

COMPLAINTS REGARDING ABC CHARACTERISATION OF WOMEN SPEAK TASMANIA AS “ANTI-TRANS”

COMPLAINT 1: Anthony Johnsen

My email to ABC Complaints:

I write to complain about the recent reporting of the women's rights group, Women Speak Tasmania, by the ABC as 'anti-trans': Specifically, this statement, taken from the article written by Josh Duggan: 'In a letter to anti-trans and feminist group Women Speak Tasmania...'

In the description of its purpose (see below), nowhere does Women Speak Tasmania refer to itself as being 'anti-trans'. The self-stated purpose of the organisation is to advocate for the rights of women and children.

Any advocacy group will have its opponents, but it is the job of those opponents — in this case, the trans community — to advocate for their specific needs or purported rights. It is not the job of the media, especially not the publicly-funded national broadcaster, to do that job for them, and by demonising Women Speak Tasmania as 'anti-trans', that is exactly what the ABC is doing. The ABC has, again, engaged in speculative and interpretive reporting rather than reporting the facts, as it is required to do. Therefore, the ABC does not comply with its own editorial standards.

By referring to Women Speak Tasmania as 'anti-trans', the ABC fails to meet the following standards:

- Independence, integrity and responsibility
- Accuracy
- Impartiality and diversity of perspectives
- Fair and honest dealing

The outcome I seek is a correction and clarification (as per point 3 of the ABC's editorial standards), and for the term 'anti-trans' to be removed or revised to 'pro-women's and children's rights group', or similar.

The article I am lodging the complaint about is not an opinion piece, and it falls within the ABC's 3-month window to qualify for consideration.

This is the stated purpose of Women Speak Tasmania, taken from the WST website:

Women Speak Tasmania is a network of women and their supporters based in Tasmania. We operate as a secular group.

We are not aligned with any political party or ideology.

We lobby the Government to protect women's and children's human rights and to repeal laws that undermine these rights.

We share research and information on a broad range of women's rights issues. These include – female-only spaces, services, groups and facilities; the sexualisation of girls and women; pornography/prostitution and the harms of the global sex trade; surrogacy as a violation of women's human rights; and ending male violence against girls and women.

We understand that sex-based oppression affects all women, and underlies all abuses of female rights.

We support the right of women to speak freely about the inequities and discrimination they experience. We aim to give a voice to girls and women in the pursuit of justice, peace and security. We support full autonomy and personal freedom for all women.

Regards,
Anthony Johnsen

COMPLAINT 2: Karen Dedenczuk

Dear Ombudsman,

I recently heard an ABC news story that, in my opinion, was very misleading.

I question whether, by not gathering the facts fully, the article could be regarded as lacking impartiality as it flirts with challenging its own declared ABC editorial policy.

As a journalist myself and having worked for the ABC in the past, I believe the editor has chosen to sensationalise a news item by using divisive language.

I refer to the news item by Josh Duggan on the alleged difference in view between the Tasmanian Attorney General Guy Barnett and our Premier Jeremy Rockliff on the matter of the Greens Conversion Prohibition Bill and the need for amendments.

However, many Tasmanians are calling for a broader parliamentary inquiry into this issue, including current medical guidelines for the care of young people who have gender identity disorder before any Bill is debated. Another main news story, in my opinion, which would inform ABC listeners.

However, the article only included quotes from Women Speak Tasmania, describing them as 'anti-trans'. Is this labeling really helpful and reflective of the group's aims to educate and inform the public of very important matters about women's and girls' human rights?

Why didn't ABC do its homework and get some good interviews from both sides of the story and present them in the article? This is what we, the listeners, want to hear about. Rather than, as I believe, sensationalising against one group, Women Speak Tasmania, the group which was the 'source' for the ABC story in the first place.

Unfortunately, the public interest is not being served by an ABC that chooses to embellish stories with subjective interpretations and fails to cover all sides of a debate from opposing community viewpoints.

