

29 January 2025

Dear Prime Minister,

cc: Opposition Leader The Hon Peter Dutton MP, Federal Health Minister the Hon Mark Butler MP, Shadow Health Minister Senator the Hon Anne Ruston MP, all State and Territory Health Ministers and Shadow Health Ministers

RE: Urgent Call for Public Inquiry into Youth Gender Medicine

We are writing as concerned citizens to call for an immediate public inquiry into youth gender medicine in Australia and a pause on all medical gender transitions for children and young people until this inquiry is complete.

Worldwide concerns about ‘gender-affirming’ treatment

Recent developments globally have exposed serious concerns about the ‘gender-affirming’ approach to treating gender-confused youth and there is now a bipartisan consensus in many countries that major changes to practice in this area are needed.

The UK's comprehensive Cass Review (April 2024) found no reliable evidence base for gender transition interventions in young people.¹ The review found:

- No clear evidence supporting ‘gender-affirming’ interventions for children
- Poor quality evidence for puberty suppression and cross-sex hormones
- No reliable support for claims that these treatments reduce suicide risk
- Social transition may significantly affect psychological functioning
- Treatment should not be based on the ‘gender-affirming’ model currently used in Australia

Medical interventions including puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and surgeries can cause irreversible harm, including physiological damage (bone density loss, infertility, sexual dysfunction), issues concerning brain development and social and relational difficulties. While lifelong impacts are yet to be fully understood, regret is real, and a growing number of detransitioners believe their gender distress masked other co-morbidities, including autism, untreated sexual trauma, and discomfort with their sexuality.

UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, Reem Alsalem, noted the Cass Review's global implications, citing its demonstration of "devastating consequences that policies on gender treatments have had on human rights of children."

Responses from governments

As a consequence, the National Health Service has halted the use of puberty blockers outside clinical trials. The issue transcends politics. The Cass review has bipartisan support and the new Labour Health Secretary Wes Streeting has imposed an indefinite ban on private or offshore prescribing of blockers. He said it was “a scandal that [puberty blocking] medicine was given to vulnerable young children without the proof that it is safe or effective or [without going] through the rigorous safeguards of a clinical trial.”

Numerous US states and Scandinavian countries have restricted or banned these practices as well,

¹ Cass, Hilary. *Independent review of gender identity services for children and young people: Final report (Cass Review)*. United Kingdom: 2024. https://cass.independent-review.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/CassReview_Final.pdf

following careful reviews of the available evidence showing a lack of benefit to children's and young people's mental health.

The situation in Australia

Despite these developments, Australian politicians, clinicians and relevant institutions have been slow to act. Worse, some have sought to undermine the significance of these developments and their direct relevance to Australia.

The Cass Review specifically evaluated Australia's current treatment guidelines and gave them a poor rating for quality overall. These standards are based on guidelines from the now discredited World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH).

On 2 November 2024, two leading Australian clinicians along with over 20 international authors released a paper demonstrating just how inadequate Australia's response has been compared to the international community in relation to the mounting evidence against the 'gender-affirming' model of care.² They also express strong concern that 'conversion therapy' laws – which five out of eight Australian states and territories have adopted – impede neutral exploratory psychotherapy for gender-confused children and young people.

The need for a public inquiry

If this issue were just about a dispute between medical professionals, it might be considered inappropriate for governments to get involved. However, leaked documents from WPATH reveal that clinicians privately acknowledge the harmful impacts of this treatment protocol on youth and the lack of evidence for benefit but continue to publicly recommend it.³ Evidence has also emerged of political interference in the work of WPATH in revising its guidelines and making recommendations.

This is a potential public health disaster of generational significance demanding an independent public inquiry. Until an inquiry is complete, all 'gender-affirming' interventions for children and young people (including puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones and surgeries) must be paused to prevent further harm.

Scope of the inquiry

An independent public inquiry needs to be carried out at the federal level with the cooperation of the states and territories, involving an expert, or panel of distinguished experts, independent from the practice of gender medicine.

Such an inquiry will need to consider how this was allowed to happen, the impact on the children and their families, and make recommendations as to how to protect other children from harm.

Such an inquiry does not need to 'reinvent' the wheel in terms of the medical and scientific evidence, for this has been systematically reviewed multiple times by different expert bodies, with the same conclusion. What the inquiry needs to do is to consider whether, in the light of the evidence, current 'gender-affirming' practices should continue, and, if so, to what extent.

The safety and wellbeing of Australian children depend on a swift response to this public health crisis.

