

Framework for Writing Your Submission on Gender Affirming Care in Queensland

Your lived experience and your voice matter. Sharing your story helps decision-makers understand the real impact of gender affirming care on young people, families, and communities. Policies and systems are often shaped by statistics and assumptions—but personal experiences show the human reality behind the numbers. When you speak up about what has helped you, what has harmed you, and what needs to change, you bring essential truth, insight, and courage to this review. Your voice is powerful, and it deserves to be heard.

The framework below is to support young people, families and community to tell their story in the final question of the survey *“Is there anything else you would like to raise about the current evidence base and ethical considerations for Stage 1 and Stage 2 hormone treatments?”* We have confirmed with the review panel that they will accept submissions from young people, families and community that only respond to this question.

Approximate total length: 900 words

Section 1 – Introduction (100–150 words)

Purpose: Introduce yourself and why you are writing.

Leading Questions:

- Who are you? (e.g., a young person, a parent, a health professional, a community member)
- What is your connection to gender affirming care? (personal experience, supporting someone, professional experience)
- Why does this issue matter to you and your family/community?
- What is the main message you want the panel to hear?

Tip: Keep it warm and authentic—your story is powerful.

Section 2 – Your Lived Experience (300–400 words)

Purpose: Describe your experiences with gender affirming care or the impact of not being able to access it.

Leading Questions:

If you are a young person:

- When did you first realise your gender identity?
- What feelings did you have at that time?
- Did you feel supported by family, friends, and professionals?
- What challenges did you face accessing care (e.g., wait times, cost, stigma)?

- How did receiving (or not receiving) gender affirming care affect your wellbeing (mental health, safety, school engagement, relationships)?
- What has improved in your life since accessing gender affirming care?

If you are a parent or carer:

- How did you come to understand your young person's needs?
- What steps did you take to seek professional advice or support?
- What barriers did you face as a family?
- How has gender affirming care impacted your child's mental health, confidence, and safety?
- How has this impacted your family as a whole?

If you are another person with lived experience:

- What have you observed about how care or lack of care affects young people?
- What positive or negative outcomes have you seen?

Tip: Use specific examples and feelings—this brings your submission to life.

Section 3 – Why Gender Affirming Care Matters (150–200 words)

Purpose: Explain why accessible, evidence-based gender affirming care is essential.

Leading Questions:

- What difference has this care made (or would have made) in your or your young person's life?
- How does gender affirming care contribute to mental health, wellbeing, and safety?
- What risks or harms arise when this care is delayed, denied, or restricted?
- What does affirming care mean to you in simple terms?

Tip: Think about how you would explain this to someone who doesn't understand the issue.

Section 4 – What Needs to Change (150–200 words)

Purpose: Suggest improvements, solutions, or principles for the system.

Leading Questions:

- What would you like the panel to understand about how to improve gender affirming care in Queensland?
- What barriers do you want to see removed? (e.g., long wait lists, lack of knowledgeable clinicians, cost)
- What would help young people feel safer and more supported?

- What role should families, communities, and professionals play?
- What does good care look like to you?

Tip: Be constructive—recommend actions or values that can guide policy.

Section 5 – Closing Statement (50–100 words)

Purpose: Finish with a clear, heartfelt message.

Leading Questions:

- If you could say one thing to the review panel, what would it be?
- How would better access to gender affirming care change lives?
- What is your hope for the future?

Tip: End with gratitude or a call to action.

Additional Tips for Writing

Be yourself - formal language isn't necessary.

Use “I” and “we” - personal voice is powerful.

Focus on impact - how does this issue affect real people?

Keep it respectful - even if you are angry or frustrated.

Proofread or ask someone you trust to read it over.

Save your submission – you will not get a copy of your submission emailed to you when you submit it please save a copy!

Example Outline (900 Words)

Below is a simple outline you can adapt to keep your submission balanced:

Introduction (approx. 120 words)

Who you are and why you are writing.

Lived Experience (approx. 350 words)

Your story in detail.

Why Care Matters (approx. 180 words)

Explain the benefits and importance.

What Needs to Change (approx. 180 words)

Share solutions and recommendations.

Closing Statement (approx. 70 words)

End with a strong message.

We hope this framework helps you to craft your story, because your story is powerful! If you need further support please reach out to ODYS at opendoors@opendoors.net.au