I look forward to your reply,

Karen Dedenczuk

COMPLAINT 3: Anna McCormack

I am making a complaint, on behalf of IWD Meanjin Brisbane, about ABC Hobart News TV and online coverage by Josh Duggan, on 29 August 2026, reporting on a Media Release the ABC received from women's rights group Women Speak Tasmania. IWD Meanjin Brisbane, like Women Speak Tasmania, campaigns for the restoration of women's sex-based rights and children's protections.

I am aware ABC Hobart has received many complaints from viewers since 2018 for describing WST as "anti-trans". ABC Hobart, however, has refused to change the language it uses, preferring instead to portray to taxpayers a false and negative view of WST.

This breaches the ABC's own editorial principles.

ABC Hobart coverage on the WST MR concerns a letter received by WST from the Attorney General and WST's reply to the AG, calling on him to establish a Parliamentary Inquiry into Affirmative Care and Conversion Practices before any Conversion Practices Bill is debated.

This significant fact was omitted, clearly deliberately, from the ABC's coverage.

ABC Hobart focused its coverage on reusing footage of interviews with opponents of WST and NOT interviewing WST President Dr Elizabeth Caballero. ABC Hobart has repeatedly refused to interview Dr Caballero in response to many media releases concerning legislation that has impacted the rights of women and children in Tasmania.

In the Public Interest, the ABC should interview Dr Elizabeth Caballero to allow for fair and unbiased reporting on the ongoing political controversies concerning conversion practices. It also needs to apologise for its long history of biased reporting in the area of women's rights and children's safety. And it needs to stop describing women's rights groups, including WST, as 'anti-trans'.

COMPLAINT 4: Isla MacGregor

I am making a complaint about ABC Hobart News TV and online coverage by Josh Duggan, on 29 August 2026, reporting on a Media Release they received from the Women's Rights Advocacy group Women Speak Tasmania.

Although ABC Hobart has received numerous complaints from viewers since 2018 for describing WST as "anti-trans", ABC Hobart has persisted with using this term in order to demonise WST. In so doing, ABC Hobart continues to breach ABC's editorial standards by engaging in opinion-based slurs.

WST's stated goals on their website are "Returning and protecting the rights of women and children in Tasmania."

ABC Hobart coverage on the WST MR concerns a letter received by WST from the Attorney General and WST's reply to the AG, calling on the Attorney General to establish a 'Parliamentary Inquiry into Affirmative Care and Conversion Practices before any Conversion Practices Bill is debated' and based on 'extensive, evidence-based documentation and testimonies we have provided since January 2025.'

These facts were totally omitted from the ABC coverage.

ABC Hobart rather focused their coverage on dragging up the back story and reusing footage of interviews with opponents of WST and NOT interviewing WST President Dr Elizabeth Caballero.

ABC have repeatedly refused to interview Dr Caballero in response to numerous Media Releases concerning legislation that has impacted on the rights of women and children in Tasmania.

I request ABC make a public apology to Dr Elizabeth Caballero, and correct all online articles that slur WST with "anti-trans", and that, in the Public Interest, the ABC conduct an interview with Dr Elizabeth Caballero to allow fair reportage on the ongoing political controversies concerning conversion practices and the adverse impacts of sex self-ID laws.

MEDIA RELEASE — 29 August 2026

Deputy Premier agrees Greens Bill is “flawed” and “extreme”

Deputy Premier and Attorney-General Guy Barnett has responded to Women Speak Tasmania (WST) following our submission concerning the Tasmanian Greens' draft Conversion Practices Prohibition Bill 2026.

On 28 August, Mr Barnett wrote to WST in response to our concerns about the proposed legislation.

Women Speak Tasmania President Dr Elizabeth Caballero said:

“We most certainly agree with Deputy Premier Guy Barnett that the Greens’ Bill is both ‘fundamentally flawed’ and ‘extreme’.”

“WST has replied to the Deputy Premier urging his Government to establish a Parliamentary Inquiry into Affirmative Care and Conversion Practices before any Conversion Practices Bill is debated.”

“WST has urged the Government to properly consider the extensive, evidence-based documentation and testimonies we have provided since January 2025.”

