[INCLUDE YOUR NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER HERE]

Adjunct Professor Stephen Cornelissen

Chief Executive

Australian Red Cross Lifeblood Service

Dr Jo Pink

Chief Medical Officer

Australian Red Cross Lifeblood Service

Both via: jpink@redcrossblood.org.au

Re: blood donation

Dear Professor Cornelissen and Dr Pink,

I urge the Red Cross Lifeblood Service to bring an end to the current Australian policy that says gay men, and bisexual men, transgender women and non-binary people who have sex with men, must be sexually abstinence for three months before blood giving blood.

Instead of this antiquated policy, Australia should adopt individual risk assessment for all potential donors regardless of their partner's gender.

This will mean more safe blood is available for those in need. According to estimates by advocacy group, Let Us Give, this could be as high as 25,500 litres per year. It will also mean the blood supply is less discriminatory.

While it is true that most new HIV infections are through male-to-male sex, it is also true that a) the overwhelming majority of gay men do not, and will never, have HIV because they are monogamous and/or practice safe sex, and b) the rates of new HIV infections in Australia are declining among gay men and increasing among heterosexual people.

Individual risk assessment is being adopted by many countries that are similar to Australia such as Britain, Canada, France and the Netherlands. This is because contemporary medical science shows this is the best policy. For more see this review by Dr Sharon Dane (<https://www.equal.org.au/recommendations_msm_blood_donor_deferrals>).

At the very least, please conduct a review into bringing the current discriminatory bloods bans to an end and adopting individual risk assessment.

Best wishes,

[INSERT YOUR NAME HERE]