

**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 the act has had a negative effect on a number of people seeking to change their way of life. It is not something government should be involved in. Whether a person wishes to change is something that is up to the individual. It is absolutely an abuse to of power and a fundamental breach of all that makes us individuals to determine what help a person may receive in changing their way of life.

**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**

Most individuals have no awareness of the act, what so called change suppression practices are, or the supposed harm caused by change or suppression practices.

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

Repeal 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?**

The Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021 represents an unprecedented intrusion of the state into the content of religious doctrine, undermining the fundamental right to freedom of religion. This provision is particularly concerning as it defaults to an affirmation-only approach, effectively outlawing doctrinal religious preaching on questions of sexuality and gender, leaving pastors and faith leaders uncertain whether their teaching constitutes a prohibited practice. Remove the Act.

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

The Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021 unfairly undermines the integrity of clinicians by presuming a conflict between their faith perspective and professional judgment, thereby creating a discriminatory and unjustified restriction on the exercise of their profession. Further if the Act is repealed there will not be any need for further clarity.

**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?**

The Act fails to account for individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual and who, due to their religious convictions, may seek support to live in accordance with their faith while also experiencing same-sex attraction. A pastor or faith-based counsellor who provides such support in response to a voluntary request may be at risk of liability under the Act, despite the individual having freely sought out their guidance, and this uncertainty leaves faith leaders uncertain about the legitimacy of offering

even ordinary pastoral care. Further since Government is lacking both in faith and morality, how would it know how to clarify how people of faith can hold and express their beliefs to support clear understanding and compliance with the Act. How would the Government know if their view of faith and beliefs is what people of faith actually believe or that their ideas of what is acceptable violate their fundamental rights to faith and belief.

**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 consultation materials released by the Victorian Law Reform Commission have a profoundly chilling effect on Victorians, as they characterise a broad range of conduct as potentially prohibited under the Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021. This overly broad characterisation is particularly concerning, as it encompasses ordinary conversations, pastoral care, and clinical practice that are not only lawful but also essential to the well-being of individuals. By framing these activities as potential conversion practices, the materials deter Victorians from engaging in lawful speech and activity, thereby undermining the very freedoms the Act purports to protect. The Commission's materials are not a neutral description of the law, but rather an advocacy document that seeks to maximise the reach of the Act beyond what the legislation requires. This approach has the potential to stifle open and honest discussions, ultimately harming the individuals the Act aims to protect. In addition, the VEOHRC is totally ineffective. One would have to be aware that VEOHRC even exists, most have never heard of VEOHRC. People would have to also be aware that VEOHRC "education" materials exist, and/or that they are even worthwhile reading, and not completely biased.

**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.**

The corruption within the Victorian Government and public service.

**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.**

One of the problems for VEOHRC is "who would trust the Victorian Govt?" It would help build trust if the Victorian Govt resigned on mass, new elections were held, and Victorian Govt officials and politicians prosecuted for corruption. It would build a great deal of trust in Govt if the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was embedded in the constitution - not the ICCPR or other watered down versions, but the original in such a way that they are enforceable by individuals and cannot be removed by any political party, politician, or subsequent act of Government without a referendum with a two thirds majority.

The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission's development of materials under the Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021 should be informed by a comprehensive consideration of the evidence, including up-to-date systematic reviews of gender-affirming care, current best-evidence guidance, and the findings of the Cass Review, to ensure that the guidance provided does not uncritically adopt affirmation of gender identity as the only medically appropriate option, which risks causing serious harm to vulnerable young people, and therefore should not be permitted to stand as authoritative guidance under the Act. As it is now the VEOHRC guidance amounts to propaganda and leads to significant distrust in Govt.

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

Lack of trust in the Victorian Govt.

**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?**

The Act should be repealed.

