

Trans woman takes stand over passports

Contributed by Katrina Fox
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Trans woman Stefanie Imbruglia this week filed a complaint with the Human Rights & Equal Opportunities Commission (HREOC) about the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) over its passport legislation, which she says puts sex- and gender-diverse (SGD) people in danger when travelling.

Last year the Howard government amended the passport legislation to disallow pre-operative trans people from gaining a passport in their presenting gender.

Imbruglia, cousin of singer Natalie Imbruglia, was told she would have to travel overseas to Thailand for gender realignment surgery on a male passport despite presenting as female (SX #341).

“At Phuket airport, a burly male official looked at me, looked at the passport and yelled at the top of his voice, ‘male or female?’ Everyone turned round and I was deeply embarrassed and humiliated at being publicly outed,” Imbruglia told SX this week. “I was also very fearful of what could happen to me.”

In her complaint she alleges that DFAT was in contravention of Article 12 of the United Nations Charter on Human Rights in that it refused to issue her with a safe travel document so she could travel abroad freely.

She also presented a petition, containing over 1200 signatures, calling for all SGD people in Australia to be issued with passports that match their presenting gender.