



# TransGender Victoria Inc

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## **PASSPORT TO THE FUTURE: PASSPORT CHANGES WELCOMED IN SAME WEEK AS INAUGURAL PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDS MEETING**

### **“changes hugely welcome...great gathering in Canberra...”**

TransGender Victoria welcomes changes to passport requirements for sex and gender diverse Australians – coincidentally announced in the same week as the inaugural meeting of the Parliamentary Friends of LGBTI group.

“The changes to passport regulations that eliminate the requirement for surgery in relation to sex and gender diverse people are hugely welcome and a great combination of common sense and humanity” stated TransGender Victoria spokesperson Sally Goldner. “The practical effects for a person travelling overseas of the previous situation have resulted in circumstances ranging from humiliation to incarceration. This change will make travel much happier for people previously affected.”

“The changes are possibly the most significant reform announced by any jurisdiction in Australia regarding sex and gender diverse issues for at least 5 years and give reassurance that sex and gender diverse people are being remembered in relation to human rights.”

“TransGender Victoria in particular thanks Foreign Affairs Minister Rudd and officials from Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for their initiative and equally for their highly professional and respectful process of consultation with transgender and intersex organisations

The announcement of the passport changes occurs within 24 hours of the first meeting of the Parliamentary Friends of LGBTI group (“friends group”) with LGBTI representatives from around Australia.

Over 40 MPs, including 3 ministers and MPs from remote electorates, where the effects of isolation for LGBTI people are felt even more deeply were in attendance. They heard the story of openly gay diver Matthew Mitcham’s personal journey in relation to sexual orientation. Peter Hyndal of A Gender Agenda spoke of the need for progress for transgender, intersex and bisexual Australians who have, at times felt left behind in reforms, while a representative of a major Australian business spoke of the positives of respecting diversity.

“The gathering, while largely informal, gave the chance for LGBTI people to give directly to MPs some insight on a range of issues including documentation, health and Medicare and even issues as basic as appropriate use of pronouns for trans people. The issue of “forced trans divorce” in relation to the lack of marriage equality also arose in the course of conversation, leaving one or two ardent supporters of the status quo at least with a new perspective.”

“The fact that the friends group was organised in a cross-partisan way is also a welcome move in aiming to put LGBTI lives above being a political football. We thank Warren Entsch, Graham Perrett and Sarah Hanson-Young and their staff for their efforts and also Corey Irlam of Australian Coalition for Equality for his strong input.”

“The first meeting builds a great foundation for further progress to a better future for LGBTI Australians, their friends, partners and families.”

For more information contact Sally Goldner on 0407 946 242. See also <http://oii australia.com/> for specific issues relating to people experiencing intersex and <http://www.genderrights.org.au/> for A Gender Agenda

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