² Kozłowska, Kasia, et al. "Evolving National Guidelines for the Treatment of Children and Adolescents with Gender Dysphoria: International Perspectives." *Human Systems: Therapy, Culture and Attachments* (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1177/26344041241269298>.

³ Hughes, Mia. *The WPATH Files: Pseudoscientific surgical and hormonal experiments on children, adolescents and vulnerable adults*. United States. 2024. <https://environmentalprogress.org/big-news/wpath-files>.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Jillian Spencer MB.BS BmedSci FRANZCP Cert. Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Cert. Forensic Psychiatry Grad Dip For Beh Sci	Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist
Dr Andrew Amos MB.BS FRANZCP	Psychiatrist
Prof Dianna Kenny PhD MA (Sch Couns) BA (Hons) Dip Ed Grad Dip FDR FAPs MAPA	Consulting Psychologist, Psychotherapist, Family Therapist
Dr Dylan Wilson MB BCh MRCPCH FRACP	Paediatrician
A/Prof Peter Parry MB.BS Ph.D FRANZCP Cert. Child and Adolescent Psych (RANZCP)	Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist
Professor John Whitehall BA MB.BS FRACP	Paediatrician
Dr Alison Clayton MBBS MPM FRANZCP	Psychiatrist
Dr Shannon Abeywardena MD RACGP	General Practitioner
Dr Cary Breakey MB.BS FRACGP DPM	Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist (retired)
Dr Michael Paul Burt MB.BS BS FANZCA FCICM	Anaesthetist
Dr Jacqueline Condon BMedSci MD FRANZCP MHL Cert. Forensic Psych Grad Cert FMH	Psychiatrist
Dr Gerald Fogarty BSc MB.BS FRANZCR PhD	Radiation Oncologist
Dr Rachel Hannam PhD MPsych BSocSci MAAPi	Clinical Psychologist
Dr Guy van Hazel MB.BS FRACP FRCP	Medical Oncologist
Dr Christine Huxtable MB.BS FANZCA DipPOM MRCS DRACOG	Anaesthetist
Dr Randy Juanta BMBS	Medical Doctor
Dr Vincent Keane MB.BS DipRACOG MPH&TM (USA) FAFPHM (RACP)	Public Health Medical Doctor
Dr Chris Kennedy MB.BS MPH&TM FRAGP FRACMA Hon Doctor Medicine OAM	Rural General Practitioner and Medical Administrator
Dr Deirdre Little MB.BS DRANZCOG FACRRM GCBioeth	General Practitioner
Dr T. John Martin MD FRACP FAA FRS AO	Emeritus Professor of Medicine
Dr Stephen Milgate AM	Medical Association Executive – Health Policy Research

Dr George L. Mendz MSc MBioeth PhD	Professor of Medicine, University of Notre Dame Australia
Dr Shannon Morton BSc MB.BS FRANZCP Cert. Child and Adolescent Psychiatry	Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist
Dr Luke O'Regan B Med FRANZCP	Psychiatrist
Dr Catherine Peterson MB.BS FRACGP	General Practitioner
Dr Nic Rosoman MB.BS	Medical Doctor
Dr Carl Scott MB.BS FRANZCA FCICM	Anaesthetist and Intensive Care Specialist
A/Professor Mike Sladden MB ChB MAE MRCP(UK) FACD MRCGP FRACGP DRCOG	Dermatologist
Dr Julie Sladden MB.BS BMedSci PGDipMedEd	Medical Doctor
Professor David Torpy MB.BS PhD FRACP	Endocrinologist
Dr Joseph Turner MB.BS PhD DRANZCOG (Adv) FRACGP-RG FACRRM	General Practitioner/Rural Generalist
Dr David Ward MBCHB MRCPSYCH FRCPSYCH FRANZCP	Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist
Dr John Warlow MB CHB BIRM FRANZCP	Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist
Dr Danielle Collins BMBS FRACGP	General Practitioner
Dr Sean Leow BSc MD MS(Plast)	Surgical Registrar
Dr Megan Richardson BAppSci MB.BS FRANZCP Cert Child and Adolescent Psychiatry	Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist
Dr Elvis Seman MB.BS FRANZCOG EUCOGE FRCOG NFPMC PhD	Obstetrician and Gynaecologist
Dr Geoff Holloway	Sociologist and Editor of United Tasmania Group Journal
Dr Shirley Prager MB.BS FRANZCP	Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist
Dr Mei Ling Doery MBBS BMedSci MPH	Medical doctor, Public Health Expert and Advocate
Dr Sandra Pertot BA MPsych PhD FCCLP	Clinical Psychologist
Dr Petra Bueskens	Clinical Psychotherapist
Courtney Coulson	Detransitioner
Mel Jeffries	Detransitioner
Jay Langadinos	Detransitioner
Hon Tony Abbott AC	Former Prime Minister of Australia
Hon John Anderson AC	Former Deputy Prime Minister of Australia