“The Government has also received submissions from LGB Alliance Australia, the Affiliation of Australian Women’s Advocacy Alliances and many Tasmanian citizens who have independently raised concerns about the adverse impacts of existing anti-discrimination laws, which could be further eroded by the Greens’ extremist Bill.”

“WST understands that many of the submissions sent to the Greens, and subsequently provided to the Government, are deeply personal.”

“WST welcomes the Greens’ response to our call for transparency and their decision to publish submissions where approval has been provided by those who made them.”

“Many people who have made submissions would not want their evidence made public for a range of reasons, including concerns about privacy, trauma, fear of reprisal, vilification, harassment, employment consequences, economic repercussions, boycotts or adverse consequences within professional, social or community networks.”

“Importantly, the Greens’ Bill intends to criminalise certain speech and expressions of political, scientific, cultural or religious opinion, including opinions held within Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and other religious communities. The Bill also appears capable of criminalising certain conversations within families and in health and education settings.”

“Worse, the Bill establishes what amounts to a quasi-inquisition into speech, based on anonymous complaints made to the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner.”

“In August 2003, the Coalition for Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (CICSA) pushed for a Commission of Inquiry that would ultimately take until 15 March 2021 to be established and would not report until 31 August 2023 — approximately 20 years after the initial call for an inquiry.”

“WST does not want a repeat of the lack of stakeholder consultation that preceded the fast-tracking by the Greens of sex self-ID laws in 2019, the adverse consequences of which have often tragically impacted many Tasmanians, especially children.”

“We have urged the Government, as a matter of duty of care and urgency, to delay no further.”

“Only a Parliamentary Inquiry can do justice to such an important public health and human rights issue, which could potentially have long-term adverse impacts on children and the human rights of all citizens — not just LGBTQI people.”

ENDS

COMPLAINT 5: Matthew Holloway

I wish to lodge a formal complaint regarding the ABC TV News report broadcast at 7.05pm on Saturday 29 August 2026, concerning the letter Women Speak Tasmania received from Deputy Premier Guy Barnett about the Greens' proposed Conversion Prohibition Bill, described by him as "flawed and extreme", and WST's call for a Parliamentary Inquiry into Affirmative Care and Conversion Prohibition.

The report referred to Women Speak Tasmania as an "anti-trans" group. This is inaccurate and pejorative.

The organisation's own stated purpose is, "Returning and protecting the rights of women and children in Tasmania."

Under the ABC Code of Practice 'Impartiality and diversity of perspectives', the ABC is required to be impartial and not to misrepresent viewpoints through the use of loaded descriptors. So the use of the term "anti-trans" group is highly offensive and seems to be an attempt to invalidate the group, their perspectives and present them as a hate group.

Over many years, ABC Hobart has used this descriptor while failing to interview any representative of Women Speak Tasmania to allow them to state their position in their own words. This has been seen many times, in particular from ABC radio, which regularly presents a one-sided perspective on the contested issues of gender ideology and sex-based rights.

I spoke with friends who were equally appalled at denigration of Women Speak Tasmania, who have a strong following in Tasmania and support amongst the Tasmanian community for their fearless advocacy for women and children.

I request that:

a) The ABC acknowledges that "anti-trans" is not an accurate descriptor for Women Speak Tasmania.

b) Issue a correction/apology; and

c) ABC Hobart commits to using the accurate descriptor "women's and children's rights group" in future and fairly include Women Speak Tasmania in any future interviews relevant to these issues.

This would ensure ABC Hobart aligns with the ABC's impartiality standards, which require the following:

- Gather and present news and information with due impartiality.
- Present a diversity of perspectives.
- Clearly distinguish analysis and commentary from the ABC's own editorial position.
- Not misrepresent any perspective.
- Not unduly favour one perspective over another.

I look forward to your response and rectification of this very obvious breach of the ABC's own editorial standards.

COMPLAINT 6: Mary Perkins. Member, Women Speak Tasmania

As a long-standing member of Women Speak Tasmania, I wish to submit a complaint about the ABC TV news report at 7.05 pm on Saturday 29 August 2026, about the letter Women Speak Tasmania received from Deputy Premier Guy Barnett concerning "the flawed and extreme" Conversion Prohibition Bill proposed by the Greens and WST's call for a Parliamentary Inquiry into Affirmative Care and Conversion Prohibition.

