



[Redacted text]

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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.

The Act has not reduced or stopped change or suppression practices; in fact, I believe it has likely exacerbated them. Its measures reflect authoritarian tendencies reminiscent of laws in Nazi Germany, and the approach risks normalizing restrictive practices that could encourage other governments to implement even stricter control over their populations. Far from limiting harmful practices, the Act may inadvertently increase their frequency and intensity, both domestically and internationally.

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. Awareness of the Act and how it functions appears high among its architects. They seem fully conscious of the consequences and the harm their policies can inflict.
- b. Understanding of change or suppression practices is similarly comprehensive among those implementing the Act. The measures are deliberate, targeting both overt and systemic forms of control, demonstrating an intentional approach rather than accidental oversight.
- c. Awareness of the harm caused by change or suppression practices is clearly evident. Those responsible appear fully cognizant of the societal, individual, and international impacts, yet continue to advance these measures, seemingly driven by a desire to consolidate power rather than mitigate harm.

Since December last year, the pattern of increasingly authoritarian and control-focused policies reflects not just ideological alignment with extreme systems but also a troubling willingness to inflict harm to maintain and expand authority. This Act seems to mark only the beginning of a broader trajectory of control, with intentional and escalating consequences.

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

The Act's operation and effectiveness cannot be improved in a way that would mitigate its harmful impact, because its very design and implementation are fundamentally problematic. Rather than attempting to "improve" it, the Act should not be allowed to continue in any form. Its measures are inherently authoritarian, deliberately harmful, and have already demonstrated a trajectory of escalating control and suppression. Continuing or modifying the Act would only legitimize these practices and risk further damage both domestically and internationally.

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?

The Act's definition of what constitutes a change or suppression practice is not sufficiently clear. The language is vague and open to interpretation, which allows for broad or arbitrary application and

increases the risk of harmful practices being implemented under its guise. Further clarity alone is unlikely to resolve the fundamental problem, as the Act appears deliberately structured to enable control rather than prevent harm. The most helpful “clarification,” therefore, would not be additional definitions or guidelines—it would be the complete repeal of the Act to prevent further intentional harm and authoritarian overreach.

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

The exclusion for health service providers is not clearly defined and leaves significant room for ambiguity. This vagueness creates the potential for misuse or overreach, undermining the intended protections for both providers and patients. While further clarification could reduce some uncertainty, it would not address the fundamental issue: the Act itself is inherently harmful and authoritarian. The most effective “clarification” would be the removal of the Act in its entirety, as no adjustment to exclusions can fully mitigate the deliberate harm it enables.

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?

Greater clarity for people of faith is unlikely to address the fundamental problems with the Act. While guidance on how beliefs may be expressed could reduce confusion in theory, the Act itself is structured in a way that enables control and suppression, meaning that any clarification would at best be superficial. The most effective approach would not be incremental guidance but the complete repeal of the Act, as no amount of clarification can prevent its inherently harmful and authoritarian effects on freedom of belief and expression.

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?

The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission’s awareness and education materials provide some information on change or suppression practices, but they are not sufficient to fully inform the community about the scale or deliberate nature of harm enabled by the Act. While the materials may raise general awareness, they cannot counteract the intentional and authoritarian measures embedded in the legislation. The most effective improvement would not be incremental educational updates, but ensuring the Act itself is repealed, as only removing the source of harm can truly protect community understanding, rights, and compliance.

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.

Any changes intended to help the VEOHRC carry out its functions or improve the civil response scheme would be limited in impact as long as the Act remains in place. The legislation itself is fundamentally harmful and enables authoritarian and suppressive practices, which undermines the ability of the VEOHRC to protect rights or promote compliance effectively. True support for the Commission’s functions would require the complete repeal of the Act, as no procedural adjustments or additional resources can fully mitigate the deliberate harm and control embedded within it.

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

Yes, there are significant barriers to reporting, investigating, and prosecuting criminal change or suppression offences under the Act. Its vague definitions and broad scope create uncertainty about what constitutes an offence, which not only discourages legitimate reporting but may also encourage false or malicious claims. Furthermore, the Act fails to account for the ways systemic racial discrimination, ableism, and misunderstandings of individuals on the autism spectrum or other neurodivergent conditions can influence both the reporting and interpretation of alleged offences. Combined with limited resources, ambiguous legal thresholds, and potential institutional biases, these factors make effective investigation and prosecution highly unlikely. The most effective way to address these barriers would be the full repeal of the Act, as no procedural adjustments can fully mitigate the deliberate harm, systemic bias, and dysfunction it perpetuates.

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?

Yes, several aspects of the criminal offences in the Act limit their effective operation. The definitions of offences are vague and overly broad, which creates uncertainty for both the public and law enforcement. This ambiguity can lead to inconsistent application, selective enforcement, and even the encouragement of false reporting. Additionally, the Act does not adequately consider the impact of systemic racial discrimination, ableism, or misunderstandings of neurodivergent individuals, which further undermines its fairness and effectiveness. The most effective way to improve the operation of these provisions would not be incremental adjustments or additional supports, but the full repeal of the Act, as no modifications can fully counteract the deliberate harm and structural problems it creates.

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?

Existing avenues for redress do not adequately meet the needs of victim-survivors of change or suppression practices. The vague and broad nature of the Act, combined with systemic barriers such as racial discrimination, ableism, and misunderstandings of neurodivergent individuals, limits access to justice and creates opportunities for harm or misapplication. These avenues can also unintentionally encourage false reporting and fail to address the deliberate, authoritarian intent of the legislation. While additional or separate redress mechanisms might offer some relief, they cannot fully mitigate the fundamental flaws and harms embedded in the Act. The most effective solution would be the complete repeal of the legislation to prevent ongoing and systemic harm to victim-survivors.

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

No, a civil cause of action should not be introduced under the Act. The legislation itself is fundamentally harmful and enables deliberate authoritarian and suppressive practices, meaning that adding another pathway would not address the root problem. Any civil cause of action risks legitimizing the Act and could be misused, particularly given the Act's vague definitions, systemic biases, and potential for misunderstanding neurodivergent individuals or marginalized groups. Rather than creating additional mechanisms within a flawed framework, the distinct and necessary purpose would be better served by the complete repeal of the Act, which would remove the source of harm and protect the rights of all individuals.

