[INCLUDE YOUR NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER HERE]

Hon Mark Butler MHR

Australian Health Minister

Mark.Butler.MP@aph.gov.au

cc: Hon Ged Kearney MHR

Assistant Minister for Health

Ged.Kearney.MP@aph.gov.au

Re: blood donation

Dear Mr Butler and Ms Kearney,

I urge you to do all you can 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 (include link).

Here are three actions you could take:

- bring the issue to the next meeting of the National Blood Authority and the Jurisdictional Blood Committee

- speak publicly about the need to adopt more modern blood policies

- fund the Red Cross Lifeblood Service to conduct a review into bringing the current discriminatory bloods bans to an end and adopting individual risk assessment

Best wishes,

 [YOUR NAME HERE]