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Georgina Beyer M.P. drafts New Zealand Transgender Law

The Human Rights (Gender Identity) Amendment Bill Offers Protection from Discrimination on the Grounds of Gender Identity.

From the [New Zealand Herald](#) 

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New Zealand M.P., Georgina Beyer.

Transsexual M.P. Georgina Beyer has drafted legislation she hopes will stop discrimination on the grounds of the gender a person identifies with. Her bill provides for 'gender identity' to be included as one of the prohibited grounds of discrimination in section 21 of the *Human Rights Act (New Zealand) 1993*. Under the Act, people are not allowed to discriminate on the basis of race or sex, for instance.

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"Transgendered people are not referred to in section 21 and thus appear to not be protected by the anti-discrimination provisions of the *Human Rights Act (New Zealand) 1993*," notes to Ms Beyer's bill said. "While most people identified with the gender with which they were born, some did not. People

whose identification with a gender different from that with which they are born, often known as transgendered people, are subjected to discrimination in employment, housing and in some matters covered by the law."

The Human Rights (Gender Identity) Amendment Bill would offer protection from discrimination on the grounds of gender identity. It has never been tested in court whether sex or sexual orientation provisions in the Human Rights Act covered transgendered people. It could be argued the 'sex' provision might do so but it was unlikely the 'sexual orientation' provision would because gender identity was not a sexual orientation.

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Explicit reference to transgender people, in terms of the words gender identity, is necessary to put the issue beyond doubt. Explicit reference to gender identity provides transgender people with the ability to point to a clear statement of law indicating that discrimination against them is prohibited, thereby increasing the chances of preventing such discrimination from ever taking place.

The bill describes gender identity as "the identification by a person with a gender that is different from the birth gender of that person or the gender assigned to that person at birth". This included intersex people – those who were of 'indeterminate' gender at birth but who were assigned a gender they later did not identify with.

The definition to be included in section 21 of the Act stated gender identity could include people who called themselves "transsexual, transvestite, transgender, cross-dresser or other description".

Members' bills are drawn from a ballot to be debated every second Wednesday when Parliament is sitting.

Georgina Beyer

From Wikipedia:  Born in 1957, Georgina Beyer was the world's first openly transsexual mayor, as well as the world's first openly transsexual Member of Parliament, and from November 1999 until February 2007 was an M.P. for the Labour Party in New Zealand.

Assigned male at birth, and given the first name George, Georgina attended two primary schools in her childhood before being sent to Wellesley College boarding school in her teens, where she tried to commit suicide amid feelings of rejection by her parents. She began acting while at that school and decided to pursue a career in that field, she left school at age sixteen. She lived in Australia for some time, and on her return to New Zealand began seeking work as an actor with increasing success and after moving to Carterton, in the Wairarapa, she worked as a radio host. She underwent sex reassignment surgery in 1984.

She also began to take an interest in local politics, first winning election to a local school board, and subsequently being elected Mayor of Carterton in 1995, serving in that role until 2000. This made her the world's first transsexual mayor. At the 1999 general election, Beyer was selected as the Labour Party's candidate for the Wairarapa electorate. She surprised the



political commentators to win the typically right-leaning electorate with a 3,000 vote majority and become the world's first transsexual M.P.. At the 2002 election, she re-contested Wairarapa for Labour and was easily re-elected with an increased majority almost 6,500 votes.

An excerpt from her speech follows: "Mr. Speaker, I can't help but mention the number of firsts that are in this Parliament. Our first Rastafarian [Nándor Tánzos] ... our first Polynesian woman ... and yes, I have to say it, I guess, I am the first transsexual in New Zealand to be standing in this House of Parliament. This is a first not only in New Zealand, ladies and gentlemen, but also in the world. This is an historic moment. We need to acknowledge that this country of ours leads the way in so many aspects. We have led the way for women getting the vote. We have led the way in the past, and I hope we will do so again in the future in social policy and certainly in human rights."



