

Mr. Peter Russo MP
Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000
Email: lacsc@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Russo,

Re: Anti-Discrimination (Right to Use Gender-Specific Language) Amendment Bill 2018

Thank you for providing the Australian College of Nursing (ACN) with the opportunity to contribute to the recent Anti-Discrimination (Right to Use Gender-Specific Language) Amendment Bill 2018 (19 September 2018).

We understand the Bill focuses broadly on protecting individuals and organisations that recognise traditional gender-specific identities (either male or female). ACN acknowledges that traditional gender-specific language may not be utilised by all people in the community, particularly those who identify as transgender, gender-diverse or non-binary. More so, contemporary use of terminology relating to gender is complex and not well understood by all, with potential consequences for those working in health professional roles.

With respect to the Bill and the nursing profession, ACN believes that nurses should not be sanctioned for using traditional gender-specific language, particularly if done so inadvertently and with no intent to cause harm when assigned to care for an individual who identifies as transgender, gender-diverse or non-binary. Nonetheless, ACN strongly advocates for use of respectful language in different settings and amongst different people.

Australian guidelines for children and adolescents support an affirmative model of care, whereby those who identify as transgender, gender-diverse or non-binary are able to explore and express their identity as they wish to do so.¹ This model has demonstrated improved wellbeing and mental health outcomes for these individuals. As such, ACN is supportive of contemporary research and models of care, which inform a better understanding of how nurses can better assist transgender and gender-diverse people of all ages in the health care setting. ACN recommends all nurses keep up-to-date with guidelines relating to care for transgender, gender-diverse or non-binary individuals. In particular, understanding and using a person's preferred name and pronouns is vital to the provision of affirming and respectful care for these individuals.² Nurses are at the forefront of health care and therefore it is essential they provide an environment that demonstrates 'inclusiveness' and 'respect for diversity'.

¹ <https://www.anzpath.org/about/statements/>

² <https://www.rch.org.au/uploadedFiles/Main/Content/adolescent-medicine/australian-standards-of-care-and-treatment-guidelines-for-trans-and-gender-diverse-children-and-adolescents.pdf>

As the pre-eminent and national leader of the nursing profession and a community of dynamic and passionate nurses, ACN is committed to promoting equality, dignity and respect for all people receiving and accessing care within Australia's health system. As such, ACN respects the right for individuals to use gender-specific or gender-diverse language.

If you have further enquiries regarding this matter, please contact Dr Carolyn Stapleton, Manager - Policy and Advocacy, at [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,



Adjunct Professor Kylie Ward
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16 November 2018