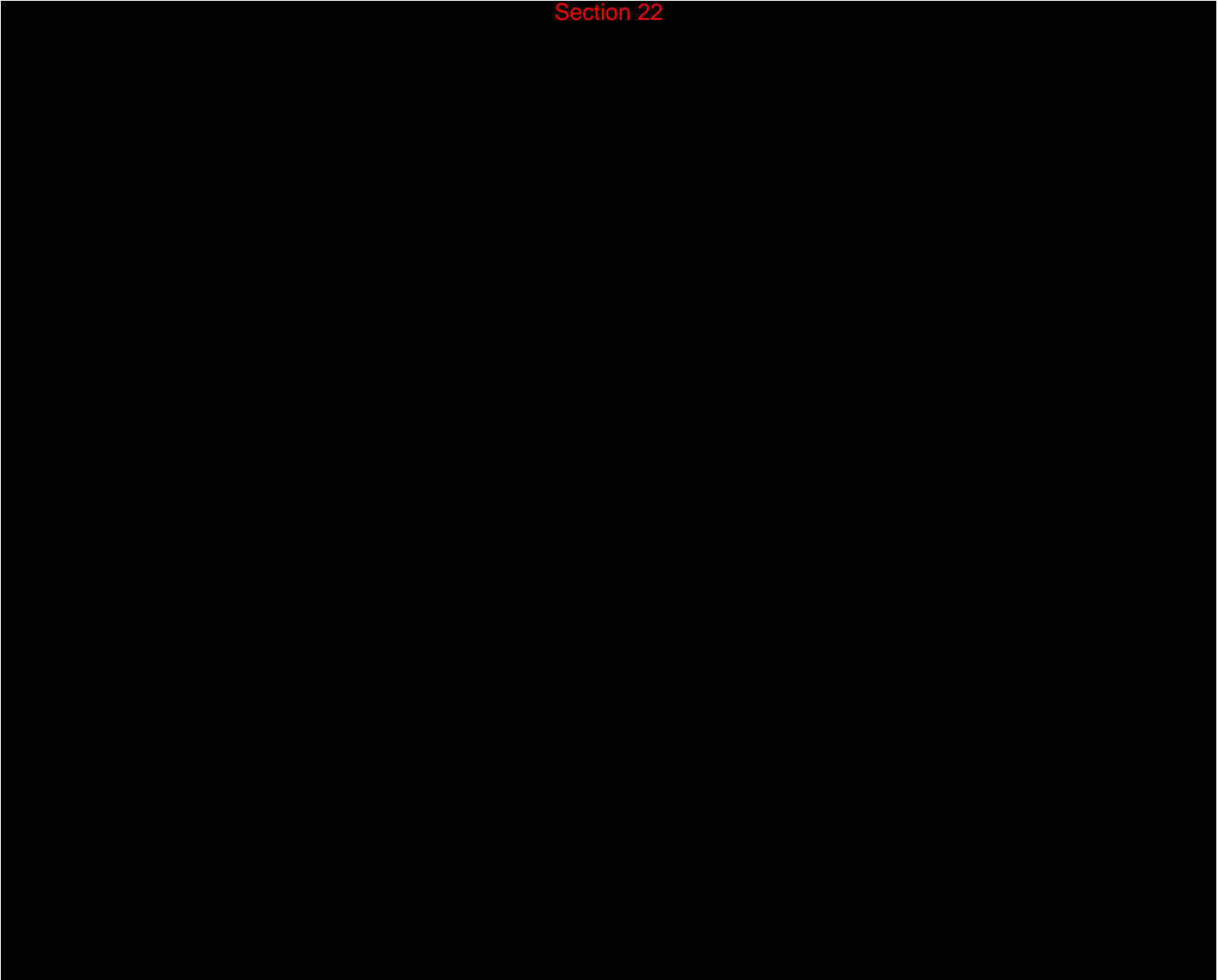












**RAINBOW Futures WA**  
22<sup>nd</sup> September, 11.40-12.20pm

**Section 47F** [Redacted]

**Section 47F** [Redacted]

**Section 47F** Rainbow Futures WA created to enable a united voice for the whole community to work with government. **s 47F** work on systemic law reform issues. Most organisations are part of Rainbow Futures. WA has the most difficult gender recognition process in Australia so they want to change that. Also very keen to see what is happening with the Equal opportunities Act. **s 47F** were very concerned to see what happened to the Aboriginal Heritage Act, repealed after 2 years. The only opposition now is the nationals with 2 members.

Rainbow labour are very supportive of Rainbow Futures WA. They have an election in 2025 but won't want to introduce legislation which could be controversial in 2024. They are concerned that the legislation isn't introduced in November which includes Pride month and lots of activities.

Other issues of importance are: eliminating conversion practices in WA and ensuring access to surrogacy legally.

Another issue is intersex variations and working with the Health sector to stop surgery. I ask whether WA discrimination law includes intersex people. They don't know. They also want a whole of government approach to issues.

**Section 47F** is the other participant in the meeting.

I ask about intersectional approaches to LGBTQIA issues. **Section 47F** talks about a project which is intergenerational between First Nations elders and young people with queer identity. There is also a research project with **Section 47F**, with NEAMI and has organisations across the State. It includes First Peoples Rainbow Mob and rainbow Migrants and QPOC.

There is a real lack of funding from government for projects.

Most of their members **Section 47G**

Pride WA used to be focussed on celebrations in Pride month November but now have a greater focus on systemic issues also.

**Section 47G**

I ask whether there is an issue of exclusion of Trans women from Lesbian spaces. They say they don't think so. They are very clear that women's events are all inclusive. Pride WA is committed to women's inclusivity.

They have had issues around Drag Story hours with some anti trans activities. But in the City of Bayswater there was a very queer friendly bookshop which stayed firm and did not cancel events. For this reason the drag story hours have kept going. There were about 100 protesters/supporters present to ensure it was a family friendly and supportive event. Also the **Section 47F** is very supportive and is part of the community.

