

To whom it may concern,

I am writing on behalf of the Renters and Housing Union regarding the appeal from the Lesbian Action Group Melbourne (LAG) which conspires to exclude bisexual and transgender women from their event at the Victorian Pride Centre. The Renters and Housing Union is a member-run union of renters, homeowners and people in unstable housing who collectively organise for the right to safe and secure housing. Given that people in the LGBTQIA+ community disproportionately face housing discrimination, many of our members are queer. We continuously work to empower renters in the struggle for secure housing and many of the cases that we take on are from people facing, not only housing precarity, but also institutional queerphobia.

The Renters and Housing Union posits that LAG along with the LGB Alliance Australia (LGBAA) are using 'lesbian rights' as an obfuscation for their sexist, queerphobic and transphobic beliefs. Their claims of lesbian erasure by the trans community are nothing more than a transphobic dog whistle. The positioning of trans-women as uniquely threatening to cis lesbian women is lesbophobic and obscures the reality.

"It is disproportionately cis people (both women and men) who are dangerous to, and perpetrators of violence against, trans women, not the other way around"

[\(Pearce, Erikainen, et al, 2020\).](#)

In 2021, LGBAA made an application to the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Commissioner for an exemption to hold single-sex events. Commissioner Bolt rejected the application, stating that an exemption '[would open up the possibility for LGB Alliance to seek to confirm a person's biological sex. I do not see how this can be done without intrusive questioning and completely undermining a person's right to privacy.](#)' Bolt added that doing so would be 'offensive, humiliating, intimidating, insulting and ridiculing' and amount to 'sexual harassment.' The Renters and Housing Union agrees with Commissioner Bolt's assessment, and we believe that the AHRC should make the same decision.

[REDACTED]

The applicants and their supporters are not representative of the overwhelming majority of lesbians. The 2023 [Positive Futures](#) report from Just Like Us found that:

“Lesbians are the most likely of the whole LGBTQ+ community to be supportive of trans people. Lesbians are the most likely to say they know a trans person (92%), and also the most likely to say they are “supportive” or “very supportive” of trans people (96%).”

[Amy Ashenden,](#)

[‘Lesbians being anti-trans is a lesbophobic trope’, Gay Times, March 2023](#)

This exemption application has nothing to do with lesbian rights and everything to do with denying the existence and rights of trans people. Furthermore, it runs the risk of assisting the far-right in their goal to divide and conquer the LGBTQIA+ community. If successful, the exemption would perpetuate the far-right’s [alarminglly genocidal rhetoric](#) and the [increasingly violent anti-trans panic](#), while creating a precedent for further dismantling of LGBTQIA+ rights. The Renters and Housing Union urges the Commissioner to reject the exemption application made by LAG and the LGBAA as it would undermine the rights of LGBTQIA+ people and the stated goal of the Sex Discrimination Act.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

██████████ Inner Melbourne Delegate  
██████████ Media and Communications Officer  
██████████ General Delegate, Assistant Treasurer of Expenditure  
██████████ North Delegate

Renters and Housing Union.