

ACT LGBTIQ Advisory Council Welcomes Long-Awaited Changes to better recognise Transgender and Intersex Persons

The ACT Government's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (LGBTIQ) Advisory Council welcomes the introduction of a Bill introducing long-awaited changes to the *Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 1997* (ACT).

Once passed, the Bill will remove reassignment surgery as a prerequisite for a person to change their legal sex. "Requiring a person to undergo unnecessary, intrusive sterilisation surgery in order to obtain legal recognition of their identity is indefensible" says Council Chair, Heidi Yates. "This Bill importantly follows the lead of the Federal Government's passport policy, which provides an alternate, non-surgical regime for change of sex on key identification documents" commented Ms Yates. Significantly, the Bill will also amend the definition of 'intersex' in ACT law to reflect best practice terminology, and provide a clear process for intersex persons to change the sex on their birth certificates.

These reforms implement recommendations from the ACT Law Reform Advisory Council's 2012 '[Beyond the Binary](#)' report, which explores options for legal recognition of transgender and intersex people in the Territory. The Council's work followed [2010 advice](#) to the Attorney-General from the ACT Human Rights Commissioner, Dr Helen Watchirs, and the Australian Human Rights Commission's 2009 '[Sex Files](#)' report, both of which highlighted Human Rights concerns regarding the existing surgical requirements.

"We know these changes will make a significant difference to the lives of transgender and intersex persons born in the Territory and congratulate the ACT Government on leading the country in this long-awaited area of reform. We encourage other States and Territories to take similar action in reviewing their birth registration systems, with a view to improving recognition of all transgender and intersex Australians" said Ms Yates.

For further information contact Council Chair, Heidi Yates on 0410 417 184 or the Council Secretariat, Matthew Clissold, within the ACT Community Services Directorate on (02) 6207 7667.

Further information regarding the Council is available [here](#) or via <http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au>.