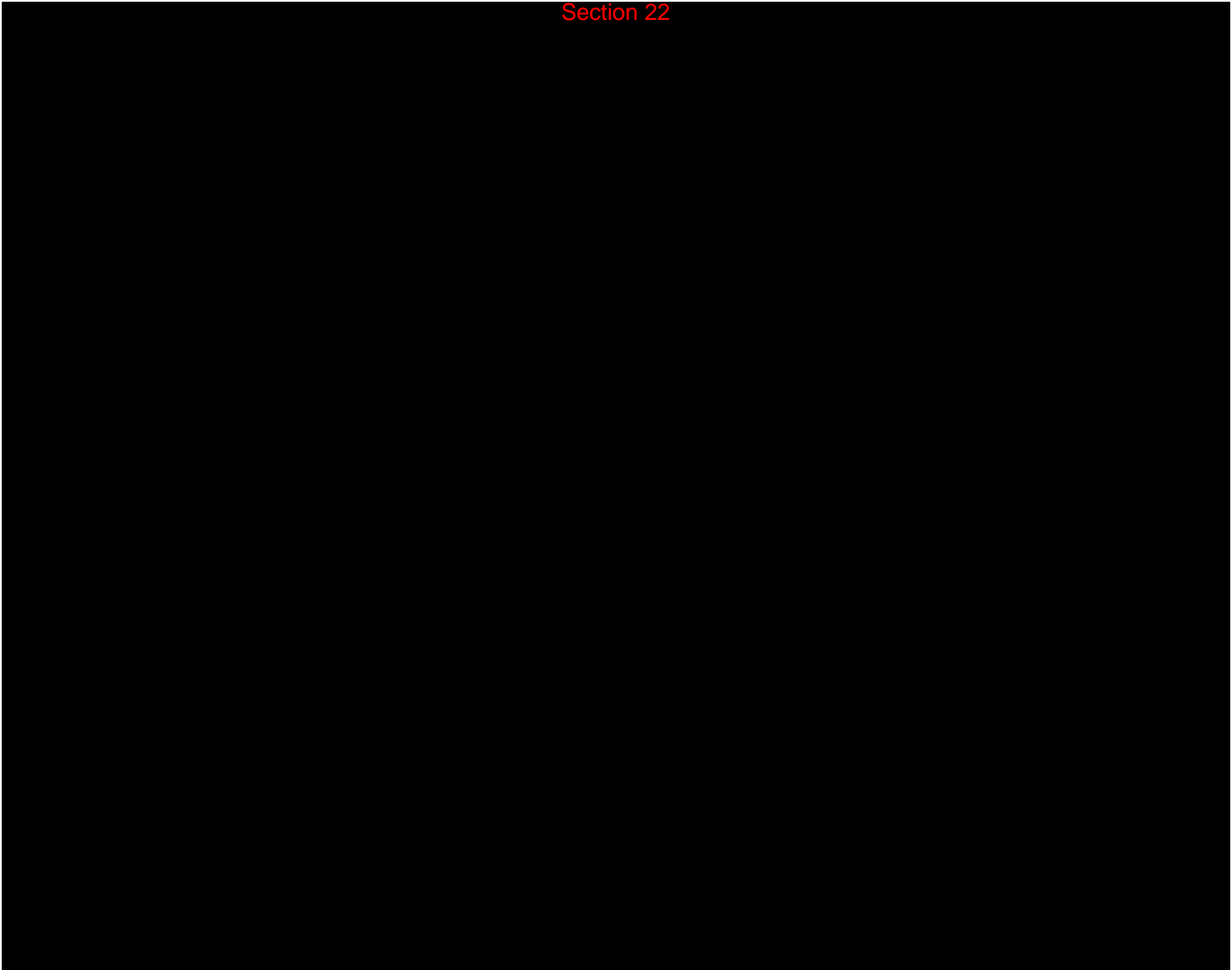
Priorities for me? And their priorities?

1. Protecting the trans community and gender recognition reform as this could get nasty.
2. Intersex community working with them

3. Breaking into the education system to educate and stop conversion practices.
4. Young people have a lack of housing, only 1-2 safe places which queer youth would go to.

Section 22





## Section 22

---

**From:** Section 47F  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 4 October 2023 12:32 PM  
**To:** Section 22  
**Subject:** RE: Connection request for Section 47F to Discuss Anti-LGBTIQ Mobilisation in Australia [SEC=OFFICIAL]

You don't often get email from Section 47F. [Learn why this is important](#)

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organisation. Verify the sender before you click links or open attachments. Email purporting to be from staff may be an impersonation attempt.

Hi s 47F,

Great to chat to you, this is one of the pieces I mentioned: [https://www.isdglobal.org/digital\\_dispatches/colorado-springs-shooting-the-latest-in-a-transnational-upward-trend-of-anti-lgbtq-hate/](https://www.isdglobal.org/digital_dispatches/colorado-springs-shooting-the-latest-in-a-transnational-upward-trend-of-anti-lgbtq-hate/)

I'll check with my colleagues about sharing the long draft chapter and setting up a time for a chat 😊

Cheers

s 47F

---

**From:** Section 22  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 4 October 2023 11:54 AM  
**To:** Section 47F  
**Cc:** Section 47F  
**Subject:** RE: Connection request for Section 47F to Discuss Anti-LGBTIQ Mobilisation in Australia [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Thanks s 47F,

I'll aim to give you a ring around 2pm 😊

---

**From:** Section 47F  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 3, 2023 9:22 AM  
**To:** Section 22  
**Cc:** Section 47F  
**Subject:** RE: Connection request for Section 47F to Discuss Anti-LGBTIQ Mobilisation in Australia [SEC=OFFICIAL]

You don't often get email from Section 47F. [Learn why this is important](#)

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organisation. Verify the sender before you click links or open attachments. Email purporting to be from staff may be an impersonation attempt.

Hi s 22,

Thanks for getting in touch and sorry for the delayed response. I'd be very happy to talk about the work we've done and the kinds of mobilisation we've been seeing, feel free to give me a call on Section 47F.

Best wishes,

s 47F

From: Section 22

Sent: Tuesday, September 19, 2023 1:02 AM

To: ISD <info@isdglobal.org>

Subject: Connection request for Section 47F to Discuss Anti-LGBTIQ Mobilisation in Australia [SEC=OFFICIAL]

To the Institute of Strategic Dialogue,

I'm reaching out after hearing Section 47F speak Section 47F about your organisation's latest report on Anti-Drag+ Mobilization. I recently started at the Australian Human Rights Commission as their SOGII advisor and the report on Anti-Drag mobilisation is already informing our strategies and initiatives. I was hoping to be connected with Section 47F to discuss this work in greater detail.

Specifically, I am interested in understanding the strategies employed by anti-LGBTIQ+ groups in Australia, how they can be countered, and the broader impact on the rights and safety of community members.

Please let me know if there is a convenient way to facilitate this connection or if you have any suggestions on how to proceed. I am sincerely grateful for your assistance in making this communication possible.

Thank you for considering my request, and for the work you do.

Section 22

Advisor on SOGII

### Australian Human Rights Commission

GPO Box 5218, Sydney NSW 2001

Section 22

| W [humanrights.gov.au](http://humanrights.gov.au)

### Human rights: everyone, everywhere, everyday

I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land I work, the Gadigal peoples of the Eora Nation (Commission Office) Section 22

and pay my respects to their Elders, past and present.

\*\*\*\*\*

WARNING: The information contained in this email may be confidential. If you are not the intended recipient, any use or copying of any part of this information is unauthorised. If you have received this email in error, we apologise for any inconvenience and request that you notify the sender immediately and delete all copies of this email, together with any attachments.

