

Submission to the Victorian Law Reform Commission

Focused Review of How the Change or Suppression Practices Ban Is Working

Please note that submissions must be relevant. We only review the matters detailed in the terms of reference. We recommend using the consultation paper and these questions to help guide your submission.

We will publish public submissions on our website, unless they are offensive, defamatory, or outside the scope of the review.

We will not publish the names of individuals who make a submission. We will also redact any information which may indirectly identify individuals.

The consultation paper relates to change or suppression practices, which can cause ongoing trauma and long-term health issues. If you need counselling or help you can get support by contacting the organisations on our [support page](#) or page 3 of the consultation paper.

	
(optional)	
	

Please provide your comments on the questions below. You may answer all or only some of the questions as relevant to you.

- 1. Has the Act reduced or stopped change or suppression practices? Describe any impact you think the Act has had on the occurrence or the nature of change or suppression practices.**

I am not aware of how this act has changed much. The organised practises that were described in the original consultations were very rare and not a product that could be accessed easily. I don't think there has been a change.

- 2. To what extent do you think the community is aware of and understands:**
- a. the Act and how it works**
 - b. what change or suppression practices are**
 - c. the harm caused by change or suppression practices.**

a. I have very little understanding of how the act functions. I have read briefings about how it supposed to work and apply to my situation but find it confusing, lacking in clarity or understanding of faith based practices.

b. the terminology of change or suppression practises is confusing, contradictory and unclear. I am very unsure what is considered allowed bible teaching, prayer and conversation and then when this might be considered forcing someone to change or suppress.

c. I think the confusion around this law actually may cause more harm. It does not focus on personal choice in seeking help but actually makes it harder for people to talk about their sexual decisions, thoughts and locate someone who can offer support in a way that they choose. There is a lot of fear now when a personal conversation moves into topics around sexuality. What if I say the wrong thing, am I breaking the law?

- 3. Could the Act's operation and effectiveness be improved? If so, how?**

There is so much of this law that is vague, contradictory and lacks a reflection of common faith practices. It doesn't reflect common understanding of terms such as prayer, bible study, sexual questioning or reflect developmental stages of growth and physical development.

4. How clear is the Act's definition of what is and what is not a change or suppression practice? If further clarity is needed, what forms of clarification would be most helpful?

It is unclear. I cannot tell you exactly what either of those terms mean. It is especially unclear when it comes to the participant's personal choice to seek support. What is voluntarily, choice or force? Does the definitions in this act remove someone personal choice and options for gaining a better understanding of themselves. Some individuals may choose support to live a celebrant lifestyle, with no sexual partners. Does this stop them from talking about their thoughts on this area?

5. How clear is the exclusion for health service providers? If further clarity is needed, how could this best be achieved?

What is the definition of a health provider? Does it cover spiritual health?

6. Is greater clarity needed about how people of faith can hold and express their beliefs to support clear understanding and compliance with the Act? What forms of clarification would be most helpful?

Yes. I know many Christians who don't know how to respond to this act. There is a lot of fear about how our faith can now be seen from people who don't understand the bible. There is also a fear of being targeted using this law when we read the bible and pray. I am also aware of confusion in non-religious setting because people are now uncertain about if they can discuss ideas from the bible, whether they profess faith in God or not.

7. How effective are VEOHRC's awareness and education materials on change or suppression practices? What improvements, if any, could help strengthen community understanding and compliance?

I still found these education materials confusing. The focus on any act should be the respect of people to make their own choice and being respected for that choice. I didn't find the education material encouraging of my beliefs or give me clarity around how my faith can be in action, nor how it respects any individual's personal choice. To improve things, there needs to be definitions that are understood in the broad community by all people groups.

8. Are there any barriers to:

- a. reporting change or suppression practices to VEOHRC
- b. VEOHRC facilitating outcomes of reports
- c. VEOHRC conducting investigations.

If so, please describe what those barriers are.

9. Are there changes that could help support VEOHRC to carry out its functions or improve the effectiveness of the civil response scheme? If so, please describe any changes.

There is too much vagueness of terminology.

10. Are there barriers to reporting, investigating and prosecuting criminal change or suppression offences? If so, what are they?

11. Are there other aspects of the criminal offences in the Act that limit their effective operation? If so, what changes or supports could improve their operation?

12. Do existing avenues for redress adequately meet the needs of victim-survivors of change or suppression practices? Are there gaps, harms or barriers that require an additional or separate redress mechanism?

13. Should a civil cause of action be introduced under the Act? What distinct purpose would it serve compared to existing pathways?

I think a civil cause of action will weaken the Act. This will open more opportunity for the act to be used emotively, rather than based on laws and facts. It will only increase the confusion because it will now be more focused on what an individual thinks, rather than what a law states.



Email your submission to csp@lawreform.vic.gov.au or send it by post to:

Victorian Law Reform Commission

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Submissions close on 24 March 2026

For more information on how we treat submissions see our [Submissions Policy](#).

Find further information on this review and the consultation paper on the [project page](#).