

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 believe that the current Act has reduced / stopped 'change or suppression' practices. I certainly haven't heard of any 'criminal' proceedings arising from the Act, but I'm unsure about any 'civil' proceedings have resulted from the Act. I still have a concern with the broad definitions around 'conversion therapies' and whether prayer or counselling should be included. Surely, if a member of the LGBTQ community - young, vulnerable, confused, seeking - choose themselves to engage counselling or prayer, why is that automatically deemed a banned 'conversion practice'?

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 and c. the harm caused by change or suppression practices

a) Certainly professionals across many fields would be well aware of the Act and its ramifications, as would parents, church staff, schools and others. Parents would be acutely aware, and often their best interests of their own child would be pitted against the parameters of the Act.

b) 'Conversion practices' are defined in the Act, though broadly, and perhaps misleading in some instances, and perhaps even poorly thought out in some others.

c) I'm sure any 'harm' has been well documented. Again, I question the absolute need to ban 'counselling' as a defined 'conversion practice', surely this is counter-productive to the safety and care of our vulnerable community members. And the strictly 'affirmative' model cannot be the exclusive approach needed in many instances, surely. And the relatively newly released Cass Review has shed fresh light on health issues and outcomes for young LGBTQ members.

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

Yes.

Change the definition of 'conversion practices'. Let it be more in line with actions which are coercive, violent, and unethical by anyone's standards, and less to do with the notion of counselling or prayer.

Restore parental rights - parents are the key carers and determiners of what's best for their own children.

Restore freedom of choice - some families or children may choose something other than the 'affirmative' model, deemed best for them.

Remove 'prayer' and 'counselling' from the scope of the Act.

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?

I believe the Act makes it reasonably clear what is a 'change or suppression practice', but as new findings and results come to light from various studies, formal inquiries and medical practice, then perhaps the terms and definitions of the Act need to reflect these. And certainly the removal of anything to do with religious practice, clinical counselling and parents best wishes, needs to be removed from the Act.

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?

Clarity is needed. Re-definition is needed.
Freedom of religion and the expression thereof is vital in a Western, pluralistic democracy. The Government should have a 'hands-off' approach to anyone's right to practice their own religion. Parental rights are paramount too, to the same society.
Clarity and re-definition are needed expressly for people of faith, because it seems as though the religious community might well be bearing the brunt of this Act.
Under the current provisions of this Act, even the long-held importance of prayer - central to the Christian faith - is forbidden. I'm sure many in the Christian faith are confused by this and the Act could have much greater clarity around this.

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

There are no barriers to reporting, investigating, or prosecuting criminal 'conversion practices'. As previously said, I don't believe there have been any 'criminal' infringements brought to light, so then, no actual instances of 'conversion practice' have been committed.
But the Act by its very scope, has brought fear and self-censure to church communities, schools, and families.
So, the Act certainly does not need to be expanded or heightened. It is succeeding where it was established to do so. Any expansion of the current Act would simply only target and penalize those already affected in this way. Certainly the religious community is feeling the full weight of the Act.

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?

No, none, I cannot think of any.

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?

Yes, on the whole.
There are already many avenues to pursue financial compensation for 'victims'. No more are necessary.
Any existing criteria, including the requirement to demonstrate proof of injury, should be retained and not expanded. This will go towards ensuring fairness and prevent misuse.
There should be no 'retrospective redress'. No person should be held liable for an action they undertook before this Act was enacted.

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

We do not need any other means by which someone's grievance is heard and redressed.

