

“CONVERSION THERAPY” BANS ARE A SMOKESCREEN

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The introduction of Bills banning “Conversion Therapy” by both the Queensland and ACT Governments today will prohibit parents, counsellors, doctors or psychiatrists from offering any alternatives for gender confused children.

Although sounding reasonable on face-value, they are in fact ideologically based laws which will only allow health professionals and carers one course of action: to agree with the child and support their choices as they explore questions about their sexuality and gender.

Along with many other organisations, The Australian Association of Christian Schools (AACCS) has consistently called for these bans to be wisely reviewed before they are introduced.

“Politicians have been unduly influenced by examples of coercive conversion practices of the past, which we unequivocally condemn, however there is no compelling evidence that such practices are in widespread use today,” said Vanessa Cheng, Executive Officer of AACCS.

“For children presenting with gender dysphoria, a ‘watchful waiting’ approach remains a respected and cautious pastoral care method for schools and parents to follow so that they have a safe and caring environment for concerns about their identity to resolve.”

In our joint submission with Christian Schools Australia (CSA), Adventist Schools Australia (ASA) and Associated Christian Schools (ACS) we predicted that the impact on pastoral care would be significant: “a bill whereby the government mandates a school counsellor’s response to a particular student, regardless of their clinical opinion and under the guise of banning vaguely defined ‘conversion therapy’ - is dangerous and unjustified.”

It is not only faith-based organisations which are concerned about these bans. The Australian Medical Association of Queensland outlined in their submission their concerns around the “potential for the legislation to limit therapeutic approaches supporting children and adolescents who present with gender dysphoria.”

Vanessa said, “despite our submissions, both the Queensland and ACT Governments have not taken into account the significant concerns about the scope these bans will have on the ability of parents and staff to care for our students.”

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