SOGII RIGHTS SUBMISSION:

The Seahorse Club of Victoria, now in its 40th year, has provided a safe supportive environment for individuals to explore and understand their transgender nature. We are making a brief submission only highlighting just three (3) points which, amongst others, arise in conversation more often.

1. The right not to have your gender/sex recorded on forms:

Unless it is required for valid reasons, such as medical or legal needs.

It is felt that the capture and recording of this information can lead to discrimination both overt and hidden. Many forms are handled and viewed by people who have no reason to know the gender or sex of an individual.

Forms could be redesigned with an option not to record gender/sex.

2. The removal of the requirement for married couples to divorce after one of the

 partners has had Sex Reassignment Surgery (SRS):

We are not aware of any other medical procedure which requires divorce.

In these cases a marriage legally exists and is forced to end because of SRS, which is a breach of fundamental human rights.

Same sex marriage/marriage equality is a different issue in that marriage did not previously legally exist.

The distress to couples and their families due to this requirement is difficult to imagine.

3. The implementation of full health fund rebates for SRS:

 Currently only some of the costs of SRS are covered as those procedures can be used for other treatments of different conditions.

Gender Identity encompasses mental health, sexual health and general

Wellbeing, and as such has broad implications in terms of individual and community health

Properly funded health care for the transgender community will ultimately

save money as well as lives.

The Seahorse Club of Victoria strongly urges the Human Rights Commission to recommend that any law or regulation which leads to discrimination where one individual or group does not have the same rights, privileges and responsibilities as another individual or group just because of being transgender.

An example of how even a small change can make a difference is the change to the anti-discrimination law in Victoria in or about 2000. In the fifteen (15) years since that change the level of acceptance and tolerance by the general population of trans-people has increased manyfold.

Yours sincerely,

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