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Equality Tasmania  
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[REDACTED]

Mary de Groot  
Secretary  
Select Committee on reproductive, maternal and paediatric health  
services in Tasmania  
Parliament House, Hobart, Tasmania  
rmphs@parliament.tas.gov.au

Re: submission to the Select Committee on Reproductive, Maternal and  
Paediatric health services in Tasmania.

Dear Ms de Groot,

Please find below the Equality Tasmania submission to the Select  
Committee on Reproductive, Maternal and Paediatric health services in  
Tasmania. Thank you for allowing us an extension on this submission.  
Please let us know if you have any questions or more information is  
required.

Best wishes,  
Rodney Croome

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### **Equality Tasmania**

Equality Tasmania (formerly the Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights Group)  
is Tasmania's leading advocacy group for LGBTIQ+ people and has been  
since it was formed thirty years ago. In that time we have advocated  
successfully for a range of reforms, including the decriminalisation of

homosexuality, Tasmania's strong Anti-Discrimination Act, Tasmania's ground-breaking relationship laws, improved policies in schools, health and policing, and marriage equality. We regularly consult with the Tasmanian LGBTIQ+ community to determine our campaign priorities and to inform submissions like this one.

## **Barriers to reproductive, maternal and paediatric health for LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians**

According to LGBTIQ+ Health Australia there are a range of barriers to better reproductive, maternal and paediatric health care for LGBTIQ+ people. Find attached a copy of LGBTIQ+ Health Australia's submission to the Senate Community Affairs References Committee inquiry into the universal access to reproductive healthcare.

Barriers include,

- Lack of information about reproductive and related health care access for LGBTIQ+ people, including lack of information about the status of same-sex partners, and inclusion for trans and gender diverse people.

This is very common problem. Many LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians seek information from both Equality Tasmania and Working It Out regarding reproductive and related services.

- Discrimination by health service providers including failure to recognise same-sex partners, same-sex co-parents, and/or non-medical infertility, and failure to respect gender identity through the use of incorrect pronouns.

Unfortunately, this still occurs despite the law prohibiting it. Equality Tasmania receives several complaints a year involving this kind of discrimination.

- Structural and legal barriers including inability to access to Medicare for reproductive services including surrogacy.
- Continued medically-unnecessary interventions on children with innate variations of sex characteristics which can lead to infertility in later life.

Tasmanian intersex community advocate, Simone-Lisa Anderson, has shown through her analysis of Medicare rebate codes that such interventions continue to occur in Tasmania.

- Inaccurate and/or inappropriate data collection when accessing reproductive and associated services.

This includes failure of data collection to recognise same-sex partners and co-parents, and failure to recognise the gender identity of trans and gender diverse people.

## **Solutions**

In Tasmania, we have laws and policies in place to deal with some of these continuing problems. For example, the Anti-Discrimination Act prohibits discrimination in health care. The State Government is also seeking to improve data collection, with Tasmania leading the nation on this vital reform.

However, there is too little understanding of these laws and policies, while some problems remain entirely unaddressed. They include federal matters such as equality in Medicare assistance. But they also include reforms which should occur at a state level.

## **Here are our recommendations:**

1. More public information about the reproductive, maternal and paediatric health care rights of LGBTIQ+ people.
2. Targetted training for reproductive, maternal and paediatric health care providers on the issues facing LGBTIQ+ people accessing their services.
3. Laws preventing medically-unnecessary interventions on children with innate variations of sex characteristics as recommended by the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute in 2019.
4. Reform of surrogacy laws to remove unnecessary barriers to accessing surrogacy in Tasmania.

[End]