

Media Release

The Hon Jill Hennessy MP
Attorney-General



Wednesday, 25 November 2020

BANNING CRUEL CONVERSION PRACTICES FOR GOOD

Cruel and bigoted practices that seek to change or suppress a person's sexual orientation or gender identity will soon be stamped out across Victoria, thanks to new laws introduced to Parliament today.

The *Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Bill 2020* will put in place new measures to protect Victorians from the serious damage and trauma caused by conversion practices.

The Bill denounces such practices as deceptive and harmful, reinforces that the ideology behind these practices is flawed and wrong.

The laws empower the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) to consider and respond to reports of change or suppression practices from any person, as well as launch investigations where there is evidence of serious or systemic change or suppression practices.

Responses to reports will be survivor led and trauma informed, focussing on community education and facilitation. This will ensure that any response meets the needs and wishes of the affected person.

The Bill also puts in place strong criminal sanctions for people who subject others to change or suppression practices that cause injury or serious injury – with up to ten years' jail for the latter.

Those who try to get around the new laws by subjecting people to change or suppression practices which cause injury outside of Victoria could face a jail term of up to two years, while advertising these practices will incur a criminal sanction and a maximum fine of close to \$10,000.

A civil response scheme will also be established within VEOHRC to support survivors and address the harm they have endured.

The Government pledged to make these landmark reforms to put an end to change or suppression practices in response to a report from the Health Complaints Commissioner.

We consulted closely with survivors, LGBTIQ+ support and advocacy organisations, and faith organisations to develop the new laws – ensuring they are effective in ending these harmful practices once and for all.

Quote attributable to Attorney-General Jill Hennessy

"We're sending a clear message: no one is 'broken' because of their sexuality or gender identity. These views won't be tolerated in Victoria, and neither will these abhorrent practices."

Quote attributable to Minister for Equality Martin Foley

"Every person deserves to live their life safely and with pride. Putting a stop to degrading and dehumanising change or suppression practices will allow LGBTIQ+ Victorians to do just that."

Quote attributable to Victorian Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities Ro Allen

"LGBTIQ+ Victorians are to be celebrated and valued – just as we are. We're not broken and we don't need fixing. The importance of this reform for our LGBTIQ+ communities cannot be overstated – it will save lives."

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