

## **Position Paper**

**Delegation from: Australia**

**Committee: United Nations Human Rights Council**

**Agenda: Deliberation on right of LGBTQ+ community with special emphasis on spreading of homophobic beliefs**

LGBTQ+ is an abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and more. These terms are used to describe a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. The first four letters of the acronym have been used since the 1990s, but in recent years there has been an increased awareness of the need to be inclusive of other sexual identities to offer better representation. The LGBTQIA+ acronym serves an important purpose, not only is it designed to be more inclusive, but it also represents the self-identities of people who are transgender and/or similar gender attracted.

### **I. LGBT in Australia**

A 2013 poll found that 79% of Australians agreed that homosexuality should be accepted by society, making it the fifth-most supportive country surveyed in the world. The term LGBTI is increasingly used in Australia, rather than just LGBT, with the I denoting intersex people. Organizations that include intersex people as well as LGBT people include the National LGBTI health alliance and community media. The Australia Human Rights Commission can investigate complaints of discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status under the Sex Discrimination Act, which was amended in August 2013. The amended Act also protects same-sex couples from discrimination under the definition of "marital or relationship status". We have conducted several major projects in recent years to identify and build community awareness around the human rights issues faced by LGBTI people.

### **II. History of Australia and LGBT**

In 1994, the Commonwealth passed the Human Rights (Sexual Conduct) Act 1994 – Section 4, legalizing sexual activity between consenting adults (in private) throughout Australia. By the late 2000s and early 2010s, support for LGBT rights in Australia generally grew, and several significant legal achievements were made. Nationwide equalization with respect to the age of consent laws was achieved when Queensland amended the law in 2016. The decade was also marked by the implementation of expungement schemes in many states and territories, which allowed men who had been charged with anti-homosexuality laws to apply to have their convictions removed from the record. As of November 2018, all eight states and territories have passed expungement laws. A significant reform in the transgender space was a November 2017 ruling from the Family Court of Australia which allowed transgender children to access cross-sex hormone treatment (known as "stage 2 treatment") without court approval needing to be sought, in cases where there is no dispute between a child, their parents, and their treating doctors, hormone treatment can be prescribed without court permission.

### **III. The World and LGBT**

In recent years, many States have made a determined effort to strengthen human rights protection for LGBT people. An array of new laws has been adopted – including laws banning discrimination, penalizing homophobic and transphobic hate crimes, granting recognition of same-sex relationships, and making it easier for transgender individuals to obtain official documents that reflect their preferred gender. Training programs have been developed for police, prison staff, teachers, social workers and other personnel, and anti-bullying initiatives have been implemented in many schools. Australia wants to see in the world, especially in non-LGBTQ+ supporting countries, the policies changing the society into something for everyone. Australia was not always the best place for encompassing people with different identities but today we have turned into one of the most supportive societies in the world. Anyone can do it.