Clive Hamilton	Professor of Public Ethics, Charles Sturt University
Dr Peter Koopman	Professor Emeritus of Developmental Biology, University of Queensland
Hon Greg Donnelly	Member of New South Wales Legislative Council, Labor Party
Sall Grover	CEO and Founder, Giggle for Girls
Joe McCrackin	Member of Victorian Legislative Council, Liberal Party
Madeleine Beekman	Professor Emerita of Evolutionary Biology, University of Sydney
Tim James	State Member for Willoughby, Liberal Party
Dr Renate Klein	Biologist and Social Scientist
Hon Rod Roberts	Member of New South Wales Legislative Council, Independent
Hon Heidi Girolamo	Member of South Australian Legislative Council, Liberal Party
Dr Chris French	Associate Professor of Medicine, University of Melbourne
Holly Lawford-Smith	Associate Professor, University of Melbourne
Belle Lane	Barrister
Hon Michael Sukkar	Federal Member for Deakin, Liberal Party
Dr Xavier Symons	Director, Plunkett Centre for Ethics
Senator Matt O'Sullivan	Senator for Western Australia, Liberal Party
Louise Elliot	Councillor, City of Hobart
Anna Kerr	Principal Solicitor, Feminist Legal Clinic
Anna McCormack	Founder, IWD Brisbane Meanjin
Senator Hon Matt Canavan	Senator for Queensland, National Party
Bronwyn Winter	Professor Emerita, University of Sydney
Senator Claire Chandler	Senator for Tasmania, Liberal Party
Dr Emma Dalton	Senior Lecturer, La Trobe University
Hon Sophia Moermond	Member of Western Australian Legislative Council, Independent
Bev McArthur	Member of Victorian Legislative Council, Liberal Party
Chris Smith	Journalist and Broadcaster
Dr Elisabeth Taylor	Researcher
Katherine Deves	Lawyer and Commentator
David Limbrick	Member of Victorian Legislative Council, Libertarian Party
Hon Tanya Davies	State Member for Mulgoa, Liberal Party
Jasmine Sussex	Breastfeeding Advocate
Hon Ben Hood	Member of South Australian Legislative Council, Liberal Party
Alan Davison	Professor, Australian Catholic University
Hon Susan Carter	Member of New South Wales Legislative Council, Liberal Party
Judith Hunter	Genspect
Hon Laura Henderson	Member of South Australian Legislative Council, Liberal Party

Patrick Parkinson	Professor Emeritus of Law, University of Queensland
Senator Alex Antic	Senator for South Australia, Liberal Party
Dr Caroline Norma	Senior Lecturer, RMIT University
Hon Damien Tudehope	Member of New South Wales Legislative Council, Liberal Party
Colleen Harkin	Director of Schools Program, Institute for Public Affairs
Dr Elizabeth Caballero	Director, Women Speak Tasmania
Hon Rachel Merton	Member of New South Wales Legislative Council, Liberal Party
Dr Henry Kha	Senior Lecturer in Law, University of New South Wales
Nicole Werner	State Member for Warrandyte, Liberal Party
Bronwyn Williams	Solicitor, Feminist Legal Clinic
Moira Deeming	Member of Victorian Legislative Council, Liberal Party
Nicholas Gordon Martin	Professor, QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute
Georgia Chenevix-Trench	Professor, QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute
Dr Renee Health	Member of Victorian Legislative Council, Liberal Party
Dr Susan Hawthorne	Adjunct Professor, James Cook University
Colin Wight	Professor Emeritus, University of Sydney
Dr Kate Phelan	Lecturer, RMIT University
Rita Panahi	Commentator and Columnist
Hon John Ruddick	Member of New South Wales Legislative Council, Libertarian Party
Dr Karleen Gribble	Adjunct Associate Professor, Western Sydney University
Karen Richardson	Clinical Research Consultant
Kirralie Smith	Binary Australia
Cordelia Fine	Professor, University of Melbourne
Stassja Frei	Host, Desexing Society
Catherine Karena	Executive Director, Active Watchful Waiting
Dr Megan Poore	Founder, Affiliation of Australian Women's Action Alliances
Parents of Adolescents with Gender Distress (VIC)	
Stephanie Bastiaan	Head of Advocacy, Women's Forum Australia
Rachael Wong	Chief Executive Officer, Women's Forum Australia