



Australian Permanent Mission
to the United Nations
Geneva

1 May 2026

Special Procedures Branch
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10,
Switzerland

Dear Ms Reem Alsalem,

Response to the reported suspension and termination proceedings affecting Dr Jillian Spencer, a senior psychiatrist at the Queensland Children's Hospital (Queensland, Australia), reportedly in connection with her public expression of professional concerns regarding aspects of clinical approaches to children and adolescents experiencing gender-related distress

The Australian Government welcomes the communication from the Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences. As aspects of the matters raised in the communication are currently before the courts, it would not be appropriate to comment on those issues specifically.

Australia places significant importance on ensuring that the rights to freedom of expression and opinion are enjoyed by all people in Australia. These rights may be subject to limitations prescribed by law, where such limitations are proportionate and necessary to protect the rights or reputations of others, national security, public order, public health or morals. Australia implements its international human rights obligations, including the rights to freedom of expression and opinion, through legislation, policies and programs at both federal and state levels, as well as through the common law.

At the national level, the *Fair Work Act 2009* provides a range of workplace protections for employees covered by the national industrial relations system, including protections from adverse action taken for prohibited reasons, such as a person's sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or political opinion. These protections operate consistently with Australia's broader human rights commitments.

Under Australia's federal system, states and territories have primary responsibility for the management of public hospitals and health services in their respective jurisdictions. At the state and territory level, workplace protections are subject to the relevant jurisdiction's industrial relations arrangements. This may include informal and formal complaint mechanisms, an external statutory body pathway or through the court system.

Medical practitioners who wish to practice in Australia must be registered with the Medical Board of Australia. The medical practitioner referenced in your previous communication, Dr Jillian Spencer, is currently registered to practice in Australia and has no conditions or reprimands against her national registration. Medical practitioners employed by hospitals are also required to comply with applicable codes of conduct and employment obligations as set out in their contracts and relevant state or territory frameworks.

Australia takes seriously the rights and wellbeing of children, including the matters relating to gender affirming clinical care for children and adolescents. The provision of public gender services to young people in Australia is exclusively led by states and territories, which are responsible for the relevant services and employ the relevant clinicians.

The National Health and Medical Research Council is developing new national clinical practice guidelines for the care of trans and gender diverse people under 18 with gender dysphoria in Australia. The development of nationally consistent evidence-based guidelines will strengthen community confidence that children receive appropriate and safe care.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

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H.E. Ms Clare Monica Walsh
Permanent Representative and Ambassador
Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations
and to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva