

Media Release

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LAWS PASSED TO STAMP OUT CRUEL CONVERSION PRACTICES

Bigoted practices that seek to change or suppress a person's sexual orientation or gender identity will be banned in Victoria for good – thanks to new laws passed by Parliament today.

The *Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2020* denounces change and suppression practices as deceptive and harmful – and puts in place a range of measures to protect Victorians and hold perpetrators to account.

Led by the experiences of survivors and trauma-informed responses, the laws empower the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) to accept and act on reports of change or suppression practices from any person.

VEOHRC will ensure that any response meets the needs and wishes of the affected person and will also be able to launch investigations where there is evidence of serious or systemic change or suppression practices.

Under the new laws, people who subject others to change or suppression practices that cause injury or serious injury will face criminal charges – with tough penalties of up to 10 years jail.

Advertising change or suppression practices will also incur a criminal sanction and a maximum fine of close to \$10,000, while taking a person from Victoria to subject them to a change or suppression practice which causes injury attracts a maximum penalty of two years jail.

The Andrews Labor Government consulted extensively with survivors, LGBTIQ+ organisations and religious organisations to develop the laws – making sure they are effective in protecting people from the harm and trauma caused by change and suppression practices.

Quotes attributable to Attorney-General Jaclyn Symes

"These are landmark reforms that reflect the values of Victorians as an inclusive and fair community. Bigoted and harmful change or suppression practices are not tolerated here – we're stamping them out for good."

"We've consulted widely to set out the kinds of actions that constitute change or suppression practices – anyone doing the wrong thing should and will be captured by these laws."

Quote attributable to Minister for Equality Martin Foley

"With these new laws, we're another step closer to a more equal Victoria – where every person is able to live safely and with pride."

Quote attributable to Victorian Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities Ro Allen

"These reforms are so welcomed. Now our work continues with survivors and faith leaders to educate people about the harms of this practice as we develop the civil system."