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Committee Secretary
Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence
Prevention Committee
Parliament House
George Street
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By e-mail: health@parliament.qld.gov.au

[Submission on Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2019](#) (QLD)

Feminist Legal Clinic Inc. is a community legal service that works to advance the human rights of women and girls through a combination of targeted casework, community legal education and law reform submissions. This submission is made with the approval of our management committee.

We have been contacted by a variety of individuals with concerns in relation to this proposed legislation, specifically the proposal in Part 5 of the Bill to insert a new Chapter 5B into the *Public Health Act* 2005 titled “Conversion Therapies”.

Firstly, we protest the inadequate public exposure given to this Bill and the time frame for submissions, falling as it does over the Christmas and New Year period. We are concerned that these drastic Orwellian measures have not been sufficiently publicised and are being sneaked into legislation under cover of a bevy of other largely inconsequential amendments.

In recent years there has been an exponential rise in the numbers of individuals presenting with gender dysphoria, including high numbers of teenage girls. Current medical treatment for these individuals includes prescribing puberty blockers and hormone treatments and sometimes surgical procedures, all of which have permanent harmful consequences. These can include infertility, decreased capacity for sexual pleasure and other harmful physical and psychological effects which have not yet been adequately investigated with longitudinal studies.

There are increasing numbers of detransitioners and members of the trans community who are now speaking out against the use of these treatments, particularly on children, and the need for more counselling before these interventions are considered. Various whistle blowers who have worked in gender clinics, such as Dr Kenneth Zucker in

Canada and Dr David Bell in the United Kingdom, have also sounded the alarm about young and otherwise vulnerable individuals being exploited for profit by pharmaceutical and medical industries. However, with the introduction of penalties, including imprisonment, for those who dare to question a gender affirmative approach, this Bill will deter health service providers in Queensland from any approach other than heavy handed medical interventions.

It is misleading to equate conversion therapy as historically applied to homosexuals with attempts to counsel individuals suffering gender dysphoria. If anything, the drastic medical interventions that accompany a gender affirmative approach and which are being applied to “transition” many young people who would otherwise go on to identify as gay or lesbian would be more rightly be regarded as the ultimate “conversion therapy”.

Certainly, there is a basis for regarding this extreme medicalised approach as a strategy to rid the world of homosexuals and other gender non-conforming individuals, rendering them invisible and sterile. Indeed, in Iran where homosexuality is a crime punishable by death for men and lashings for women, sex reassignment is not only allowed, but subsidised by the State. Trans individuals are regarded as having psychosexual problems for which there is a medical solution.

Sex is an immutable biological reality whereas gender is a social construct which is subject to change. It is essential that these concepts should not be conflated and individuals should not be misled into believing that superficial changes to their physical appearance can alter whether they are male or female. No amount of feminine dressing, female hormones or surgical interventions will change you into a woman if you are born with XY chromosomes. Health professionals must be free to explain these simple facts to patients without being accused of conversion therapy and risking prosecution.

The existence of intersex individuals does not change the reality that human sex is binary. There are many individuals with only one leg but this does not alter the fact that humans as a species are bipedal. It is not necessary to reject either science or common sense to be accepting of diversity and compassionate to those who experience psychological discomfort in relation to their physical attributes. This Bill paves the way for a dystopic future where pseudoscience is freely propagated and those who dare speak the truth face severe sanctions by the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission. Please do not hesitate to contact me at [REDACTED] or on [REDACTED] to expand on any element of it if required.

Yours faithfully



Anna Kerr
Principal Solicitor