

Submission on Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023

Parents of Adolescents with Gender Distress (PAGD) is a growing collective of Victorian parents with teenage or young adult children with confusion around their gender identity. We are grateful for the opportunity to make a submission on the **Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023**.

We are writing to you today to emphasize the crucial role that sex-based language plays in addressing and discussing the very complex issue of gender dysphoria. As we navigate an increasingly complicated, controversial, and evolving landscape around the treatment of gender dysphoria it is vital in our advocacy for our children that we can accurately, and freely, observe and discuss their biological identities. This includes how we advocate for them publicly and discuss their medical care.

We are concerned that the use of the term 'gender' in the amendment is unclear and not consistent with the characteristics defined in the Anti-Discrimination Act (**gender identity** means the gender-related identity, appearance or mannerisms or other gender-related characteristics of a person (whether by way of medical intervention or not), with or without regard to the person's designated sex at birth). To this end there needs to be a clear distinction between sex and gender identity and what these terms refer to.

It is vital for us as parents that this planned amendment doesn't create a conflict with our rights and responsibilities as parents to advocate and discuss the best care for our gender distressed children and young people. As parent advocates, our freedom of expression is paramount. To this end we would encourage that where sex-based language is used, on behalf of, or by parents as advocates for our children that this is **excluded** as misinformation, as such an exception can clearly be recognised as serving the public interest.

We are happy to answer any questions you might have regarding this submission.

Regards,

Parents of Adolescents with Gender Distress – Victoria

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