



**Isla MacGregor Interview on Huon FM
Wednesday Grapevine with Iris Richter**

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Iris: Now on the phone we are being joined by Isla MacGregor. Isla, are you there?

Isla: Yes, I'm here, Iris.

Iris: Excellent. Lovely for you to join the show today.

Isla: Thank you. Lovely to be on your show today.

Iris: Great. I can hear you loud and clear. So that's wonderful. So for those who don't know Isla, because I think she's fairly well known around the country by this stage — Isla, what is your position within Women Speak Tasmania?

Isla: I have an advisory role with Women Speak Tasmania now, but I was the spokesperson for Women Speak Tasmania since 2018. We had other women who also spoke on behalf of Women Speak Tasmania. The new director is Dr Elizabeth Caballero, and she's done an exceptional job in the most recent campaign to have sex put back into anti-discrimination law in Tasmania. She's a brilliant advocate for women, articulating the basic human rights position for women's campaign to have sex once again recognised as a protected characteristic in Tasmanian anti-discrimination law, which it currently isn't.

Iris: Yeah. So for all the people out there — and there are actually many that have never heard about any of these issues because it's not really laid out in the media — I have found that a lot of people don't know anything about this. Can you just give us a rundown of what the issue is?

Isla: The issue is that federally in 2013, Julia Gillard basically passed a law for the Australian government that basically did not define sex — what a man and a woman is — and basically opened the door to gender identity being the primary protected characteristic.

Iris: So if I reword that quickly to make it simple for our listeners — the law basically changed in 2013 on a federal level. Before that, obviously a man was a man, a woman was a woman by biological facts. But now we are legally required to accept when someone who is born of one sex wants to live as someone representing the other sex — we have to accept their voluntary choice over biological facts, right?

Isla: Yes. And this effectively means that any man, at any time — and this can change from day to day — can don the apparel of a woman or not don the apparel of a woman and claim to be a woman and enter female-only spaces like the Aquatic Centre in Hobart, women's refuges, women's prisons. Internationally, hundreds of men have been deciding to change their gender identity to enable them to move from incarceration in men's prisons into women's prisons.

Iris: I can see that there would be a lot of benefits. I mean it's a classic theme that there's gang wars and stuff going on in male prisons. You can get beaten up, you can get sexually abused even by other men.

Isla: Yes. Well this highlights the fact that the prison system is not protecting men and women.

Iris: It highlights some bigger problems altogether, doesn't it?

Isla: Oh absolutely. But essentially we've now got a law that enables men to win in women's sports. Although the International Olympic Committee has now decided that they will not allow males who identify as females to participate.

Iris: We've been seeing this going on for many years, and like you just said, the Olympic Committee made a different statement. They have changed their mind. And so I hear many voices from Europe now. The UK Parliament has just decided they're not really going to go in that direction any further, and we're going back to biological reality. Do you think the tide is turning?

Isla: Oh look, I definitely think the tide is turning. The tide has turned to such a degree that in the coming federal election, one of the key issues is going to be amending the Sex Discrimination Act and putting the definition of man and woman in there so that in particular men will not have primary protections overriding the category of sex.

Iris: Everyone's meant to have rights and live in freedom and happiness as long as they don't intrude on other people's rights, right?

Isla: That's correct.

Iris: That's why the law got changed in the first place — to make sure that transgender people have their rights too. So now it's got to be backpedalled and fine-tuned so that everybody has the same rights and no matter who wants to live and express their gender identity, it does not intrude on other people's spaces. A very prominent feature here has been the women's only spaces that we as women would like to protect. And I think that's because of many biological facts, right? The female body has a lot of peculiarities that men can simply not understand or engage in because they have never felt it. But women benefit a lot from talking with other women about these topics.

Isla: Look, one of the most extraordinary aspects of the federal Sex Discrimination Act and the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Act is that, without many people really fully understanding, they are now discriminating against people because of sexual orientation. The Australian Human Rights Commission is pushing much harder towards developing a human rights bill, and Andrew Wilkie has just tabled a bill in federal parliament for a human rights act. But what we don't want to see with that bill is a situation where same-sex orientation is no longer a protected characteristic — which means lesbian groups throughout this country are no longer able to have lesbian-only events because they have to include men who claim to be lesbians.