WST is an independent, secular, politically non-aligned women-led group in Tasmania that is a major stakeholder on all matters concerning women's and children's human rights, especially as they pertain to sex self-ID laws.

Independence, Integrity and Responsibility

This ABC news report lacks independence from the influence of political, sectional, commercial and personal interests.

These interests are: Equality Tasmania, the Australian Workplace Equalities Index, ABC Queer.

The report failed in its responsibility to be fair and impartial, in particular by describing Women Speak Tasmania as an "anti-trans" group. By describing Women Speak Tasmania as "anti-trans", the ABC has expressed a subjective opinion about the group that is not consistent with ABC policies.

The descriptor for Women Speak Tasmania on their webpage is: Returning and protecting the rights of women and children in Tasmania.

The correct language for introducing Women Speak Tasmania is therefore: "Women's and Children's rights group Women Speak Tasmania".

Accuracy

The Women Speak Tasmania Media Release which was the basis for this news item was not reported accurately and failed to mention:

- WST's request to the Premier to establish a Parliamentary Inquiry into Affirmative Care and Conversion Prohibition — rather, the ABC only mentioned WST was calling for "an inquiry".
- WST had also put out a Media Release on 27 August calling on the Attorney General Guy Barnett to establish a Parliamentary Inquiry, "Push for Parliamentary inquiry into 29 Testimonies" — yet this was ignored by the ABC.

The ABC was fully aware of what sort of Inquiry WST has been calling for over the years and why.

The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) is currently developing new national clinical practice guidelines for the care of trans and gender-diverse people under 18 with gender dysphoria (Gender Guidelines). Queensland and the Northern Territory have both banned medical interventions for under 18s due to the lack of evidence-based support for such treatments.

WST mentioned that other national organisations, LGB Alliance and Australian Affiliation of Women's Advocacy Alliances, and numerous legal, health and education professionals, have also sent submissions to the Government raising concerns about the numerous adverse human rights impacts of the proposed Greens Bill.

That WST called on the Government to properly consider all documentation in Testimonies and Dossier provided to them since January 2025 and for full stakeholder consultations, so that there will not be a repeat of the fast-tracking of the 2019 sex self-ID laws followed by flawed and extreme conversion prohibition laws.

The omissions in the report failed to uphold objective standards of journalism.

Impartiality and Diversity of Perspectives

The ABC has consistently refused to report on WST's dozens of media statements since 2018. In January 2025, WST released their Dossier on the Impacts of Sex-Self ID laws and the ABC has not covered these evidence-based documents.

The report:

- Used the Women Speak Tasmania Media Release as an opportunity to yet again denigrate Women Speak Tasmania as "anti-trans", replay file footage interviews with political lobbyists and politicians who disagree with WST and the Attorney General Guy Barnett.
- The report contrived the 'story' in order to engage in wedge politics between the Attorney General Guy Barnett and Premier Jeremy Rockliff — or more correctly, the very publicly

known factional dispute within the Parliamentary Liberal Party on these contested issues.

Corrections and Clarifications

I request that the ABC undertake to interview Dr Elizabeth Caballero and allow Women Speak Tasmania, on future occasions when they respond to developments on these issues, to be fairly presented in reportage.

I request that corrections on the story are publicised and an apology is issued to Dr Elizabeth Caballero and Women Speak Tasmania and a commitment given so there is not a repeat of these breaches of ABC policies again.

Finally, I request that ABC management and Board consider establishing an Inquiry into Activist Journalism at ABC Hobart — AWEI, ABC Queer and the influence of political, sectional, commercial and personal interests at the ABC.

Mary Perkins

COMPLAINT 7: Jeff Briscoe

In a prominent ABC TV news story (repeated on ABC radio and its social media), Women Speak Tasmania was described inaccurately as an 'anti-trans and feminist group' in the opening remarks. More accurately, they should be described as a mainstream women's rights organisation. The group is supported by many Australians, including the well-known Drew Hutton, one of the co-founders with Bob Brown of the Australian Greens.