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error, we apologise for any inconvenience and request that you notify the sender immediately and delete all copies of this email, together with any attachments.

\*\*\*\*\*

**From:** Section 47F  
**To:** Section 22  
**Subject:** RE: Connection request for Section 47F to Discuss Anti-LGBTIQ Mobilisation in Australia [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Date:** Thursday, 5 October 2023 12:15:20 PM  
**Attachments:** [Drag Queen Story Hour Report - Australia \(draft\) - Copy.docx](#)

---

You don't often get email from Section 47F. [Learn why this is important](#)

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organisation. Verify the sender before you click links or open attachments. Email purporting to be from staff may be an impersonation attempt.

Hi s 22

Attached is a draft copy of the Australia chapter for the Drag Queen Story Hour report, which I'm sharing on the understanding that it's confidential and will not be shared widely (if you want to show it to just a few colleagues that's fine though). I expect the final version will be substantially shorter than this, and hopefully a bit more up to date since Section 47F and obviously a lot has happened since then. Hope it's useful!

I'm still rounding up my colleagues to see if we can organise a time to have a chat with you, the UK timezone is not enormously convenient though. Any chance you'd be able to do a quick call in the evening (around 7 or 7:30pm) one day or is that too late?

Cheers

s 47F

---

**From:** Section 22  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 4 October 2023 11:54 AM  
**To:** Section 47F  
**Cc:** Section 47F  
**Subject:** RE: Connection request for s 47F to Discuss Anti-LGBTIQ Mobilisation in Australia [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Thanks s 47F,

I'll aim to give you a ring around 2pm

---

**From:** Section 47F  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 3, 2023 9:22 AM  
**To:** Section 22  
**Cc:** Section 47F  
**Subject:** RE: Connection request for Section 47F to Discuss Anti-LGBTIQ Mobilisation in Australia [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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Hi **s 22**,

Thanks for getting in touch and sorry for the delayed response. I'd be very happy to talk about the work we've done and the kinds of mobilisation we've been seeing, feel free to give me a call on **Section 47F**.

Best wishes,

**s 47F**

---

**From:** **Section 22**

**Sent:** Tuesday, September 19, 2023 1:02 AM

**To:** ISD <[info@isdglobal.org](mailto:info@isdglobal.org)>

**Subject:** Connection request for **Section 47F** to Discuss Anti-LGBTIQ Mobilisation in Australia [SEC=OFFICIAL]

To the Institute of Strategic Dialogue,

I'm reaching out after hearing **Section 47F** speak **Section 47F** **Section 47F** about your organisation's latest report on Anti-Drag+ Mobilization. **Section 47F** Australian Human Rights Commission as their SOGI advisor and the report on Anti-Drag mobilisation is already informing our strategies and initiatives. I was hoping to be connected with **s 47F** to discuss this work in greater detail.

Specifically, I am interested in understanding the strategies employed by anti-LGBTIQ+ groups in Australia, how they can be countered, and the broader impact on the rights and safety of community members.

Please let me know if there is a convenient way to facilitate this connection or if you have any suggestions on how to proceed. I am sincerely grateful for your assistance in making this communication possible.

Thank you for considering my request, and for the work you do.

**Section 22**

Advisor on SOGI

[Australian Human Rights Commission](#)

GPO Box 5218, Sydney NSW 2001

**Section 22** |

**Section 22** | [W humanrights.gov.au](http://W.humanrights.gov.au)

[Human rights: everyone, everywhere, everyday](#)

I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land I work, the Gadigal peoples of

the Eora Nation (Commission Office) **Section 22**  
[redacted] and pay my respects to their Elders, past and present.

\*\*\*\*\*  
WARNING: The information contained in this email may be confidential.  
If you are not the intended recipient, any use or copying of any part  
of this information is unauthorised. If you have received this email in  
error, we apologise for any inconvenience and request that you notify  
the sender immediately and delete all copies of this email, together  
with any attachments.  
\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*  
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the sender immediately and delete all copies of this email, together  
with any attachments.  
\*\*\*\*\*























































**From:** Section 22  
**To:** Senior Management  
**Subject:** Reforecasting - process and timeframes [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Date:** Friday, 27 October 2023 5:43:00 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)

---

Dear SMG members

Further to Leanne's email of 18/10/2023, please find below the forecast template to assist you in developing estimates and a short explanation/business case for your spending proposals.

Action required by 6 November:

Using this template update the forecast figures<sup>1</sup> and the 'spending proposal' tab with details of the proposal to support analysis and comparison of each proposal: [AHRC forecast \(project code family\) 2023-24 v1.1 \(for Finance\).xlsm](#)

Save your proposals in Sharepoint here (this will facilitate consolidation of the proposals): [202310 Spending proposals for consideration](#)

Please contact me if you have any questions or need any help from myself or **s 22** during this process.

Detailed guidance for using the template

<sup>1</sup> Forecast figures are developed using the 'ABC-1' tab of the template. The number of staff required at each level are entered in rows 7-33. Estimated travel, administration and other supplier expenses are input in rows 44-53 and details of any new tenders required to support the proposal are input in rows 57-66.

<sup>2</sup> There should be one spreadsheet for each core project code. If you have more than one proposal for a project, clearly indicate in the ABC-1 tab which resources are for each proposal and complete a 'spending proposal' tab for each proposal.

<sup>3</sup> When you have populated the template, save it in the Sharepoint folder above.

Kind regards

**Section 22**

**Section 22**

---

**From:** Leanne Smith **Section 47F**  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 18, 2023 1:47 PM  
**To:** Senior Management **Section 22**  
**Cc:** **Section 22**  
**Subject:** Reforecasting [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Dear SMG members,

As we discussed briefly at the last SMG, it's time to look at our forecast underspend and identify other strategic and essential priorities.

Please come to next week's SMG with any proposals you might have in mind. Some of these might flow from the extra priorities list we prepared in April.

Thanks,  
Leanne



Project name:   
 Project code:

Guidance: You must enter the project code name using the format "XXX-#F" where X represents a letter, # represents a number. The first number must be present; the second number is optional.

