

Media release

The Government Must Not Let One Nation Divide This State

- **One Nation's Leader in New South Wales Parliament, Mark Latham, puts forward anti-LGBTIQ Bill.**
- **Families, children, and teachers hold serious concerns about the Education Legislation Amendment (Parental Rights) Bill 2020.**
- **Many believe that the Bill will cause harm and increase bullying in schools.**
- **Teachers union's and frontline staff hold concerns about their right to work as a teacher.**
- **A Joint Public Statement was coordinated by NSW peak lobby body, Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby.**
- **Civil society organisations, professional bodies, unions, and community leaders called on the Government to reject the harmful bill.**

The Education Bill will prohibit schools from teaching that trans or gender diverse people exist, including affirming a trans or gender diverse student or providing them with support, and puts teachers at risk of losing their accreditation if they do.

The New South Wales Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby (NSWGLRL) coordinated a Joint Public Statement in opposition to the Bill, fielding support from civil society organisations, including peak bodies, front lines services, unions, and community leaders in NSW.

Lobby Co-Convenor Jack Whitney stated, "There is a real need for positivity right now in NSW and Latham could do a Bill that would actually benefit the state... for example, a Bill that would reduce unemployment during the pandemic, increase support to our frontline staff, support small businesses, assist elderly residents in aged care and nursing homes, or young people who have been impacted by social isolation. Instead he is attacking LGBTIQ children."

"This Bill will increase bullying in NSW schools to already vulnerable kids, and it does nothing to reduce discrimination in our communities", Whitney stressed.

Co-Convenor Audrey Marsh also stated, "Young trans and gender diverse people need the support of their school communities, the love of their families and acceptance from society. Any reactive legislation that attempts to make the lives of trans and gender diverse children harder is cruel and must be stopped".

The Joint Public Statement was joined by Lord Mayor of the City of Sydney Council, Clover Moore.

Moore stated, "It is disappointing that in the year 2020 the community must come together once again to oppose another divisive and discriminatory piece of legislation against the LGBTIQ and gender-diverse communities. Mark Latham's Education Legislation Amendment (Parental Rights) Bill 2020 is an outrageous attack on trans and gender-diverse students, families and teachers and I am proud to join the NSW Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby and a large group of community and civil society partners and leaders in opposing it."

Large professional bodies such as the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) and The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) joined the public statement. Dr Ashlea Broomfield, NSW/ACT Deputy Chair of RACGP stated, "Discrimination can prove extremely detrimental to the mental health and wellbeing of people in our communities. I stand strongly against this legislation and urge all people in New South Wales to do what they can to make LGBTIQ+ young people feel included and safe."

The Joint Public Statement also received support from the Teachers Federation and the Independent Education Union, two major unions for teachers across Australia. They were joined by peak bodies for social services The NSW Council of Social Services, as well peak bodies for youth and youth-at-risk, Youth Action and Yfoundations.

LGBTIQ leaders came forward in opposition to the Bill. Chief Executive Officer of ACON, Nicolas Parkhill stated,



**Gay & Lesbian
Rights Lobby**

“ACON believes that this Bill represents an attack on trans and gender diverse children, parents and school staff. We know the dangerous outcomes that public debate around the lives of our communities brings about, and as such we would encourage all members of Parliament to ensure this Bill does not become law.”

Parkhill was joined by Albert Kruger, Chief Executive Officer of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, who stated, "It is vital that LGBTQI+ young people feel safe, supported and included at school. Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras stands against anti-LGBTIQ discrimination, and therefore wholeheartedly opposes this harmful and dangerous One Nation Bill."

Allies also came forward in protest to the Bill. President of PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians And Gays) Australia, Les Mico, stated, “We wholeheartedly reject the Bill... [it] engenders pervasiveness and encourages discrimination at all levels within schools and does little to demonstrate the State government’s creditability to support and empower the front-line teachers and staff.

Lobby Co-Convenor Jack Whitney concluded, “I stand with the NSW community partners in this Joint Public Statement against this awful Bill and say, ‘not in our backyard’. This type of legislation has no place in NSW, and should never be accepted, little alone proposed during a global pandemic.”

Whitney, further added, “Weren’t we all in this together? Uncertainty in our schools is extremely high given the global environment - our students deserve and need stability - not this Bill.”

ENDS

For further comment about the Joint Public Statement and this media release, contact Jack Whitney Co-Convenor, NSW Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby on 0411387913 or convenors@glrl.org.au

For further comment and inquiry regarding ACON’s comment, contact Reg Domingo on RDomingo@acon.org.au

If this article brings on mental health presentations, or you just want someone to talk to, please contact:

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