The basis of the story was a letter sent to Women Speak Tasmania (WST) from Guy Barnett MP, Attorney General, pointing out the obvious defects in a bill on anti-conversion practices presented to Parliament by the Greens.

The ABC contacted WST for a copy of the letter. However, the reporter did not seek comments from WST but rather used the letter to morph into a story that may show political differences in the Liberal Party Government. The reporter interviewed a strange group of individuals but ignored WST.

Dr Elizabeth Caballero, spokesperson for the WST, has been lobbying Parliament to have an inquiry into the discredited Affirmation Model for children with gender dysphoria, including use of puberty blockers and mutilation surgery, these practices now being discontinued in the UK and many countries of the world (and some Australian states) due to the lack of evidence of their benefits. The ABC has ignored the significance of that international medical evidence and experience. An important story that ABC should follow and report, and the WST would be well placed to provide comment.

To describe WST as an 'anti-trans' group is at best completely misleading, but it seems more likely a convenient way for the ABC to show people like Rodney Croome that they are allies with his ideological position and ignore mainstream opinions. I believe that the ABC bias and inaccurate reporting doesn't comply with ABC's editorial policies.

I am a proud member of WST and I know many of the other members, including medical doctors, ministers of religion, nurses and teachers. They were horrified, as I was, that our national broadcaster ABC continues to show poor journalist practices to push an agenda that is so far outside the views of mainstream Tasmanians (and Australians) and to misidentify the group when it is an important women's rights group in Tasmania.

I would hope in future stories that WST is correctly described by the ABC in this state and some redress is given by way of an apology publicly and directly to WST and its members.

COMPLAINT 8: Tamara Manning

Dear ABC Editorial Team,

In all recent media reports, Women Speak Tasmania (WST) has been described as an 'anti-trans and feminist group'. WST is a women's sex-based rights group. This needs to be rectified immediately. I would also suggest an internal assessment of the implicit bias that might be preventing accurate reporting.

Sincerely,

Intending Candidate for Kingborough Councillor

COMPLAINT 9: Drew Hutton

31 August 2026, 9:59 am AEST

I am writing to lay a complaint about an ABC TV news story of 29 August 2026 in which the respected Tasmanian women's rights organisation, Women Speak Tasmania, was described inaccurately as an 'anti-trans and feminist group'.

The basis of the story was a letter sent to Women Speak Tasmania (WST) from Guy Barnett MP, Attorney General, pointing out the obvious defects in a bill on anti-conversion practices presented to Parliament by the Greens.

The ABC contacted WST for a copy of the letter. However, the reporter did not seek comments from WST but rather used the letter to show political differences in the Liberal Party Government, ignoring altogether WST.

To describe WST as an 'anti-trans' group is completely misleading as, to my knowledge, WST has never argued that trans-identified people should be denied rights.

I believe that the bias and inaccurate reporting on the part of the ABC doesn't comply with its editorial policies. I am disgusted that the national broadcaster continues to show poor journalist practices to push an agenda that is not acceptable to most Australians and to misidentify the group, Women Speak Tasmania.

I would urge the ABC to issue a public apology to WST and, in future, refer to them correctly in your broadcasts.

COMPLAINT 10: Deeane Moorhead

I wish to complain about the bias shown against Women Speak Tasmania on the ABC TV news report at 7.05 pm on Saturday 29 August 2026, regarding the Conversion Prohibition Bill proposed by the Greens.

WST have been consistently referred to by the local ABC as an "anti-trans" group, including in this news report. I have not once seen or heard any representative from this organisation being directly interviewed by the ABC to clarify their position.

Does the ABC not support a democratic society where laws and policies can be openly debated, especially if they have a negative impact on the rights and safety of women and children?

It appears that although ABC has removed itself from ACON, the damage is well and truly done. The ABC is entrenched in a systemic culture of bias against reportage on any issues being raised by women's rights groups and will obviously require some deprogramming of ABC staff.

I suggest a prompt apology to WST and a commitment to report impartially on issues as raised by WST with the media in future.