



**Australian
Doctors
Federation**

*A strong profession
for a healthy Australia*

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Australian Doctors Federation Open Letter to Australia's Health Ministers and Shadow Health Ministers

13 February 2026

The Hon Mark Butler MP, Federal Minister for Health
Senator The Hon Anne Ruston, Federal Shadow Minister for Health
Ms Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA, ACT Health Minister
Mr Mark Parton MLA, ACT Shadow Health Minister
The Hon Ryan Park MP, NSW Health Minister
The Hon Sarah Mitchell MLC, NSW Shadow Health Minister
The Hon Steven Edgington MLA, NT Health Minister
Mr Dheran Young MLA, NT Shadow Health Minister
The Hon Timothy Nicholls MP, Qld Health Minister
The Hon Mark Bailey MP, Qld Shadow Health Minister
The Hon Chris Picton MP, SA Health Minister
The Hon Heidi Girolamo MLC, SA Shadow Health Minister
The Hon Bridget Archer MP, TAS Health Minister
The Hon Sarah Lovell MLC, TAS Shadow Health Minister
The Hon Mary-Anne Thomas MP, VIC Health Minister
Ms Georgie Crozier MP, VIC Shadow Health Minister
The Hon Meredith Hammat MLA, WA Health Minister
Ms Elizabeth Mettam MLA, WA Shadow Health Minister

Dear Health Ministers and Shadow Health Ministers,

On 6 February 2026, The Economist published an analysis titled "*Lawsuits over transgender medicine for minors could be huge.*"¹ The article reflects an accelerating international reckoning with the clinical and legal failures associated with gender transition interventions in children and adolescents.

¹ <https://www.economist.com/united-states/2026/02/06/lawsuits-over-transgender-medicine-for-minors-could-be-huge>



The article cited the 30 January decision by a New York jury to award USD \$2 million for pain and medical costs to Ms Fox Varian, a 22-year-old de-transitioned female. At age 16 she had been subjected to irreversible gender surgery while experiencing significant psychological distress. Her mental state deteriorated following gender surgery and at age 19 she sued her psychologist and surgeon for malpractice.

This case is emblematic of a broader global pattern: medicalized gender transition pathways for minors are not supported by robust evidence and carry clear, foreseeable and lifelong harm.

In early February 2026, the American Society of Plastic Surgeons released a comprehensive *Position Statement on Gender Surgery for Children and Adolescents*.² Its conclusion is unequivocal: **there is insufficient evidence to justify any favourable risk–benefit ratio for endocrine or surgical gender interventions in minors, and such procedures should not occur before the age of 19**. This position aligns with the American Medical Association and the Cass Review of paediatric gender services in the United Kingdom.³

International medical consensus is now converging on a single reality: these interventions are harmful, irreversible, and lack evidentiary justification.

Relevance to Australia: A substantial proportion of gender transition care for minors in Australia occurs within government operated or government funded services. This exposes governments to direct liability for practices that are increasingly recognised overseas as unsafe and professionally indefensible. Continuing these pathways exposes minors to preventable physical, psychological and reproductive harm; clinicians to medico legal jeopardy; and governments and taxpayers to the substantial financial burden of foreseeable litigation.

To continue is to knowingly sanction harm.

² <https://www.plasticsurgery.org/documents/health-policy/positions/2026-gender-surgery-children-adolescents.pdf>

³

https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20250310143933mp_/https://cass.independent-review.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/CassReview_Final.pdf

Recommendations: The Australian Doctors Federation calls for immediate statutory action to:

1. Prohibit irreversible medical or surgical gender transition interventions in minors.
2. Mandate evidence-based, ethically governed care pathways aligned with emerging international standards.
3. Ensure robust protection for clinicians from being pressured into delivering interventions unsupported by credible evidence.
4. Protect the Australian public from massive future liability arising from foreseeable litigation.

Australia must act now to prevent deepening clinical harm and an inevitable surge of litigation. Delay will only magnify the medical, legal and financial consequences.

We welcome your response, including whether you consent to publication of your response.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Aniello Iannuzzi
Chair Australian Doctors Federation

cc. AMA Presidents: Federal, State and Territory
MDA National
Avant Mutual
MiGA
MIPS
Tego