

The Tasmanian Law Reform Institute,
Faculty of Law,
University of Tasmania,
Private Bag 89,
Hobart TAS 7001.

26 January 2021

Re: Response to Community Consultation on SOGI conversion practices (Issues paper 31)

Dear Sir/Madam,

We wish to submit the following response to the above issues paper.

In overall terms we object to the creation of this issues paper on the basis that on page xi of the document it was initiated in response to a limited group of so called peak stakeholder bodies. This statement appears as below:

“This Inquiry was initiated by a community reference from peak Tasmanian Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Asexual Plus (LGBTQA+) stakeholder bodies and representatives in 2016. This Reference Group includes:

- *Working It Out*
- *Rainbow Communities Tasmania*
- *Martine Delaney*
- *Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG Tasmania)*
- *Tasmanian Council on AIDS, Hepatitis and Related Diseases (TasCAHRD)*
- *Tas Pride*
- *Bi Tasmania and*
- *Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights Group.”*

The problem with this approach, which we believe taints the entire paper, is that the above list of stakeholder bodies is very limited, and many other parties could claim to be peak stakeholder bodies in this matter. Given that the paper goes on to single out religious groups and beliefs for alleged or potential practices then we would submit that each and every religious body in Tasmania should be regarded as a “peak stakeholder body” in this matter.

By way of numeric and demographic data we note that the website <https://churchesoftasmania.com> lists 863 (and growing) religious organisations in Tasmania of either current or historic operation. Let the TLRI write to each of these current bodies, ask them to be included as a peak stakeholder body, request their views on this matter and invite them into meaningful discussions.

This is particularly important if this discussion is to have any claim to transparency and representation.

We also note with concern that on page v the paper states that “LGBTQA+ status is not a disorder or dysfunction.” Yet it provides no reason or reference point for making such a statement. Is this a belief, a community opinion or historic fact? If it is statement of fact then what standards are available to verify it? On the other hand, if there are other standards and writings that would state otherwise, then why has the TLRI failed to cite them, and seek informed and trained opinion on them? This leads one to seriously question the motives and methods behind the formation of this study.

To highlight the seriousness of this matter we note that the outworking of this paper has the potential to impact on the rights of parents and religious bodies to inform and guide individuals within their jurisdiction. This in turn will call in question a range of International, National and State constitutional and human rights conventions.

We trust you will take these views into consideration.

Yours sincerely,

