



30 July 2026

Submission on the Draft Conversion Practices Bill 2026

As a service specifically highlighting and challenging the role of rigid and limited gender ideas in the perpetuation of violence, Engender Equality welcomes the draft Conversion Practices Prohibition Bill 2026.

Engender Equality is a specialist family violence service, that has long recognised the ways in which gender stereotypes and other gendered drivers of violence against women intersect and overlap with cis and hetero normative ideas that enable ongoing violence towards LGBTIQ+ folk. A commitment to LGBTIQ+ rights and inclusion has been evidenced in much of our work including in the development of LGBTIQ+ practice guidelines and in our current Dads for Gender Diversity project focussing on enhancing the capacity of fathers to affirm the gender identity of their trans children.

Just as gender inequity drives men's violence against women, conversion practices arise in a society in which LGBTIQ+ folk are considered unequal to cisgender and heterosexual people. In such a context, forms of violence towards LGBTIQ+ folk such as conversion practices are too easily minimised and condoned.

A core of Engender Equality's work is responding to the harm experienced by victim survivors of violence. Victor Madrigal-Borloz, the then United Nations independent expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, described the harm resulting from conversion practices as "profound psychological and physical damage" (Madrigal-Borloz, 2020). Preventing this damage and creating safe and empowering spaces for LGBTIQ+ folk requires not only behavioural change at the individual and relationship level, but a clear and strong systemic and legislative framework that protects the rights and promotes the societal belonging of the LGBTIQ+ community. The draft Conversion Practices Prohibition Bill 2026 is an essential part of that protection for LGBTIQ+ folk in Tasmania.

While the enactment of a bill prohibiting conversion practices in Tasmania is necessary to reduce this harm, it is essential that such legislation is the strongest possible. In doing so, it is important to draw from the best practice experience and knowledge of other jurisdictions. Engender Equality is aware of the review currently being undertaken by the Victorian Law Reform Commission into Victoria's Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021, and the recommendations made to this review by Victoria's Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC). Some key VEOHRC recommendations are relevant to Tasmania's draft bill, and we have considered these in raising the following issues:

Organisations should have a positive duty to prevent conversion practices from occurring

One of the VEOHRC recommendations made in the beforementioned review calls for a requirement that organisations hold a positive duty to prevent conversion practices from occurring. Without such an organisational obligation, victim-survivors themselves can be left with the responsibility to challenge conversion practices and to ensure that the legislation is being adhered to.

Victim survivors should be able to seek and be granted redress in civil courts

Under the draft Conversion Practices Prohibition Bill 2026, the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Commissioner can act to prevent ongoing conversion practices by issuing an enforceable undertaking or a compliance notice. If these are not followed, a referral can be made to the Tasmanian civil and administrative tribunal. However, the draft bill does not allow for victim-survivors themselves to seek and be granted an apology or financial redress. Given the significant harm inflicted on those who have experienced conversion practices, the potential for such redress should be available as a pathway to healing for victim-survivors and reflects important social justice principles.

The right of protection for asexual, aromantic and agender people must be clear within the draft bill

In 1993, through the organising work of the LGBTIQ+ community and their allies, Tasmania became the first state in Australia to formally recognise asexual, aromantic and agender people. While the Tasmanian government provided this recognition through the addition of 'A' to its gender and sexuality acronym on government documentation, these identities have not been included in definitions of sexual orientation and gender identity in the state's Anti-Discrimination Act, limiting the 'real' protections behind this historic Tasmanian recognition. For example, the draft Conversion Practices Prohibition Bill 2026 relies on definitions within the Anti-Discrimination Act and subsequently lacks clarity in relation to whether asexual, aromantic and agender people would be protected from conversion practices. To ensure protection under the draft bill, to foster community confidence in its potential support, and to provide broader legislative power behind

Tasmania's recognition of asexual, aromantic and agender people, relevant attributes and definitions within the Tasmanian Anti-Discrimination Act must be amended.

Engender Equality supports the call for a ban on conversion practices in Tasmania, and acknowledges the important work already undertaken in the draft Conversion Practices Prohibition Bill 2026. We invite reflection on the points raised in this submission and look forward to the enactment of robust and comprehensive protections as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely,

D. I. Pitcher

Don Pitcher

Project Coordinator Dads for Gender Diversity

Reference

Madrigal-Borloz, V. (2020). *Practices of so-called "conversion therapy". Report of the independent expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity*. A_HRC_44_53-EN.pdf