Submission to the Senate Committee examining the Exposure Draft of Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill 2012

The Perth Sisters and Brothers of the Order of Perpetual Indulgence are an International HGLBTIQ Organisation which is dedicated to supporting the rights of GLBTIQ People.

Along with all of our fabulous activities and rituals such as marriages, blessings of public events and naming ceremonies the Perth Order of Perpetual Indulgence are actively engaged in Health Promotion through a Condom Ministry within both the Gay and Str8 Communities.

This involves distributing free condoms to the Members of the Gathered Faithful, on behalf of the WA AIDS Council, at a range of major public and private events. The Perth Sisters believe that providing safe sex information and education to heterosexuals serves to decrease Stigma and Discrimination directed at Gay and Lesbian People Living with HIV/AIDS.

We believe the basic approach which has been proven to work in the past such as ubiquitous posters and Pamphlets is also a strategy that does help reduce Discrimination and Vilification and needs to be revisited by Government Funded NGO in the AIDS Industry. Their self admitted lack of leadership begs the question: Are AIDS Councils still the best model or would prevention be best done by qualified professionals in advertising and communication agencies?

The Order's submission is that we believe that anti-discrimination legislation should include reference to HIV stigma to protect the rights of all HIV+ People and to ensure they are safe living in our societies.

We are not experts but we believe that the legislation should address Hate Crimes such as Threats of legal intimidation towards HIV POZ People and Verbals used to discriminate socially. Legislation should include protection for social Media & Chat rooms and in the Work Places to prevent suicide and violent hate crimes against HIV+ people.

The Vilification through Social media is a major concern. Chat rooms are being used to shame and out HIV People. The use of the word unclean is used to describe Positive people, referring to Positive people as being unclean and dirty. This verbal vilification has now become a standardised part of the social scene in Perth WA and needs addressing. Positive people are once again not going out to Venues as a result and been forced to become socially isolated as a result leading to more mental health issues.

There has been nothing done from a mainstream approach and the forms of campaigns to address this need to be looked at. While there is Vilification Law in respect to Race it should also apply to people with Health disability such a chronic Illness as AIDS and other BBV & STDs.

The Order would like to inform the Senate that there is an Organisation
funded by Government to represent HIV positive people on matters such this
in Australia. We have written to NAPWHA and the WA AIDS Council and
advised them of the submission process and asked them to make a
submission on Behalf of HIV/POZ People. We are only a Volunteer
Organisation and do not have the same funded resources that these
Organisations have to provide Campaigns to address Vilification and
discrimination.

Kind regards
The Perth Sisters and Brothers of the Order of Perpetual Indulgence