GRAND TOT  
\$0

Guidance: Cells shaded in dark grey have been locked by Finance and cannot be edited

Staff profile				Full Time Equivalents (#s) for 9 month budget forecast (update)												TOTAL	Names/Details
Classification	Pay point	\$ Salary fr 10 Nov	\$ Salary fr Nov 2023	Jul 2023	Aug 2023	Sep 2023	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	Jan 2024	Feb 2024	Mar 2024	Apr 2024	Mag 2024	Jun 2024	TOTAL	Names/Details
APSI1	APSI11	48,384	50,319														
APSI1	APSI12	51,455	53,513														
APSI1	APSI13	54,524	56,705														
APSI2	APSI21	56,266	58,517														
APSI2	APSI22	59,090	61,454														
APSI2	APSI23	61,914	64,391														
APSI3	APSI31	62,371	64,866														
APSI3	APSI32	65,504	68,124														
APSI3	APSI33	68,636	71,381														
APSI4	APSI41	69,513	72,294														
APSI4	APSI42	73,233	76,162														
APSI4	APSI43	76,955	80,033														
APSI5	APSI51	77,533	80,634														
APSI5	APSI52	81,458	84,716														
APSI5	APSI53	85,383	88,798														
APSI6	APSI61	85,826	89,259														
APSI6	APSI62	91,953	95,631														
APSI6	APSI63	98,079	102,002														
EL1	EL11	107,355	111,649														
EL1	EL12	113,696	118,244														
EL1	EL13	120,035	124,836														
EL2	EL2.1	129,072	134,235														
EL2	EL2.2	143,204	148,932														
EL2	EL2.3	151,691	157,759														
EL2-		177,693	184,801														
SES 1	SES 1	212,825	221,338														
SES 2	SES 2	276,938	288,016														
<b>Total FTE #</b>																	
<b>Total FTE \$</b>				\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	

Guidance: Enter the number of full time equivalent staff at each level each month. In the example below, one and a half full time APS6.3s are initially employed, increasing to two FTE by 1 Dec 2023 (with no resignations expected); ongoing oversight equivalent to one day per week is provided by an EL2.1. The team have a vacant EL1.1 role, likely to be filled from 1 Sep 2023 by someone working 2.5 days per week.  
 Delete the example FTE numbers initially shown below and enter your own forecast FTE numbers for each project code you own / administer.

OnCosts \$ *Finance use only!*

Jul 2023	Aug 2023	Sep 2023	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	Jan 2024	Feb 2024	Mar 2024	Apr 2024	Mag 2024	Jun 2024	TOTAL
												\$ -

Supplier Expenses \$ (including travel, ICT charges, admin costs etc)

Guidance: Enter details of contract/supplier in column C and expected payment amount within the month

Supplier Expenses section - Amounts in all rows below this one in dollars (\$) - 9 month budget forecast (update)													TOTAL	Details/Comments
Jul 2023	Aug 2023	Sep 2023	Oct 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023	Jan 2024	Feb 2024	Mar 2024	Apr 2024	Mag 2024	Jun 2024	TOTAL	Details/Comments	

1) Estimated value of supplier services to be delivered by 30 Jun 2024:

Line 1: Estimate based on 2022-23 supplier spend													
Line 2: Estimate based on 2022-23 supplier spend													
Line 3: Estimate based on 2022-23 supplier spend													
Line 4: Estimate based on 2022-23 supplier spend													
Line 5: Estimate based on 2022-23 supplier spend													
Line 6: Estimate based on 2022-23 supplier spend													
Line 7: Estimate based on 2022-23 supplier spend													
Line 8: Estimate based on 2022-23 supplier spend													
Line 9: Estimate based on 2022-23 supplier spend													
Line 10: Estimate based on 2022-23 supplier spend													
													\$ -

Guidance: If you require more than 10 lines in section 1) above, please contact Finance.

2) New tenders planned during 2023-24 (include scheduled publish date in Column Y)

Tender 1													
Tender 2													
Tender 3													
Tender 4													
Tender 5													
Tender 6													
Tender 7													
Tender 8													
Tender 9													
Tender 10													
													\$ -

Guidance: If you require more than 10 lines in section 2) above, please contact Finance.

The information below is intended to assist the Chief Executive assess the proposal benefits as well as risk of non-delivery when considering spending proposals.

Requesting officer:

Officer responsible for delivery:

Is officer responsible for delivery aware of this proposal?

SMG sponsor:

Does this proposal require recruitment of new staff?

If yes, do you have position descriptions drafted?

If yes, please advise People and Culture once proposal is approved.

Does this proposal require new procurements over \$10K?

If yes, do you have business requirements drafted?

Does this proposal require new procurements over \$80K?

If yes, please advise General Counsel for planning purposes once proposal is approved.

Does this proposal include payments that could be considered to be 'grants'?

Aligned to strategic goal:

Description of spending proposal and benefits:

[ Insert description of spending proposal here ]

Months
1 Jul 2023
2 Aug 2023
3 Sep 2023
4 Oct 2023
5 Nov 2023
6 Dec 2023
7 Jan 2024
8 Feb 2024
9 Mar 2024
10 Apr 2024
11 May 2024
12 Jun 2024
13 FY2023-24 CLOSED

Finance forced start month

4 1-13 only; 13 = year closed

sum of all Font Color = Red cells in checking range of 1st tab (the ' Budget Forecast Setup' worksheet)  
None

Other:

Immediate window: For Each nm In ActiveWorkbook.Names: nm.Visible = False: Next  
The table name "Table1" will not be visible once the "db" sheet is hidden in the final version

run to hide all named ranges from users (ALL NAMES VISIBLE IN THIS VERSION FOR FINANCE USE ONLY)

**Budget Forecast Setup** ABC 1 1

1 Budget Forecast Setup Budget Fc 0
2 ABC-1 ABC-1 1 ABC
3 Spending proposals Spending 1
4 Finance Use Only Finance U 1
5 db db 1
6 1
7 1
8 1
9 1
10 1
11 1
12 1
13 1
14 1
15 1
16 1
17 1
18 1
19 1
20 1

**Inforce Salary Assumptions - change from #1 to #2 below in Month**

	#1	#2	% change from #1 to #2
<b>Classifica Pay point \$ Salary fr \$ Salary fr Nov 2023+</b>			
APS1 APS1.1 48,384 50,319			
APS1 APS1.2 51455 53,513			
APS1 APS1.3 54524 56,705			
APS2 APS2.1 56266 58,517			
APS2 APS2.2 59090 61,454			
APS2 APS2.3 61914 64,391			
APS3 APS3.1 62371 64,866			
APS3 APS3.2 65504 68,124			
APS3 APS3.3 68636 71,381			
APS4 APS4.1 69513 72,294			
APS4 APS4.2 73233 76,162			
APS4 APS4.3 76955 80,033			
APS5 APS5.1 77533 80,634			
APS5 APS5.2 81458 84,716			
APS5 APS5.3 85383 88,798			
APS6 APS6.1 85826 89,259			
APS6 APS6.2 91953 95,631			
APS6 APS6.3 98079 102,002			
EL1 EL1.1 107355 111,649			
EL1 EL1.2 113696 118,244			
EL1 EL1.3 120035 124,836			
EL2 EL2.1 129072 134,235			
EL2 EL2.2 143204 148,932			
EL2 EL2.3 151691 157,759			
EL2+ 177693 184,801			
SES 1 SES 1 212,825 221,338			
SES 2 SES 2 276,938 288,016			

