

Stonewall Medical Centre  
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July 13<sup>th</sup> 2016

**Submission to Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee re Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016.**

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing in regard to the section of this bill which refers to amending the Criminal Code to standardize the age of consent for sexual intercourse to 16 years old and replace references to sodomy with anal intercourse.

I have worked as a general practitioner for twenty five years . For the last fifteen years I have practiced with a sub-speciality in sexual health. In 2001, I was one of the organizers of a statewide conference in Queensland on homophobia in schools. This conference was instrumental in changes to the Queensland Anti-discrimination Law in 2002 under the Beattie Government.

This part of the Criminal Code is out-dated and discriminatory against gay males. Also, it is inconsistent and non-sensical that it is legal for a 16 year old to create a pregnancy, but illegal to engage in anal sex.

I encourage the Committee to recommend that the Queensland Government proceeds with this amendment. At present it is a criminal offence to educate young adults between 16 to 18 years old about anal intercourse. This ignorance leads to reduced condom use for anal sex and thus increased incidence of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections in this age group. This is particularly relevant to gay men, but also applies to all young people

Same-sex attracted young people start having sex early and need education about anal sex in order to avoid HIV and other sexually transmitted infections. 'Writing Themselves In Again' is a 2005 report on same-sex youth from Melbourne University. This report identifies that by the age of 16 years old 70% of same-sex attracted youth have engaged in penetrative sex, and the majority have not used condoms.

Young people will not approach health practitioners to discuss their sexual health if they believe what they are doing is illegal. Indeed, 'Writing Themselves In Again' reports that same-sex attracted youth are five times more likely to have a sexually transmitted infection than their heterosexual peers.

Thanks for consideration of this matter.

Yours sincerely

Dr Neil Simmons MA MB Bchir FRACGP