



19 April, 2021

Mr Rodney Croome
President
Equality Tasmania
E: rodney.croome@equal.org.au

Dear President

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Equality Tasmania questionnaire for the 2021 State Election.

I am pleased to respond on behalf of all Liberal Members and Candidates.

Conversion practices

The Tasmanian Liberals are concerned about reports of harmful, non-consensual conversion practices occurring in Tasmania.

The Tasmanian Liberals remain open to considering the need for reform and we will, as always, give careful consideration to any recommendations made by the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute (TLRI) in relation to their current inquiry.

Intersex surgeries

The Tasmanian Liberals are committed to caring for the health and wellbeing needs of all Tasmanian children and ensuring the best possible health and care outcomes for infants and children with variations of sex characteristics.

There are numerous legal principles, Australian Standards of Care and Treatment Guidelines regarding trans and gender diverse children and adolescents that provides the clinical framework for Tasmanian clinicians when making decisions regarding medical treatment and clinical practice.

Any proposed change to clinical guidelines or consent laws in Tasmania will need to be subject to significant consultation with both clinicians and the community, and will continue to carefully consider any recommendations regarding any changes to our current legal framework.

A Human Rights Act

Whilst a re-elected Gutwein Liberal Majority Government is committed to a fair, more accepting and inclusive Tasmania, there are no plans to introduce a Human Rights Act we are firmly of the view that there are sufficient, robust protections in place that protect and promote human rights in Tasmania.

These are enshrined in a range of legislative regimes and those bodies set up under such frameworks at the international, Commonwealth and State level.

In Tasmania, these protections are extensively reflected in statute and in the numerous independent statutory authorities established, including the Office of the Public Guardian, the Commissioner for Children, the Ombudsman, the Custodial Inspector, the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, the Guardianship and Administration Board, the Mental Health Tribunal and the Integrity Commission.

Beyond the Tasmanian context, we are of course obligated to comply with international human rights law including under the seven core international human rights treaties to which Australia is a party, and those Optional Protocols to these treaties to which Australia is a party to.

Discrimination and Bullying

Discrimination, offensive and insulting conduct and incitement of hatred on the basis of race and other attributes are prohibited under the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Act.

Compliance with anti-discrimination legislation is not a matter of choice. It should go without saying that discriminatory behaviour is completely unacceptable and cannot be tolerated.

The Tasmanian Liberals in Government have expressed a number of concerns with the Australian Government's Religious Discrimination Bill and how it interacts with Tasmanian legislation.

Ultimately, this legislation is a federal matter and we have, and will continue to, make our views known.

With regards, to bullying and cyberbullying, the introduction of the crime of 'stalking and bullying' in the *Criminal Code* in 2019 delivered on the Tasmanian Liberals 2018 election commitment to make serious cyberbullying a criminal offence.

Bullying has lasting effects on individuals and their families and serious bullying can result in tragic personal consequences for victims, such as long-term mental health impacts, self-harm and psychological damage.

The Tasmanian Liberals are determined to do all we can to stop bullying. As well as law reform, education and community awareness initiatives have an important role to play in addressing the problem of bullying.

Gender recognition

The Tasmanian Liberals primary concern at the time the Bill was tabled was that the normal parliamentary process was not followed and the Tasmanian community was not consulted however we understand that a small number of people have been comforted by these laws and will not be repealing them.

However as with all reports produced by the TLRI, the Tasmanian Liberals will consider the recommendations put forward.

Expungement of historical convictions

The Tasmanian Liberals introduced the Expungement of Historical Convictions Scheme in 2018 as an important step in addressing previous laws that were unfair and unjust resulting in some people experiencing discrimination and disadvantage.

The report is comprehensive and includes a number of recommendations in relation to the operation of the scheme and legislation.

The recommendations put forward in the review largely focus on fine tuning and promotion of the scheme and if re-elected, the Tasmanian Liberals will consider compensation as part of any refinement.

The Coroner's Act

The Tasmanian Liberals are committed to changing the Coroner's Act to ensure there is a clear process for determining next of kin and everyone under the law is treated equally.

Equal opportunity in schools

Government schools

The Tasmanian Liberals are committed to the Valuing Diversity Program, it is an important resource with the feedback from teachers very positive.

We are not aware of any evidence of unmet need.

Independent Schools

Compliance with anti-discrimination legislation is not a matter of choice. It should go without saying that discriminatory behaviour is completely unacceptable and cannot be tolerated.

We will always ensure that Non-government schools meet their obligations under the law for enrolled students of diverse needs, noting there are also requirements to be met around student welfare including anti-bullying, harassment and discrimination.

Mental health

LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians, their friends and families must have equal opportunity to participate in and contribute to Tasmania's social, political, economic and cultural life. This means supporting communities to recognise and treat all Tasmanians with dignity and respect – regardless of their relationship status, sexuality, gender identity or intersex characteristics.

In line with the updated *Rethink 2020* mental health plan released late last year, the Tasmanian Liberals if re-elected will continue to work with LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians to ensure that they can access the mental health support they need, when they need it.

As a priority population group, LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians will be consulted over the coming months regarding actions that can help services better respond to their specific needs. This consultation work will inform the implementation plan for *Rethink 2020*.

Health care

The Tasmanian Liberals in Government have committed to provide professional development for staff, as well as work underway to develop a network for our staff with diverse sexualities and gender identities.

The Tasmanian Department of Health presently has a LGBTIQ+ Reference Group which is working to improve health outcomes and access to services for LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians.

Government reference groups, LGBTIQ+ Framework, Peak body funding

The LGBTIQ+ Whole-of-Government Reference Group (GRG) has an oversight and advisory role on the implementation of the Framework. In government, the Tasmanian Liberals established the GRG to include non-government representatives nominated by LGBTIQ+ community organisations and review the current policy framework for LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians

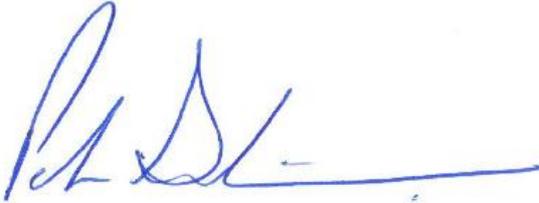
The Tasmanian Liberals understand the importance of these reference groups and if re-elected will ensure they remain as a key advisory role for government to improve outcomes for the LGBTIQ+ community.

As well as continuing to support the LGBTIQ+ Grants Program, we will consider any recommendations from the survey the Tasmanian Government commissioned the University of Tasmania to undertake, once it is finalised including relating to peak body status.

Should we be re-elected the Tasmanian Liberals will consult with the LGBTIQ+ community on the need for and also the funding of a peak body to support policy development, and provide advice to ensure government is well informed noting the role of the Government Reference Group (GRG).

Thank you again for the opportunity to respond to these important issues. Our positive plan to Secure Tasmania's Future can be found at [Election Policies | Tasmanian Liberals](#).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Peter Gutwein', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Peter Gutwein MP
Premier