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**Billboard Chris wins landmark case against Australian government censorship of X posts**

Canadian Chris Elston – better known online as ‘Billboard Chris’ – has won a landmark legal case against Australia’s eSafety Commissioner, who had ordered Elon Musk’s X platform to “take down”one of his posts critical of transgender activist Teddy Cook.

The Australian Review Tribunal found that Mr Elston’s post was not “cyberabuse” under the Online Safety Act and that an ordinary reasonable person would not conclude that Mr Elston intended the post to cause serious harm.

A father-of-two, ‘Billboard Chris’ goes viral on social media for wearing a sandwich board reading “*children cannot consent to puberty blockers*” and engaging passersby in conversations about transgender ideology.

But it was his post on X in February, 2024, sharing a Daily Mail article titled “Kinky secrets of a UN trans expert REVEALED”, that attracted the ire of Australia’s internet censors.

The article, and accompanying post, criticised the suitability of Sydney transgender activist Teddy Cook to be appointed to a World Health Organisation’s “panel of experts”, which advises on global transgender policy.

Cook complained about the post to Australia’s eSafety Commissioner, who requested that X remove the content. The social media platform initially refused, but geo-blocked the content in Australia when the Commission issued a formal order.

Billboard Chris, with the support of ADF International and the Human Rights Law Alliance appealed the violation of his right to share his convictions publicly in an online forum at a five-day hearing in the early April of 2025.

X also challenged the e-Safety Commissioner’s decision to block Elston’s post.

In its decision of July 1, the Australian Review Tribunal found that Mr Elston’s post did not meet the test for “cyber-abuse of an Australian Adult” under the Online Safety Act and that the e-Safety Commissioner should not have issued a take down notice.

This is an important decision for the protection of free speech in Australia against increasing government censorship.

The Tribunal reaffirmed that the Online Safety Act is not intended “to control or regulate debate on controversial issues, nor to manage or set minimum standards of courtesy.” The decision is a significant reprimand to the eSafety Commissioner for use of social media censorship powers in the Online Safety Act to silence political speech.

Led by Melbourne senior barrister Stephen Moloney, Elston argued that his post is an important political discussion of the important public issue of whether transgender activists should be setting clinical guidelines for medical treatments.

Elston argued that free speech should be afforded high levels of protection and that it is protected by the rights of freedom of political communication under the Australian Constitution.

HRLA is thankful to Melbourne barristers Stephen Moloney, Owen Wolahan and Nina Vallins for their advocacy in the running of the case and ADF International for its support.

Billboard Chris quote:

“*No child has ever been born in the wrong body.*

*“As a father, I have grave concerns about the impact of harmful gender ideology on our children’s wellbeing.*

*“This is a serious issue with real world implications for families across the globe and we need to be able to discuss it.*

*“Ultimately, the message I wanted to communicate with this post is that children struggling with gender dysphoria deserve better than ‘guidelines’ written by activists who only want to push them in one direction.”*

HRLA Principal Lawyer John Steenhof quote:

*“Chris’s case is an important win for freedom of speech in Australia.*

*“It will seriously curtail the overreach of the government into discussion in the public square about important issues such as the protection of children from medical harm and the upholding of women’s sex based rights.*

*“It is part of a global fight against government censorship.*

*“In Western societies, there should be vigorous public debate about contentious ideas and political movements, particularly the dangers to children and to women’s rights presented by transgender ideology.*

*“This decision will safeguard every Australian’s right to speak truth in the public square even on issues that are in opposition to the political diktats of those in power.”*

*“We’re proud to stand with Billboard Chris in a case that sets a landmark precedent in Australia for free speech”*

**CONTACT**

Chris Elston and John Steenhof (principal lawyer) are available to appear and speak to media outlets.

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