Iris: I'm struggling with it logically. If I hold a party and invite certain people and don't invite others, that's my right, right?

Isla: That's right. It's called freedom of association. This has effectively decimated this fundamental covenant within the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Isla: With the lesbian issue, this is what we don't understand with Equality Tasmania and particularly with Rodney Croome — that people like Rodney Croome are now talking about same-gender attraction. So they're erasing the very basis of same-sex attraction as being embodied sex attraction. Not only same-sex attracted people but also heterosexual people are being discriminated against.

Iris: We're not trying to discriminate against anybody. We want everyone to have free rights of expression, to be happy, and to live their life to the fullest.

Isla: But when you have a conflict over rights, you must have community consultation. And there has been a conflict over the sex self-ID legislation since 2016 in Tasmania, and the whole of the Tasmanian community have been denied the opportunity by the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute and the Tasmanian government to have robust and open debate on all aspects of these laws, particularly the very well-known adverse implications of sex self-ID from other jurisdictions internationally.

Iris: You mentioned Rodney Croome. I actually met him by chance. It was pure chance. I went to this lobbying meeting wanting to learn something about lobbying and I had no idea what I walked into. And it was basically that was when Tasmania changed so that you could change the sex on your birth certificate anytime you please. And I happened to end up at this lobbying meeting where literally only six people were sitting together — someone from the Mercury, I forget his name, some politicians. They were really very encouraging to the transgender activists to push forward, and the Mercury made sure to say, "Yes, you can get an article published anytime, just come to me, and I'll be your mouthpiece in the media." And which I found appalling because I was actually there trying to learn some lobbying for another cause, and my cause has just been — they never wanted to hear it, they never wanted to write about it. It was a scientific cause but we won't get into that. But I was just shocked at how few people were in the room. It was sort of like a meeting behind closed doors.

Isla: The initial discussion paper on sex self-ID legislation was put out by the former Anti-Discrimination Commissioner in 2016. One of my colleagues in fact had a meeting with the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner and the policy officer, and this matter was actually written up in The Australian following this meeting where my colleague alleges that she was bullied and harassed and ridiculed at this meeting for an extended period of time. The Attorney-General at the time did an investigation into this matter and found that the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner had acted inappropriately in regards to stakeholder consultations. This was quite an adverse finding. The discussion paper was not widely circulated in Tasmania. We made submissions, various groups throughout the country made submissions to this. The Tasmanian Law Reform Institute held a public forum, we asked to be on that forum and we were rejected on

repeated occasions. When the Tasmanian Law Reform Institute put out its final report from the discussion paper, it excluded all the adverse implications of these laws, as I said, which are well known from other jurisdictions. And of course when the bill was debated in parliament, the bill designed to follow through with the federal referendum on same-sex marriage was hijacked by the Greens and Labor to make the amendments to the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act with self-ID. And this is where the Trojan horse began. So there was no forewarning for the Tasmanian community that Greens and Labor were actually going to do this.

Iris: Yes, and a lot of people are still not aware, to be honest.

Isla: The Sall Grover case has really peaked the interest of millions of Australians. It had international reach. Australia is the laughing stock of the human rights community because of these laws.

Iris: I have heard the most outrageous things. Politicians cannot say what a woman is? And that is a very sad state. Tell us more.

Isla: The Tickle versus Giggle case is the one that the Federal Court has just ruled on in support of Roxy Tickle, a trans-identified person. Sall Grover set up an app called the Giggle app, which was an app for women to connect. There was a screening process, an AI facial recognition screening process, and apparently thousands of men tried to get into this women's only group. Roxy was not suitable for the Giggle app and sued through the Australian Human Rights Commission. The outcome of that was that the Commission supported Roxy's case and found against Sall Grover. She appealed to the Federal Court. I think most people understood that the Federal Court was going to be the next stepping stone to the High Court, because the Federal Court can only rule on existing law.

Iris: And based on these existing law changes that came in a few years ago they affirmed that women in Australia cannot have a women-only space unless they let in self-identifying males.