108,023 <--- If this cell is zero then nothing has changed in Salary #2 c.f. Salary #1

5 2-13 only; 13 = no salary change during 2023-24  
4.00% override in formulae below in M24:M50 if required  
change label M23 if required

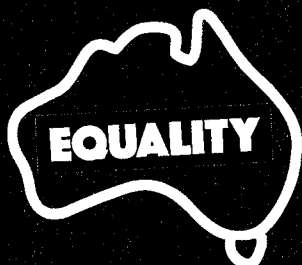
Yes  
No  
N/A



# **SNAPSHOT LGBTIQ+ ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA**

**ANNA BROWN OAM**

**CEO, EQUALITY AUSTRALIA**



**31 OCTOBER 2023**

**WE NEED YOUR VOICE. [EQUALITYAUSTRALIA.ORG.AU](https://equalityaustralia.org.au)**

# **KEY ISSUES**

---

Anti-discrimination law reform

---

Ending LGBTQA+ conversion practices

---

ID reform

---

Gender affirming care

---

Vilification and hate

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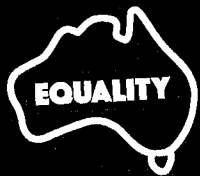
Data collection

---

Intersex medical treatment



# FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION



WE NEED YOUR VOICE. [EQUALITYAUSTRALIA.ORG.AU](http://EQUALITYAUSTRALIA.ORG.AU)

# WHO IS PROTECTED?

ARE THERE PROTECTIONS FOR...	ASEXUALS?	BISEXUALS?	NON-BINARY PEOPLE?	INTERSEX PEOPLE?	SEX WORKERS?
NSW	No	No	No	Partly <sup>(1)</sup>	No
CTH	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
NT	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
VIC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>(2)</sup>
TAS	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>(2)</sup>
ACT	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>(2)</sup>
QLD	No, but proposed <sup>(3)</sup>	Yes	Yes <sup>(4)</sup>	Yes <sup>(4)</sup>	Yes <sup>(2)</sup>
SA	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
WA	No, but under consideration <sup>(5)</sup>	Yes	No, but under consideration <sup>(5)</sup>	No, but under consideration <sup>(5)</sup>	No, but under consideration <sup>(5)</sup>

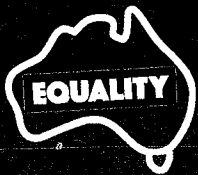
<sup>1</sup> Partly protected under the attribute of 'transgender status'.

<sup>2</sup> Protected under the attributes of 'lawful sexual activity' or 'profession, trade, occupation or calling'.

<sup>3</sup> The Queensland Government has committed in principle to the [Queensland Human Rights Commission](#) recommendations.

<sup>4</sup> Introduced by *Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2023* (Qld), Div 3 [not yet commenced].

<sup>5</sup> The Western Australian Government are considering the [Western Australian Law Reform Commission](#) recommendations.



# RELIGIOUS EXEMPTIONS

PROTECTION FOR...	LGBTQ+ STUDENTS?	LGBTQ+ STAFF?	LGBTQ+ SERVICE USERS?
NSW	No	No	No
CTH	No, but proposed <sup>(1)</sup>	No, but proposed <sup>(1)</sup>	Partly – aged care
ACT	Yes	Yes	Yes <sup>(2)</sup>
NT	Yes	Yes	Yes
TAS	Yes	Yes	Yes
VIC	Yes	Yes	Partly <sup>(3)</sup>
QLD	Yes	Partly, and further protections proposed <sup>(4)</sup>	No, but proposed <sup>(4)</sup>
SA	Arguable, but unclear	Some, but weak	No
WA	No, but proposed <sup>(5)</sup>	No, but proposed <sup>(5)</sup>	No, but under consideration <sup>(5)</sup>

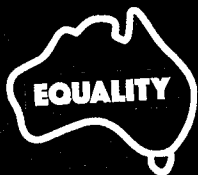
<sup>1</sup> The [Australian Law Reform Commission](#) is currently inquiring into how to implement the Albanese Government commitment.

<sup>2</sup> This is the intention of the reforms introduced by the *Discrimination Amendment Act 2023 (ACT)* [not yet commenced].

<sup>3</sup> The strongest protections apply to goods, services and accommodation funded by the Victorian Government: *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)* ss 82(2), 82B.

<sup>4</sup> The Queensland Government has committed in principle to the [Queensland Human Rights Commission](#) recommendations.

<sup>5</sup> The Western Australian Government are considering the [Western Australian Law Reform Commission](#) recommendations, and have committed in principle to reforms protecting LGBTQ+ students and teachers in religious schools.



# FEDERAL REFORM

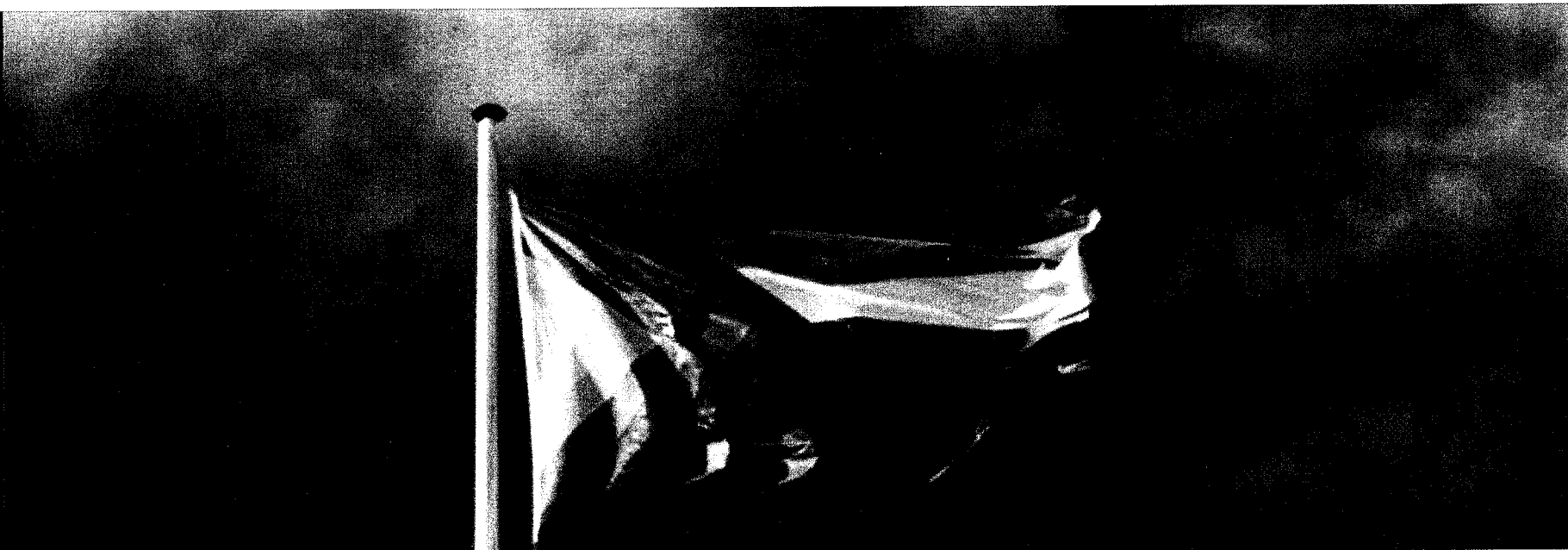
- Government commitment to amend federal anti-discrimination laws to *“ensure that religious educational institutions:*
  - *must not discriminate against students on basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, marital or relationship status or pregnancy;*
  - *must not discriminate against staff on basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital or relationship status or pregnancy; and*
  - *can continue to give preference, in good faith, to persons of the same religion as the institution in the selection of staff.”*
- ALRC review
  - Over 420 submissions and 40,000 survey responses
- Upcoming Equality Australia Research Report



