

# Brainwave Trust Submission on The Definitions of Woman and Man Amendment Bill

June 2026

Brainwave Trust shares research-based information to support positive health and development for all pēpi, tamariki and taiohi.

## Key points:

- The bill is based on the terms “adult human biological female” and “adult human biological male” without any definition of what these mean. Science and indigenous knowledge have long been aware that the binary options of female and male do not adequately encompass the human range of gender experiences and identity.
- Although this bill will affect all people, the consequences for tamariki and taiohi will be much greater. All tamariki and rangatahi both need and deserve the support and acceptance of their whānau, and the wider community, to enable them to develop well and become contributing members of Aotearoa/NZ.
- Some groups of tamariki and rangatahi face additional challenges, and support for and acceptance of them is even more critical. This includes the 1% of NZ secondary school students identifying as transgender or non-binary.<sup>1</sup>
- Transgender and non-binary youth experience increased rates of depressive symptoms, self-harm, and suicide, compared to their cisgender (those whose identity matches their sex assigned at birth) peers. This is due to stress and mistreatment by others, including bullying.
- This Bill will further increase the marginalisation, discrimination and associated harm to children and young people; likely leading to tragic consequences for some.

## Brainwave Trust opposes this bill.

### For further information, and references please read:

Fenaughty, J., Suttie, M., Fleming, T., Ker, A., Lucassen, M. F., Greaves, L. M., & Clark, T. (2021). *A Youth 19 Brief: Transgender and diverse gender students*. Retrieved from <https://www.youth19.ac.nz/publications/transgender-and-diverse-students-brief>

O'Neill, K. (2022). Supporting the well-being of our rangatahi. *Brainwave Review*, 36. <https://brainwave.org.nz/article/supporting-the-well-being-of-our-rangatahi/>

---

<sup>1</sup> (Fenaughty et al., 2021)