

The following submission to this review has been received

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.

This law is not needed. It prevents genuine inquiry and support by professional practitioners. Young people are impressionable and need the space and support for genuine exploration of all aspects of their life. Affirmation as is currently required by professionals is currently conversion therapy - the reverse of what is helpful for young people.

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

The community has no idea at all that professionals are at risk of losing their license to practice if they undertake exploratory questioning and attempt to support a young person with a wide range of life issues and not just an affirming focus on gender.

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

The consultation advice makes the following statement "A change or suppression practice is conduct that seeks to change or hide an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity. These practices are often referred to as 'conversion practices' and can cause life-long harm and trauma."

Firstly this is a conflation between sexual identity and gender identity. There is no evidence that gender identity is fact. This is a new cultural concept based on feelings and stereotypes and has no basis in fact or alongside sexual orientation.

Secondly - Gender identity being a new concept since 2015 means there can not ever have had conversion practices around gender identity. So the statement that 'conversion practices' cause lifelong harm with regards to gender identity can only be false - no law should be based on a falsehood. In addition, in the decade 2011 to 2021 suicide rates in 18-24 year olds in Australia increased 40% (AIHW data) indicating the focus on gender affirmation and gender identity in recent years could be contributing to increases in suicides - it is certainly not resulting in decreases. To make a statement that gender identity 'conversion practices' causes lifelong harms must be tested at the outset - it is not a correct statement and therefore cannot be used as the basis for a law.

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?

Refer to response to item 3

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

No clarity is needed at all - the law should not be passed at all. This law makes an assumption that

no one can question a person's gender choice, That makes the law coercive for those that do not believe gender identity can or should be changed. If a person believes that no person should be supported to cosplay into the opposite sex but instead should be supported to be their own person/identity within their gender however they choose to present, then this law is coercive and is in itself a conversion practice.

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?

This issue has does not have anything to do with religion or faith - nothing in any faith literature discusses gender identity.

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 materials do not include any evidence to the basis "A change or suppression practice is conduct that seeks to change or hide an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity. These practices are often referred to as 'conversion practices' and can cause life-long harm and trauma."

The only materials provided refer to conversion practices and harms relating to past practices with regards to sexual orientation, not gender identity. There is no need for this law to include gender identity.

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

The law change is not needed

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 law change is not needed

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?

There is no evidence of victims/survivors - the question is superfluous

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

Civil action should be available to the young people harmed by medical practices associated with so called "gender affirming care" approach adopted in Australia over the past 10 years (alongside an increased suicide rate in 18-24 year olds). Australia should be following the truly compassionate approach being taken in forward thinking societies such as Scandinavian countries where gender affirming approaches for young people are being greatly scaled back. This law is out of date and out of touch - it is not needed