

Submission to the Victorian Law Reform Commission

Focused Review of How the Change or Suppression Practices Ban Is Working

Please note that submissions must be relevant. We only review the matters detailed in the terms of reference. We recommend using the consultation paper and these questions to help guide your submission.

We will publish public submissions on our website, unless they are offensive, defamatory, or outside the scope of the review.

We will not publish the names of individuals who make a submission. We will also redact any information which may indirectly identify individuals.

The consultation paper relates to change or suppression practices, which can cause ongoing trauma and long-term health issues. If you need counselling or help you can get support by contacting the organisations on our [support page](#) or page 3 of the consultation paper.



Please provide your comments on the questions below. You may answer all or only some of the questions as relevant to you.

- 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 stripped away the parent's right to expose a child to the ethics that the family finds central to their view of the world. The state has overstepped its legitimacy in this situation.

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**
- c. the harm caused by change or suppression practices.**

a. Most members of the society have no idea that this act exists, let alone its intrusive powers.

b. The public understanding of what "suppression practices" might mean is minimal. They only come to learn of its powers if they encounter the question within the confines of the extended family.

c. The harm caused by the suppression practices can only be measured by the view of the agency and attitude of the entity attempting to restrict the parent's right to raise his child according to his principles.

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

As far as i am concerned the best way to improve this act would be to eliminate it from the statute books. It is an effort to impose "progressive" views upon our society. Families are coerced into "accepting" the attitudes being promoted by the state.

- 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?**

I am not in a position to make a judgement of this.

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

Again, this is an area on which I feel I do not have enough understanding to make a judgement.

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?

For the most part, the act violates the parents' fundamental right to raise their children within a particular moral framework. What we see here is an intrusion of the state into a core value of the family. The contradictions cannot be resolved, as far as I can see.

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?

This is again an area on which I feel I cannot comment with any real understanding of the legal minutiae of the issue.

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.

As stated, I find the concept of coercive intrusion into a family's ethical system of beliefs lies outside the purview of the state, I would only be satisfied with the extinguishment of the bill as a whole.

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.

As above.

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

I find it simply preposterous that criminal charges can be brought to bear on well-meaning people interested in the long-term welfare of the child. The state does not hold that position and never should.

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?

I am unfamiliar with the details, so i cannot 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.

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

It would invite the grand standing of the most ambivalent cases with the aim of increasing confusion in the public mind. It is a short step from there to the claiming of legitimacy for the cause.

