



IWD Meanjin Brisbane

28 September 2023

TO:

legal@humanrights.gov.au

I write, again, to support the right of lesbians to meet socially without men. I express my deep disappointment at the AHRC's preliminary decision to reject the Lesbian Action Group's exemption application for a single-sex event to celebrate International Lesbian Day. This decision has raised concerns and frustrations among many individuals who value the importance of single-sex spaces for lesbian women and gay men.

The Lesbian Action Group's proposal to host a single-sex event on International Lesbian Day was an earnest effort to create a safe and affirming space for lesbians to celebrate their identity and connect with other lesbians who share similar experiences. It is essential to recognise that such events play a crucial role in fostering a sense of community and solidarity among marginalised groups.

The AHRC's mission includes upholding the principles of non-discrimination and equality. This should never mean you are able to force lesbians to accept men at lesbian social events. Lesbians, like any other minority group, have faced systemic discrimination, social stigmatisation, and exclusion throughout history. Single-sex events, especially on an occasion as significant as International Lesbian Day, are really important to the lesbian community. If the AHRC continues to measure non-discrimination and equality by white male standards, you impose an extreme degree of discomfort and lack of safety on those who are not white and male.

I urge the AHRC to reconsider its decision and to engage in a more comprehensive dialogue with the Lesbian Action Group. By doing so, the AHRC can take a proactive approach in finding a balanced solution that respects the rights and needs of lesbians. There is no contradiction between respect for lesbians and respect for the principles of equality and non-discrimination.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and your commitment to protecting human rights and promoting equality. I hope that, upon further reflection, the AHRC will reconsider its preliminary decision and work collaboratively with the Lesbian Action Group to find a resolution that respects the rights of lesbian women.

I do have a serious question which I hope you will respond to seriously: do you consider women, and lesbians in particular, to be 'human'?

Anna McCormack

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