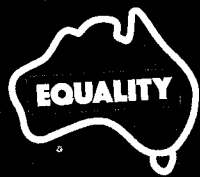
# OTHER ISSUES

- 'Comparator test' for direct discrimination in QLD, WA, NSW, SA and Cth
- *Roxanne Tickle v Giggle for Girls Pty Ltd & Anor*  
NSD1148/2022
- Other issues in *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth)





# **ENDING LGBTQA+ CONVERSION PRACTICES**

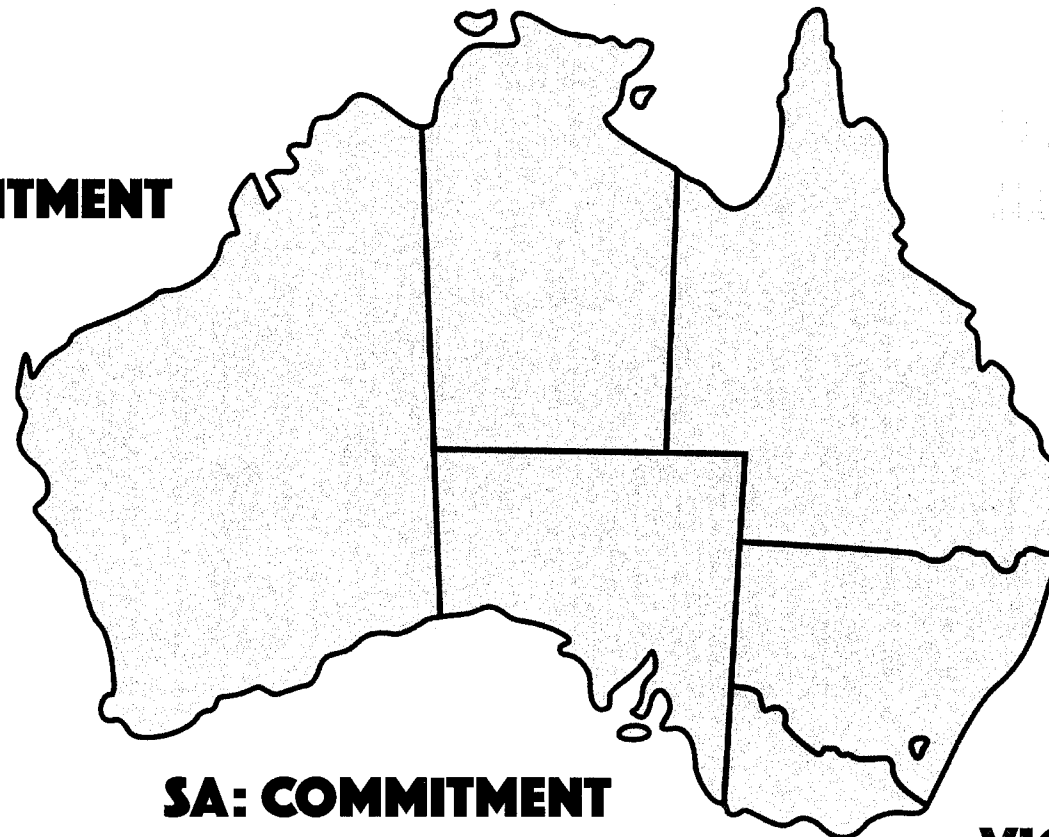


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# WHERE ARE LGBTIQ+ CONVERSION PRACTICES BANNED?

**NT: NOT BANNED**

**WA:  
COMMITMENT**



**ACT: BANNED**

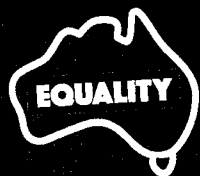
**NSW:  
COMMITMENT**

**ACT: BANNED**

**SA: COMMITMENT**

**VIC: BANNED - BEST  
PRACTICE**

**TAS: COMMITMENT**





# **CURRENT ISSUES FOR TRANS & GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE**



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# GENDER RECOGNITION

JURISDICTION	SURGICAL REQUIREMENTS REMOVED?	RECOGNITION OF NON-BINARY GENDERS?	ACCESSIBLE PATHWAYS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO UPDATE GENDER? <sup>1</sup>
NSW	No	Partly, subject to surgery requirement <sup>(2)</sup>	No
QLD	Yes <sup>(3)</sup>	Yes <sup>(3)(4)</sup>	Yes <sup>(3)</sup>
VIC	Yes	Yes <sup>(4)</sup>	Yes
TAS	Yes	Yes <sup>(4)</sup>	Yes
SA	Yes	Yes	Yes
ACT	Yes	Yes	Yes
NT	Yes	Yes	No
WA <sup>(5)</sup>	Yes <sup>(6)</sup>	No	Yes
Cth	Yes	Yes	Not specified

<sup>1</sup> We have determined a pathway as ‘accessible’ if a young person can update their gender with the consent of only one parent or authorisation by a court or tribunal.

<sup>2</sup> NSW offers a ‘non-specific’ gender marker for people who meet the surgery requirement.

<sup>3</sup> Introduced by *Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2023* (Qld) [not yet commenced].

<sup>4</sup> Vic, Tas and QLD allow people to specify their gender descriptor, meaning there is a broader range of gender descriptors available. Tas and QLD also allow parents to choose whether to record a gender on their child’s birth certificate.

