



**DiversityACT**  
COMMUNITY SERVICES

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The Honourable Gladys Berejiklian  
Parliament House  
6 Macquarie St  
Sydney NSW 2000

26 September 2021

Dear Premier

**RE: Education Legislation Amendment (Parental Rights) Bill 2020**

I am writing to you on behalf of the members of Diversity ACT Community Services, an LGBTIAQ+ support agency with members in Queanbeyan, Goulburn and the greater ACT region, to express deep concern about the Parliamentary Education Committee's report into One Nation's proposed amendment to education legislation. I ask you to categorically reject the report and its findings, and to oppose One Nation's Education Legislation Amendment (Parental Rights) Bill 2020.

Every student in NSW should have the opportunity to reach their potential, to learn with their peers, and feel a sense of belonging in their school.

But One Nation's NSW Education Legislation Amendment (Parental Rights) Bill 2020 harms trans and gender diverse students by denying their existence and preventing teachers and counsellors from supporting them. It allows parents to withdraw their child from a class or program which tells them LGBTIAQ+ people are just like everyone else.

This bill would:

- prohibit schools from teaching that trans and gender diverse people exist and should be treated with respect;
- prohibit school counsellors from affirming a trans or gender diverse student or providing them with any support or referrals to gender affirming support;
- put teachers at risk of losing their job when they support a trans or gender diverse student in affirming their identity;
- enshrine biological fallacies, and describe intersex people as disordered;
- allow parents to deny their children access to lessons in public schools which may contradict their political, social or personal values, including their views about LGBTIAQ+ people.

A parliamentary committee chaired by One Nation NSW's leader Mark Latham, has endorsed many aspects of the bill and made further recommendations directly attacking the safety and inclusion of trans and gender diverse young people at school. This parliamentary committee completely ignored the submissions from the LGBTIAQ+ community; indeed, only one community member was invited to speak with the committee. The recommendations in the committee report include preventing trans and gender diverse young people from being able to seek confidential support from their school counsellor, access toilets in which they feel safe, and take part in school sport.

If the ability for students to be their authentic selves and receive appropriate supports isn't sufficient reason to oppose this bill, consider the economic impacts. The World Economic Forum has found that the ramifications of

this lack of inclusion, such as homelessness, mental and physical health issues, and lower educational outcomes, results in significant loss of economic productivity.

To quote the WEF: "Altruism and self-interest both point in the same direction. Tackling discrimination is the right thing to do – and essential if the human rights of LGBT people are to be properly protected. But it's also the smart thing to do for any business that wants to maximize the productivity of its own workforce – as well as for any country that wants to harness the full economic potential of its people."<sup>1</sup>

Every child deserves a quality education in a school which supports and welcomes them. The Education Legislation Amendment (Parental Rights) Bill 2020 is in direct opposition to the goals of NSW education and must be opposed in the Parliament.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Megan Watts". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Megan Watts  
President  
Diversity ACT Community Services

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<sup>1</sup> World Economic Forum. (2016). The Real Cost of LGBT Discrimination. Retrieved from: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/the-real-cost-of-lgbt-discrimination>