Change for the Better

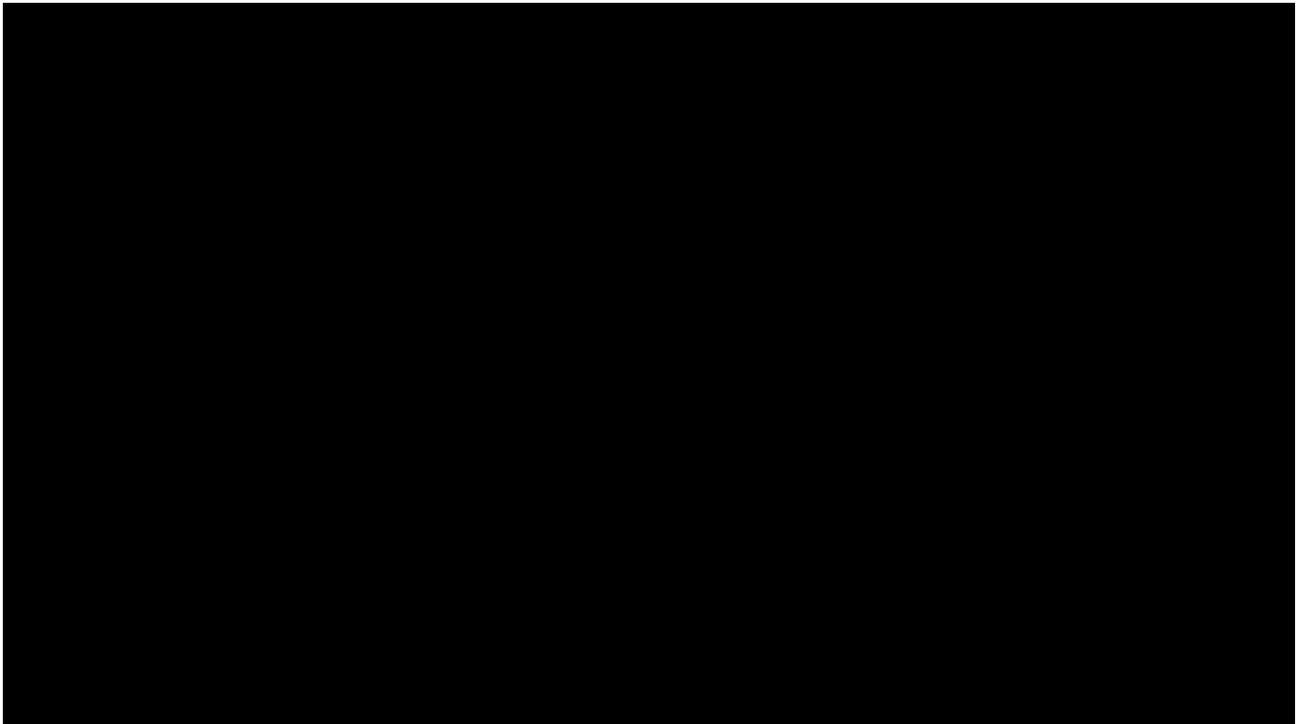
Author: Georgina Beyer and Cathy Casey

Publisher: Random House, New Zealand (2000)

I.S.B.N.-13 978 1869413717

From Fishpond Books:  George Bertrand was born in 1957, an ordinary boy who was to become an extraordinary woman. As he grew up, George realized he was a woman trapped inside a male body. Once he discovered that men could live as women, Georgina Beyer was born. This volume follows that difficult rebirth, Georgina's time working in the sex industry in the 1970s and '80s, a brutal rape in Sydney and her liberation by a sex change operation in 1984. Since then, Georgina

has achieved acclaim as an actress, including a nomination for a G.O.F.T.A. award for best actress in 1987, has tutored unemployed youth in drama, was elected to the Carterton District Council in 1993 and became the first transsexual mayor in the world in 1995. This account of Georgina's life gives an insight into New Zealand's intolerance of sexual difference. It is a story of a struggle for acceptance as a transsexual and of extraordinary determination to change life for the better.



This short film, courtesy of [Girl On A Bike Films](#)  and You Tube features performer/politician Georgina Beyer from the *Assume Nothing* Exhibition. This exhibition exploring alternative gender identity toured New Zealand Art Galleries and Museums for eighteen months and features the photographs of Rebecca Swan and the films of documentary director Kirsty MacDonald.

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The Gender Centre is committed to developing and providing services and activities, which enhance the ability of people with gender issues to make informed choices. We offer a wide range of services to people with gender issues, their partners, family members and friends in New South Wales. We are an accommodation service and also act as an education, support, training and referral resource centre to other organisations and service providers. The Gender Centre is committed to educating the public and service providers about the needs of people with gender issues. We specifically aim to provide a high quality service, which acknowledges human rights and ensures respect and confidentiality.

