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Conversion Practices: Public Consultation

The Tasmania Law Reform Institute (TLRI) is seeking public feedback on possible reforms to Tasmanian law to respond to sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) conversion practices.

The TLRI today released its Issues Paper, 'Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Conversion Practices' for public consultation.

The paper and online survey form can be accessed at www.utas.edu.au/law-reform/conversion-practices

Submissions responding to this consultation may be sent to TLRI. All submissions must be received by **7 January 2021**.

SOGI conversion practices are attempts to change or suppress a person's sexual orientation or gender identity; to 'convert' someone who is homosexual or transgender into a heterosexual or cisgendered person (a person whose gender identity corresponds with the sex they were assigned at birth). SOGI conversion practices are often based on pseudoscientific ideas that non-conforming sexual orientation or gender identity is the result of dysfunction, trauma or brokenness, and can be 'healed', suppressed or changed.

Medical and psychological practitioners have long accepted that LGBTQA+ status is not a physical or psychological disorder in any sense. Clinical studies indicate that SOGI conversion practices therefore do not work and also cause trauma and long-term harm to people exposed to them. A range of peak national and international bodies have therefore declared such practices to be unscientific, degrading, dangerous and contrary to human rights and have called for them to be banned.

National studies and survivor reports indicate that SOGI conversion practices are occurring across Australia. As such, Queensland and the ACT recently passed laws to ban SOGI conversion practices, and Victoria is preparing to ban them.

The TLRI Issues Paper is the basis for a public discussion in Tasmania about whether and how Tasmanian law should also be reformed in response to contemporary evidence about the harm caused by SOGI conversion practices.

- This Inquiry was initiated by a community reference from peak Tasmanian LGBTQA+ stakeholder bodies and representatives. Funding for the Inquiry was provided by the University of Tasmania in 2019.
- The Issues Paper was prepared by TLRI researchers with assistance from an advisory group made up of experts from law, medical and health sciences and representatives of the SOGI conversion practice survivor and faith communities.

The TLRI is now calling for feedback from the community, government and stakeholders on the Issues Paper and possible reforms to Tasmanian law.

The Issues Paper and online survey form can be found at www.utas.edu.au/law-reform/conversion-practices

Responses must be received by 7 January 2021.

Contacts for media:

For more information or queries contact Law.Reform@utas.edu.au on 6226 2069.

TLRI Research Fellow and **paper co-author** Dr Martin Clark is available for interview on ph: 0403 936 623, email: Martin.Clark@utas.edu.au

Members of the project's Expert Group are also available for comment:

- Mr Chris Csabs, **SOGI conversion practice survivor** (for contact details contact Law.Reform@utas.edu.au on 6226 2069)
- The Revd Jeff Savage, **Christian Minister and Accredited Youth Worker** (for contact details contact Law.Reform@utas.edu.au on 6226 2069).
- Dr Jessica Roydhouse, **Health research expert**, Select Foundation Senior Research Fellow in Health Services Research, Menzies Institute for Medical Research, ph: (03) 6226 4794, email: Jessica.Roydhouse@utas.edu.au
- Prof Margaret Otlowski, **Expert in health, law and ethics**, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Culture, Wellbeing and Sustainability) and Professor of Law, email: Margaret.Otlowski@utas.edu.au

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