Isla: I think they don't know about the history of how this came about, how this Trojan horse law which has clearly conflicted with the rights of women. But more than just the rights of girls and women — and I really want to reiterate this as a very important point — these self-ID laws have conflicted with the rights of parents, and men too.

Iris: I think everyone's affected by these laws. We need clearer definitions. If we need separate spaces for trans-identifying individuals, then maybe we need a third space.

Isla: We produced two extensive documents. One is called The Impact of Sex Self-ID Laws on Tasmanians, which we delivered to the Attorney-General 18 months ago, and earlier this year we produced a document with 29 testimonies of Tasmanians about the adverse impacts of these laws. These testimonies, which are not publicly available documents but the Attorney General and other politicians have a copy, provide the basis from which to justify the inclusion of sex to be put back into anti-discrimination law. Many people throughout our community are witnessing little boys in schools who think they are girls winning in sports, men participating in women's events in surf lifesaving clubs, hockey, soccer.

Iris: That is very concerning.

Isla: Men wearing women's swimming suits and wigs at the aquatic centre, walking up and down in front of the girls' classes and going into the women's change rooms.

Iris: There's obviously a lot of potential for abuse. Do you think with the law changes that have been made, this is like a process of fine-tuning to come to a good legal basis in the end that works for everybody?

Isla: As far as the trans extremists are concerned, they just want their rights to override everybody else's rights — girls and women, boys and men, parents, health professionals, educators. What we're dealing with is an ideology, a social engineering project to change the language. And we saw this on the ABC last week with Ryk Goddard interviewing Rodney Croome about a letter that Women Speak Tasmania wrote to all MPs inviting them to join Women's Pledge Australia and to put sex back into the Anti-Discrimination Act.

Iris: But now, one last topic I would like to touch on is, because you mentioned children. We're seeing this in schools now. If a child decides to change their name to the other sex or wants to be identified as the other gender, then the schools basically have to go along with it under policy. And this has created this whole atmosphere where no one is allowed to speak out. I talked with our local principal and he was rather concerned but didn't want to speak clearly out of fear. Everybody is sort of in fear of speaking out against these policies. I mean we've even got that here on community radio. I don't know if there's going to be a backlash for this. I just hope that some people hear this and are concerned too, because I think the tide really is turning. So in the gender conversion — giving children or teenagers hormones to stop their puberty or lead them down the chemical path of forever medication. And we have already got transitioners who've de-transitioned and speak out with words of warning to other people about how they got funnelled into this. And they really had some other psychological problems that needed to be addressed instead of mutilating their body. And I think there's lots of science recently coming in that the evidence is going to be so heavy it's going to be unavoidable, but we're just trying to reduce the carnage, right?

Isla: Women Speak Tasmania has been very effective in social media outreach in Tasmania but they've been effectively blackballed by the mainstream media. Recently David Killick in the Mercury wrote an article about the email that Women Speak Tasmania sent to the politicians and he will not mention the name Women Speak Tasmania.

Iris: And also there's the recent lawsuit, Tickle versus Giggle. I mean social media is on fire about this and you hear nothing in the media.

Isla: The Mercury in Tasmania — it is Sophie Elsworth, a News Corp journalist based in London, whose articles are being published here because journalists here are too afraid to cover the other point of view because of the backlash. Basically what we have with this ideology and trans extremism is a system of what is often referred to as political extortion. If women are allowed to put their case to the public through mainstream outlets, then the trans extremists say

they feel unsafe and harmed. We have ABC's Leon Compton saying that we cannot have this debate because it is harmful. And we have children who are being harmed by an ideology.

Iris: Yeah. I think that would be my main point — that the children need to be protected from influences like lobbying and so on. They're so easily influenced and changes at that age are going to be long lasting for the rest of their lives. And we've also had some other concerning changes in medical rights — that basically children from the age of 12 can do medical procedures without their parents even knowing. And I think that is super concerning.

Isla: And within the Tasmanian school system, Working It Out are actively giving affirmation planning to students. It is well documented on the Women Speak Tasmania webpage and this is absolutely unacceptable. It is unethical as far as we're concerned — this ideology is resulting in medical abuse.

