

3 May 2013

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

By email: legcon.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary,

Inquiry into the Sex Discrimination Amendment (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Status) Bill 2013

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Sex Discrimination Amendment (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Status) Bill 2013.

Women's Legal Services Australia (WLSA) is a national network of community legal centres specialising in women's legal issues. WLSA provides legal advice, information, assistance and casework for women, particularly those experiencing multiple disadvantage and vulnerability in our legal system. We also undertake legal education to the community and to other professionals on violence against women and legal issues as well as law and policy reform work. The majority of our members have been providing essential legal services to their local communities for 15 years, whilst some of our members have been operating for 30 years.

WLSA is also a member of the Advisory Group of the Australian Women Against Violence Alliance and a member of the Equality Rights Alliance.

WLSA supports and endorses the submission by Women's Legal Services NSW to this inquiry. That is, while welcoming and supporting protection from discrimination for LGBTIQ people and recommending the passing of the Sex Discrimination Amendment (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Intersex Status) Bill with the enhancements proposed in the Women's Legal Services NSW submission, we see this as an interim step prior to the passing of a revised Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill ('HRAD Bill') in the winter 2013 session of Parliament.

WLSA also believes it is essential to have sex-disaggregated data to ensure gender analysis with the goal of achieving gender equality. We recognise that the current choices of 'male' and 'female' are not inclusive and support a clear and consistent way of providing more inclusive options which would ensure the continued collection of sex-disaggregated data.

The revised HRAD Bill should incorporate the recommendations made by the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee in their report on the Exposure Draft of the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill.



WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICES AUSTRALIA

We refer to our submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Exposure Draft of the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill. Our submission endorsed the joint National Association of Community Legal Centres and Kingsford Legal Centre submission to that inquiry as well as specifically discussing the important reasons why the status of being a victim/survivor of domestic violence should be included as a protected attribute in the HRAD Bill. We note the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee in their report on the Exposure Draft of the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill recommended the inclusion of domestic violence as a protected attribute.¹

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me

Yours faithfully,

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Angela Lynch
WLSA
National Law Reform Coordinator

¹ Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, *Report on the Exposure Draft of the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill*, 21 February 2013, Recommendation 3.