

The following submission to this review has been received

**Organisation Name**

Aleph Melbourne

**Do you want your submission to be kept confidential?**

No

**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.**

From the perspective of the Jewish community change or suppression practices may still occur in a range of subtle and not-so-subtle ways in the sections of the Jewish community that are completely intolerant of homosexuality. The most impenetrable sections of the Jewish community are the various ultra-Orthodox communities, and in these communities it is impossible to have frank and open conversations about human sexuality, let alone discuss homosexuality in a positive light, given these communities consider homosexuality completely forbidden and non-negotiable at the outset.

**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 progressive and more open-minded sections of the Jewish community would understand and embrace the Act fully. The further towards the ultra-Orthodox end of the Jewish community the less they are aware of the Act and understand and/or accept the harms caused by change or suppression practices.

Recently, a number of prominent religious leaders in the global Jewish community issued a statement strongly condemning change or suppression practices. The statement is available at <https://rabbisagainstconversiontherapy.com/en>. Awareness of this statement has rippled through the Victorian Jewish community.

In 2023 Aleph Melbourne met with Rabbi [REDACTED] a signatory of the statement, and note that whilst he is a practicing ultra-Orthodox Jew, Rabbi [REDACTED] actively advocates for the rights, inclusion and dignity of LGBTIQ+ people. He actively helps rabbis around the world, including in Australia, find positive support for same-sex attracted and gender-diverse community members in highly conservative religious communities, whilst recognising that efforts to change their sexuality or gender identity would cause them grave harm.

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

Education of the Act needs to permeate through the whole of the Jewish community. Peak bodies are unable to reach the more resistant sections of our community, and special effort is needed to break down the barriers in the ultra-Orthodox community, via male and female leadership channels separately.

**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?**

No comment.

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

No comment.

**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?**

No comment.

**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?**

No comment.

**If so, please describe what those barriers are.**

No comment.

**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.**

No comment.

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

No comment.

**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 comment.

**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?**

No comment.

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

No comment.