Iris: And this is really where I would draw the line. Children need to be protected and adults need to be adults at some point. And we need to work it out — maybe we need a third space or maybe even a fourth. But that doesn't mean we have to give up the spaces we have already achieved through long legal battles and logical arguments, right?

Isla: That's right. I think third spaces for people who have a different notion about identity.

Iris: Exactly. We don't want anyone to feel unsafe. We want to accommodate everybody but nobody gets to overstep the line.

Isla: Coercion and control is highlighted by this legislation. Women are being coerced and controlled into accepting the erasure of sex as a protected characteristic and their boundaries and their safety.

Iris: So a new bill got introduced into Parliament just a few days ago, right?

Isla: Yes, that's correct. By a Nationals MP.

Iris: And so we hope that there will be some fine-tuning to distinguish between sex and gender.

Isla: Look, I'm not optimistic this bill will pass, but multiple parties — the Nationals, the Liberal Party, One Nation, the Libertarians — all support defining what a man and a woman is in the SDA and ending sex discrimination.

Iris: And we have noticed recently there is some political movement into the One Nation direction and so on because people are disenchanted with what the government has been putting through in policies like these.

Isla: I think there is a very slow but gradual shift from the left of politics in Australia. The levels of intimidation and harassment within the left have been severe, but people are finally deciding to speak up because we've now got puberty blockers banned in Queensland. We've got the Olympic Committee at least saying no to men in women's sports anymore. We've got more and

more nations coming on board banning blockers for children. We've got schools rejecting Family Planning Tasmania from teaching sex education. We've got parents, religious groups and other organisations that are keeping up the pressure on this issue.

Iris: I think the tide is definitely turning. People are seeing the consequences and like I said, I think there needs to be some fine-tuning. Do you think Sall Grover has to go to the High Court to have a girls-only social media page?

Isla: Sall Grover will most definitely go to the High Court. Regardless of what happens, ultimately the law needs to change. Personally — taking off my WST advisory hat — dissatisfaction with the government has been growing in Australia over many years, whether left or right. I think there needs to be far more robust debate about definitions in politics generally and of course far more respectful debate.

Iris: I hope Andrew Wilkie is successful with his human rights bill because we need strong protection for speech.

Isla: I fear for that bill though. Andrew Wilkie actually banned Women Speak Tasmania from using his facilities some five years ago, allegedly because Rodney Croome and Charlie Burton had told him that we were a hate group.

Iris: That's what I find fascinating in Tasmania. It is a very small state, but it's literally five people who can change the law here.

Isla: It was a cabal of people who were ideologically fixated on fictional notions about the fluidity of gender. At the same time, as we saw again in the interview with Ryk Goddard and Rodney Croome, they are now refusing to use the word biological sex and are calling it biological gender. How insane these people are that they actually want to manipulate the language to such a degree.

Iris: It would be funny if it didn't affect us, wouldn't it? You can try to outlaw reality, but it doesn't really add up in the long run and we're going to come back to reasonable ground, I'm sure.

Isla: Well, censorship has caused some of the world's most devastating disasters.

Iris: I'm German, I can attest to that.

Isla: Censorship is a real problem and what we've got with the national broadcasters, the ABC and SBS,

Iris: is not much different from Hitler's propaganda machine.

Isla: The ABC just removed itself from the AIDS Council of New South Wales Australian Workplace Equality Index because the ABC has been targeted repeatedly for bias and activist journalism in relation to refusing to interview women's groups like Women Speak Tasmania. The ABC in Hobart refused to interview Senator Claire Chandler.



Iris: We're running out of time. What would you suggest to our listeners who want to get more information?

Isla: We'd love people to have a look at our Facebook page and our website. There's lots of information there. We'd love to work with anybody in the community. We've got a big issue coming up — our legal matter against the Tasmanian government over Libraries Tasmania banning Women Speak Tasmania in their meeting rooms.

Iris: Please have a look at Women Speak Tasmania and come to your own conclusions. Think for yourself — that's my best advice to everybody. Isla, thank you very much. I wish you all the best with your endeavours in the future.

Isla: Thank you. We look forward to another interview.

Iris: And thank you very much for standing up for women's and children's rights.

Isla: Thank you.

[Interview ends]

Disclaimer:

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