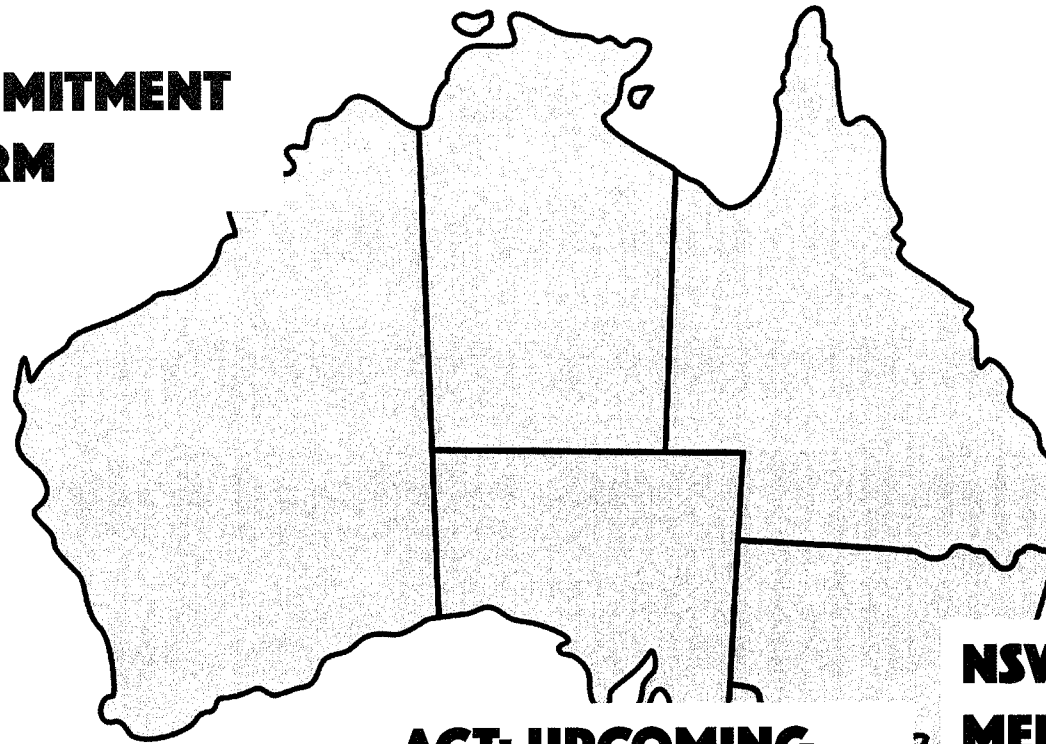
<sup>5</sup> WA Government has announced proposed reforms which are expected to improve recognition.

<sup>6</sup> WA does not require surgery but does require some medical treatment: *AB v WA* [2011] HCA 42.



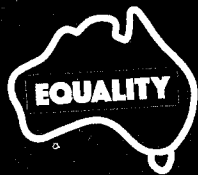
# GENDER RECOGNITION REFORM

**WA: COMMITMENT  
TO REFORM**



**ACT: UPCOMING  
REFORM**

**NSW: PRIVATE  
MEMBERS' BILL**



# ACCESS TO GENDER AFFIRMING CARE

- Gender affirming care for young people is life-saving
  - 4 in 5 trans young people aged 14-25 years report self-harm
  - 1 in 2 have attempted suicide
- **Challenges and threats**
  - Family Court approach
  - Bill introduced by Senator Antic
  - Effect of widespread fear and misunderstanding
- **Opportunities for reform?**



# TRANS INCLUSION IN SPORT

## Challenges

- Highly politicised environment
- Concerning international blanket bans

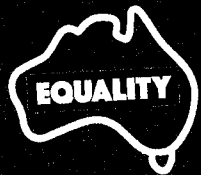
## Positive developments:

- Strong support within Australian sporting codes
- AIS and ASC Guidelines
- Recent reform in ACT requires discrimination to be 'reasonable and proportionate'.





**STAND UP AGAINST HATE**



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# VIOLENCE AND ABUSE ESCALATING

- Trans Justice Project and Victorian Pride Lobby 2023
  - 50% trans participants experienced anti-trans hate
  - 10% experienced anti-trans violence
  - **Escalation:** 34% participants experienced more or significant more in-person anti-trans hate in 2023 than in 2020
- ARCSHS 2020
  - 1/3 participants in previous 12 months experienced violence and harassment based on their sexual orientation or gender identity
  - **Escalation:** 9.1% increase verbal abuse, 8.9% increase sexual assault and doubling of physical attacks between 2012 and 2020



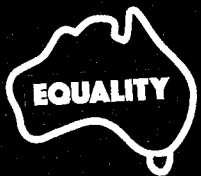
Councils call off drag storytime and LGBTQ+ events in Victoria after far-right threats

Drag performer who had four IDAHOBIT events cancelled said councils felt they could not create a safe environment



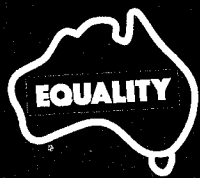
# LEGAL RESPONSES

- Issues with frameworks across Australia include:
  - not extending protections to LGBTIQ+ people (**Cth, Vic, WA and SA**)
  - focus on incitement, not harm (**Vic, SA, WA, ACT and NSW**)
  - significant underreporting
- Recent positive reforms in QLD, proposed reforms in Vic





# 2026 CENSUS INCLUSION



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# OUR LEGAL COMPLAINT

2020

- EA submission calling on ABS to count LGBTIQ+ people in Census

2021

- Census conducted **excluding** LGBTIQ+ people
- EA issues Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to investigate reason for exclusion

2022

- EA launches **legal complaint** with April Long
- ABS **admits** 2021 Census failed to collect proper non-binary gender data

## 'My family was invisible': April has filed a human rights complaint over the census



Caitlin Fitzsimmons  
September 16, 2022 - 3:00am

Save Share A A A

157 News Alerts

The organisers of the 2021 census are facing a formal human rights complaint, alleging they failed to properly count LGBTIQ people.

Advocacy organisation Equality Australia and Newcastle resident April Long, who identifies as non-binary, are co-complainants in the case filed with the Australian Human Rights Commission on Thursday.

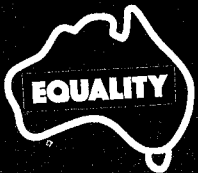


April Long sits with their partner, Jess, (right), and their 10-year-old son, Long, who identifies as trans, in their home in Newcastle, Australia, on Monday. (Credit: Caitlin Fitzsimmons) The census failed to count them and their family.



