

While the current proposition is better than the original it still needs to better include non-binary transgender and other forms of gender expression. I'm glad to see the inclusion of mannerisms and characteristics irrespective of medical intervention and genitalia. However, I am worried that the wording is still not sufficiently inclusive of non-binary Trans* people to the point of protecting us in the workplace; actually seeking employment and also our children in our schools and other institutions.

I am Transgender. My gender identity, like many transgender people - including my partner, is not a simple male or female but moves fluidly from one to the other. I have read that the antidiscrimination legislation is worded in such a way that does not protect me; my partner or most transgender people; and only protects a small number of transgender people whom are binary gender conforming. That's not good enough for Australia. We get bullied the same as, or worse than, those transgender people who you will be protecting; we get hassled in the street the same as, or worse than; we run the same, or worse, risk of being bashed.

We are the same Australian citizens as binary transgender people, so why don't we get the same protections?

I face daily discrimination (and have faced bullying in the past) in my workplace (as well as while seeking employment) and TAFE due to my female body being in a physical; heavy lifting and manual labour workforce, so I know the importance of lawful protection from sex and/or gender identity discrimination. This is even before I have come out as transgender to my current or future employers and fellow employees partly because of the stress and concern that I could face further discrimination or bullying – such as the suggestions of trying too hard to be a man just to prove a point which I have witnessed with other people. A friend in a previous workplace whom was non-binary transgender was seen with traces of eyeliner left on their face from the night before, whereupon their desk was strewn with fashion magazines and women's underwear catalogues. Under the current insufficient discrimination laws – the manager and HR people tried to send my friend to a psychologist on stress leave rather than take action against the bullies.

Unless you protect Gender Expression and unless you protect the gender identities of all forms of transgender then you are telling me and telling my friend that our daily abuse is okay – when obviously it is not ok!

My partner suffered bad bullying in school, and is still hurting because of it many years after. Some of this bullying was because they didn't fit stereotypes of the sex they were considered to be, including: being spat on; attacked with a chisel and struck with thrown stones. I myself suffered bullying at school in various ways including being called a 'dyke' and a 'man'. I was at the NSW parliamentary forum on homophobic bullying in schools with my partner and heard about what so many others have gone through. All schoolkids should be protected from that discrimination, including those whose gender identity is non-binary.

Religious schools and charities should not be allowed to discriminate either. It's one thing for churches to decide on their clergy as it pertains to their religion, but a school is not a religious organisation. A school is a place of learning. What lesson are they going to learn when they are taught boys and girls are inherently different so much so that they cannot mingle – and that any “deviation” from this gender binary is wrong and must be quashed?

How would you feel, as a parent, if you had a transgender child that resorted to suicide because they

believed there was no place for them in this world? This is how important gender acceptance and understanding is. This isn't a patting on our heads to placate us – these are peoples' lives that hang in the balance! When religion is allowed to continue their legally sanctioned ostracism and bullying en masse, how far is exemption going to creep? It's seeped over into sport already and it greatly worries me as to where it will stop. In primary school I tried out for a co-ed touch football team. The female coach told me and the only other female whom tried out that "You're both good enough – I just think the boys might get a bit rough so I'm sorry but you didn't make it onto the team." What lesson is this blatant sexist discrimination going to teach us? What did it teach me? Those adults are legally sanctioned to take our rights off us and as children – there is nothing we can do to stop it or seek justice.

Is it any wonder we lose so many school children to suicide each year? We only know for sure that the rate of attempted suicide of "gender questioning" children is something like 28% (Do you realise how many more times that is than the general youth suicide rate? Source: Writing Themselves In 3, LaTrobe University) – and you think it's ONLY because of bullying.

Look at your own children and you will understand how heartbreaking every suicide is and how much worse preventable suicides are. Suicides you can directly help prevent!

People shouldn't be forced to hide who they truly are inside for fear that they will face bullying; violence or unnecessary hardships regarding employment when they aren't doing anything unethical, when they aren't hurting anyone.

Aren't we all supposed to be equal? Well then this new law is needed, but it should protect all transgender and intersex people not just some of them.

Thank you for your time and thank you for taking careful consideration of our lives.

Tamsin "Thomas" White