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Public Submission-
Inquiry 2026 into The Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021

Terms of reference

whether changes are required to increase the effectiveness of the criminal offences, including by considering why no criminal offences have been prosecuted, whether there are barriers to reporting offences to police, whether the framing of offences is appropriate, and in the case of offences that are reported to police, whether alternative offences are being prosecuted or whether there are barriers to prosecution,

Opening Statement:

It may well be that the Act is working as it was intended to make illegal, coercion into changing one's sexuality. I as a Christian Pastor celebrate that.

As I often say, if God doesn't stop people from doing what they want, why should we? Particularly when it comes to personal choices of someone's sexuality or religion.

Although I'm aware this governments policy is to do so, I will make it clear my objection to children being given options regarding their sexuality as they are under the care of their parents or guardians except where criminal behaviour is involved.

Moving on:

As a young adult Christian I witnessed some attempts at these kind of conversion therapy practices on people which definitely appeared coercive, so in principal I wasn't necessarily against the substance of these laws to protect vulnerable people. I think after some initial pushback from my Christian colleagues it was broadly understood in the overwhelming number of cases these practices were either coercive or unsuccessful (despite good intentions in many cases) or ultimately harmful. So, despite my concerns about religious freedoms, I was interested to wait and see what outcomes might result from these laws.

The fact that no one has been prosecuted is a fantastic result! I think Victorians have concluded that these practices are by nature coercive and on balance the laws seem to be working as intended.



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Having had my submission into cults received by the Victorian government inquiry in 2025, I see the connection to these conversion therapy laws in a clearer light.

This brings me to the substance of this submission as outlined from a summary below.

Note: The Act prohibits these practices even if a person consents to them, as the law recognizes the coercive, harmful nature of these practices.

I always ere on the side of giving people the right to do what they want to do, even if they are making a trade-off to give up some of their rights (or submitting to being coerced) for the sake of inclusion.

If that's what they want to do, that's what they want to do. Laws can still protect people from criminal intent or criminal acts against them even though they choose to submit to some form of coercion. As pointed out in my previous submission to the cults inquiry all human interactions require submission to coercion of some kind.

My Point: Freedom to choose.

Do you Forsee a day when people are coerced into or have felt coerced into a LGBTQI lifestyle and thus are bound by these laws when they may well realize it's not for them? That they may desire to extract themselves from that lifestyle but need help to do so? Is there any provision within the current laws for this side of the coin?

As I do not encourage the labelling of people as "*broken*" or "*needing healing*" for the choices they make regarding their sexual orientation or their religion either for that matter, neither do I think that criminalizing them for seeking to change should be made lawful either. If a person decides that they are indeed "*broken and need healing*" or that they have come to the conclusion their previous orientation was not ultimately right for them, then shouldn't that be their right?

Is there provision for people to seek help if they decide they feel coerced into staying in the LGBTQI community if they have changed their mind?

Summary:

Although the legislation doesn't say a person can't change their mind as long as they don't submit themselves to conversion therapy, it is implied that to change one's mind (or even consider it) about being LGBTQI is somehow wrong in itself.



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Human nature says that people feel coerced or submit to coercion in virtually every group setting or relationship. As I continue to Labor the point, many are happy to make that trade-off for the enjoyment of inclusion.

But again, the freedom to change one's mind must not be hindered or even implied if personal freedoms are deemed paramount. I'm concluding that the Act was introduced to enhance and protect personal freedoms. So, If people are affirmed to discover one direction for their lives, then can't they be affirmed to change that position?

If young people in particular (but not exclusively) are being encouraged to explore their sexuality as a matter of government policy or cultural shifts, it must be that there is a form of coercion in that. It is impossible that it could not be the case as a matter of human nature.

So, it only stands to reason that at some point, some will change their minds away from that and want to return to more traditional views of sexuality. What protection do they have to seek help? How are their rights protected? What kind of affirming help is available to them?

Conclusion:

Considering this I applaud the introduction of the Act to enhance personal freedoms on one side of the ledger but perhaps not so the other side. Whilst it appears the current Act is working well to deter what is universally agreed upon as harmful practices, it may well go too far in prohibiting the right of individuals to change their minds and seek a new direction. Thank you for your consideration of this matter. I am open to pursuing this discussion further.