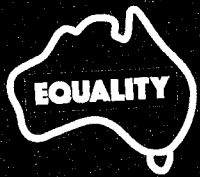
# OUTCOME

- Matter was settled August 2023
- Key commitments made by the ABS:
  - Removal of language assuming family composition
  - LGBTIQ+ Expert Advisory Committee established
- Statement of regret issued by ABS in August 2023





# **SPOTLIGHT: INTERSEX HUMAN RIGHTS**



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# STATE OF PLAY

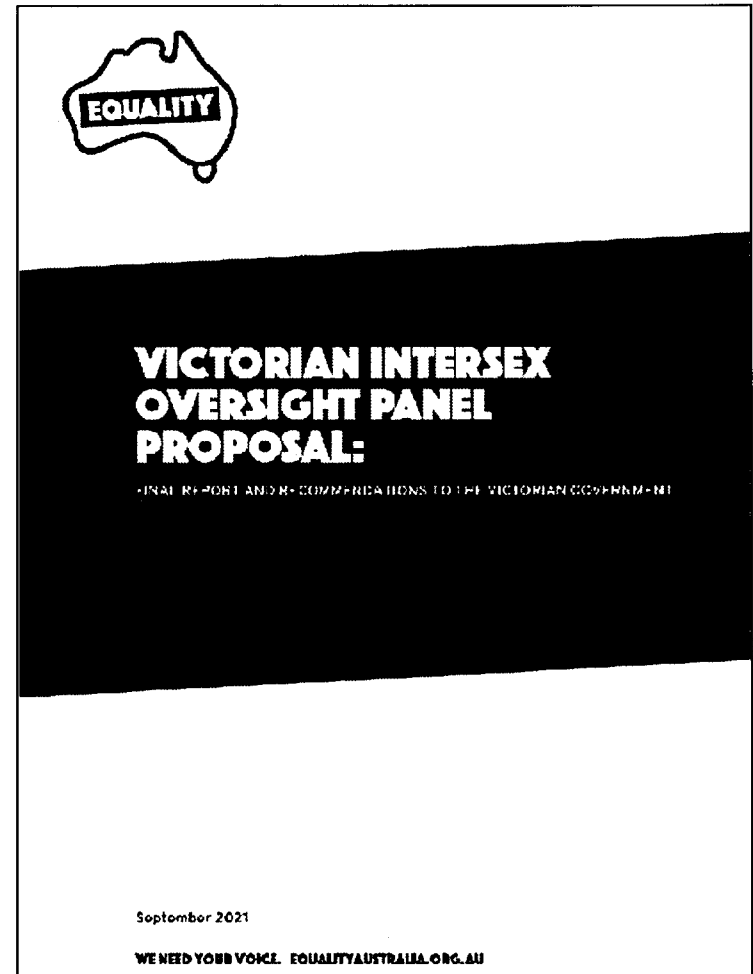
Unnecessary medical procedures performed on people with variations in sex characteristics causes ongoing **physical** and **psychological** distress and adverse impacts

- AHRC report '**Ensuring Health and Bodily Integrity**'
- Legislation passed in the ACT
- Commitment to change in Victoria
- No commitments in remaining jurisdictions



# MODEL FOR REFORM

- EA commissioned by the Victorian Department of Health
- Proposal recommendations:
  - Criminal and civil prohibitions on medical treatments that modify sex characteristics of intersex people
  - Establishment of oversight panel to approve treatment
  - Exceptions: emergencies situations



# ACT: BACKGROUND

Australian Senate Report 2013

UN Special Rap on Torture 2013

Malta 2015

Darlington Statement 2017

Yogyakarta Principles Plus 10 2017

UN HRC 2017

Portugal 2018

ACT LGBTIQ+ Legal Audit 2019

2019: Capital  
of Equality  
First Action  
Plan

Dec 2020:  
Discussion  
Paper

April 2021:  
Legal issues  
workshop

June 2021:  
Options  
Paper

May 2022:  
Draft Bill

Iceland 2020

Germany 2021

Australian Human Rights Commission 2021



# OVERVIEW: THREE KEY PLANKS

## Restrictions on certain intersex medical treatment

- Treatment will be permitted with personal consent, where urgent, or under general and individual medical treatment plans approved by the Restricted Treatment Medical Assessment Board.

## Consent safeguards

- For intersex people able to give personal consent
- Ensures appropriate information, time and support is provided when decisions are made

## Creation of independent expert advisory panel

- Members with qualifications or lived experience in medicine, human rights, ethics, psychosocial support and variations in sex characteristics. The President must have qualities and experience in human rights.



# WHEN DOES IT APPLY?

People with variations of sex characteristics

To be defined under regulations

Restricted medical treatments

Surgical or medical procedures or treatments that change a person's sex characteristics and those changes are:

- **permanent** (or cannot be reversed except with further medical treatment); OR
- temporary but caused by a **prescribed** treatment

**But does not include:**

- **Urgent treatments** to save life, prevent serious damage to health, or prevent significant pain or distress
- **Circumcision** of the penis



# WHEN WILL RESTRICTED TREATMENTS BE ALLOWED?

Does the person have a variation of sex characteristics?

If **yes**, continue to next step.

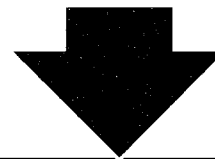
If **no**, the legislation does not apply.



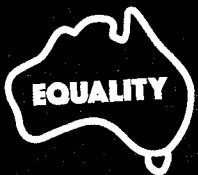
Is the restricted medical treatment urgent treatment?

If **yes**, treatment can proceed.

If **no**, continue to next step.



*Continue to next slide...*



# WHEN WILL RESTRICTED TREATMENTS BE ALLOWED? CONT..

*Continued from last slide...*

Does the person have capacity to give personal consent to the restricted medical treatment?

If **yes**, treatment can proceed with personal consent. **Consent safeguards** come into play.

If **no**, continue to next step.

Has the Restricted Medical Treatment Assessment Board approved the treatment?

**Yes**, under a **general treatment plan**. Made after a process of public consultation. The treatment can proceed + reporting obligation.

**Yes**, under an **individual treatment plan**. Made by application to the panel. The treatment can proceed.

**No**, the treatment cannot proceed. Offences and regulatory consequences apply.



# OTHER FEATURES OF THE SCHEME

## Transparency

- Reporting obligation if treatment undertaken under general treatment plan
- Annual report by expert panel with key statistics on treatment plans made under the Act
- Health records must be stored until the person turns 45 or 7 years after the record is made (whichever is later)

## Protection of personal privacy

- Nothing can be revealed (without applicant's consent) that would identify a protected person.

## Appeal process

- Internal and ACAT review options

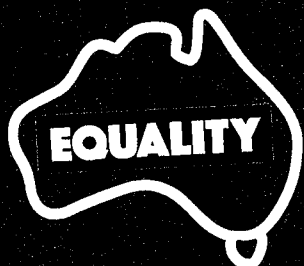


# FUTURE ACTION

- Victorian Bill expected late 2024
- Federal Health Minister continues to engage with intersex community for LGBTIQ+ health plan
- Discussions ongoing with health ministers in other jurisdictions
- **'My Body My Choice'** community campaign



# QUESTIONS



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**EQUALITY**