

## CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT CANBERRA FAMILIES AND TEACHERS LAUNCHED

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The Christian Schools Alliance today launched its campaign to inform Canberra voters about the threat to their beliefs and values in the lead up to the ACT election.

The Alliance is responding to the poorly drafted *Sexuality and Gender Identity Conversion Practices Act 2020* passed by Labor and the Greens on the last sitting day before the election.

“More than 5,000 flyers have been printed for distribution through Christian and Islamic schools and their communities” said Mark Spencer, Director of Public Policy for Christian Schools Australia.

“We were disappointed that the ACT Government and the Greens passed flawed legislation without any genuine attempt to fix the Bill and address community objections,” said Vanessa Cheng from the Australian Association of Christian Schools.

“Instead of a Bill addressing coercive or abusive practices which everyone would support we have legislation that could put mums and dads across Canberra in jail.” Mr Spencer said.

Mrs Cheng said “The rejection of sensible amendments that would have clearly protected parents, teachers and people of faith across the ACT reinforces our concerns about the legislation.”

“Mums and dads across Canberra need to be asking candidates whether they will support parents, families, teachers and people of faith in the next Assembly,” she said.

The Alliance indicated that it was planning a range of other activities over the election period.

ENDS

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## **‘CONVERSION PRACTICES’ Q&A**

### **Q: Who are you?**

**A:** The Christian Schools Alliance brings together a number of Christian school associations in Canberra. [ValueEd Voices](#) is an online platform for the Alliance.

### **Q: Why is the Christian Schools Alliance campaigning on this issue?**

**A:** The *Sexuality and Gender Identity Conversion Practices Act 2020* was rushed through by the ACT Government before the election without proper consultation. The Government is adding stress to parents and teachers by creating a new law which our legal advice indicates could result in well-meaning parents and teachers finding themselves defending a criminal charge for teaching their child a faith-based worldview on topics such as sexuality and gender.

### **Q: Aren’t ‘Gay Conversion Practices’ bad?**

**A:** Let’s be clear here. Nobody supports harmful ‘gay conversion practices’. Any medical or even religious practices that forcefully attempt to change someone’s sexuality is terrible and have no place in Australia.

These laws go way beyond banning ‘gay conversion practices’ and potentially prohibits mere “counselling, pastoral care programs, and the provision of resources” according to the Chief Minister, if it can be argued to be trying to change someone’s expressed gender identity. It is a poorly thought through law and its implication are not even fully understood by the Government. It likely won’t be understood until someone goes to jail!

### **Q: How could this law affect parents and teachers?**

**A:** The law effectively says that parents and teachers can only provide one type of advice to young people who have questions about their sexuality or gender, with only so called “affirming” treatments being allowed. We know that adolescence can be confusing times for young people, and we believe parents, teachers and chaplains are best placed to guide children through these sensitive and personal questions about their identity.

### **Q: What do others say about this law?**

**A:** The ACT Law Society criticised the Government for this poorly drafted law, the AMA-ACT also expressed concerns, as did a range of faith leaders. We want children to feel safe and protected. We want clear legislation that can be understood and works in the real world.