

Sexuality and Gender Policy

OBJECTIVES

- The Australian Democrats believe that all people, including gays, lesbians, bisexuals, intersexed persons and transgenders have a right to equality under the law and in all dealings with Government and the community and that all Australians should be protected from discrimination and vilification on the grounds of their sexuality or gender status.
- The Australian Democrats will pursue comprehensive legislation which prohibits discrimination and incitement to hatred or vilification, against gays, lesbians, bisexuals, intersexed persons and transgenders and provides for basic democratic rights and true equality of all these individuals, such as freedom of assembly, equal access to public funds and equality for all couples irrespective of their sex or gender.

PRINCIPLES

The Australian Democrats:

1. accept and celebrate human sexual and gender identity diversity
2. believe that these principles should be applied in the conduct of Australia's foreign policy, particularly where there is a need to rectify the injustices suffered by people around the world who are being persecuted for their sexuality or gender identity
3. believe that the age of consent for sexual activity should be equal across the nation, and not less than 16 years
4. support the removal of homosexuality and consensual acts as criminal offences from all Australian statutes
5. believe that all couples should be treated equally to ensure full partnership equality, particularly in relation to division of property and stamp duty, access to partners at time of sickness and incapacity, superannuation and life insurance, employment entitlements and benefits, and in death, such as in funerals, post mortems, intestacy and succession
6. support the establishment of an office for sexuality and gender identity discrimination (or similar) to ensure that the intent of the legislative changes is being achieved and advocated
7. believe there should be no discrimination based on sexuality or gender identity against couples in their assessment for suitability and eligibility, for parenting in relation to official separation of partners
8. believe the eligibility criteria for fertility and surrogate programs should not discriminate on the grounds of sexuality or gender
9. support the creation and development of safe and supportive educational environments for young people, regardless of sexuality or gender identity, and encourage tolerance and respect to underpin school curricula
10. believe that all training and development courses, particularly those for the health, education, legal and law enforcement professions, must include an introduction to sexuality and gender identity issues

11. support the establishment of specific sexuality and gender identity police liaison officers or task forces
12. will encourage active support of activities and information resources aimed at meeting the needs of people with sexuality or gender identity concerns
13. support the provision of specialist health and social services within the existing health infrastructure to address sexuality and gender identity concerns, including the provision of services for those experiencing severe emotional distress or disturbance, and will ensure continued funding of existing specialised services
14. believe that personal and familial relationships of sexuality and gender identity prisoners be recognised, with confidentiality ensured where requested, and actively support the provision of adequate protection for all prisoners who are being persecuted for their sexuality or gender identity
15. believe that all constraints hitherto placed on gays, lesbians, bisexuals, intersexed persons and transgenders from entering and serving in all areas of the defence forces and prison services should be removed
16. believe that no discrimination on the basis of sexuality or gender should be made against persons in regard to immigration or applications for permanent residency
17. support the provision of multilingual information about sexuality and gender identity for people from diverse cultural backgrounds
18. support the provision of adequately funded community based accommodation services for all people in need, with special emphasis on refuges for young people with sexuality or gender identity concerns, along with appropriate research into the issues of youth suicide and drug use within this community
19. support the provision of funds for research into discrimination against sexuality or gender identity in Australian society and the law, with specific emphasis on the workplace, law enforcement and institutional practices, and where such research shows that discrimination remains, we will promote legislative amendment
20. support the recognition of gender affirmation without the onerous restrictions that some state legislations have in place
21. believe that transgendered persons and intersexed persons should have full access to information about treatments available (both surgical and non-surgical) and that such treatments be available under Medicare
22. support the earliest possible disclosure of a diagnosis of an intersex condition to the parents and carers of intersexed infants and to intersexed persons at the earliest appropriate time
23. support the provision of counselling and support services for parents and carers of intersexed infants before and after important decisions are made concerning the child's medical treatment and social gender role
24. support the prohibition of 'Normalising' surgery in the absence of physical danger, without the informed consent of the intersexed person
25. believe a person's gender is no longer a requirement on official documents issued by the government

***Note:** Affirmation, formally known as gender change or reassignment. "Normalising" surgery is the assignation by surgery of the intersex (IS) infant to "male" or "female", and involves penis removal, vaginal removal, gonad removal, loss of orgasmic ability in later life, assignation to a gender opposite to that later chosen by the child, very psycho-active hormone treatment, repeated surgical procedures to a child's genitals over a period of many years, shame around needing sex and gender "correction", and the routine "medical" insertion of foreign objects into a child's surgically created vagina without their consent. More at AIS Support Group Australia (<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~aissg/>) or (<http://www.isna.org>)*