



## **The NSW consultation that isn't: why all the secrecy?**

**MEDIA RELEASE: 4 August 2023**

**Australian Feminists for Women's Rights (AF4WR) has obtained a leaked copy of a 42-page 'Consultation Paper' on 'Banning LGBTQ+ Conversion Practices'. The paper, issued by the NSW Department of Communities and Justice and NSW Health on 31 July, has so far not been released publicly. We ask: why?**

The paper is related to a 'Conversion Practices Prohibition Bill' proposed by Independent MLA for Sydney, Alex Greenwich, which the NSW government has committed to supporting. The Consultation Paper reveals that a joint working group within DCJ and NSW Health has been set up to 'develop legislation in consultation with survivors and other stakeholders'. *But who exactly are the 'stakeholders' in question?*

On page 8, we are told that the submission deadline (on a 'Consultation Paper' not yet made public) is close of business on 25 August. We are also told that as it is a 'targeted consultation', submissions will not be made public. Again we ask: *why?*

As a feminist organisation defending the sex-based rights of women and girls, as well as the rights of lesbians and gay men to live free from harassment and interference with their lives, their loves and their bodies, we are deeply concerned that the NSW government has not seen fit to consult widely and publicly with a range of stakeholders: feminists, lesbians, gay men and indeed *all* parents.

At issue is proposed legislation potentially affecting all children who do not gender-conform, and their families. The proposed NSW legislation continues the practice found in other states (Queensland, Victoria) of conflating lesbian and gay identities and lives with those of transgender people, when the two are distinct groups and have different and sometimes conflicting wants and needs. Worse, just like Qld and Victoria this proposed legislation ignores the demonstrated harms of early social transition and the off-label use of puberty blockers on children and teenagers.

***'Every time feminist, lesbian and gay groups—and all other groups and individuals defending the sex-based rights of women and the welfare of children—attempt to engage in reasoned public debate about the rights of girls and lesbian and gay youth, we are shouted down, censored and branded with offensive labels,'*** said AF4WR co-convenor, Emeritus Professor Bronwyn Winter.

***'Why is the NSW government being so sneaky? Our political leaders should not be cherry picking who they "consult", but listening to and engaging with all stakeholders. We expect more transparency and more due diligence from the political left. They owe their election victory to us, so they should be listening to us now.'***

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