

14 August 2020

PRIDE IN LAW
Level 2/ 725 Ann Street,
Fortitude Valley, QLD 4006



By email: [Undisclosed](#)

Dear Colleagues,

Letter of support to ban conversion therapy in Australia - Pride in Law

As a Board of Directors, one of our key responsibilities is to continue to advocate for laws that support, protect and include the LGBTIQ+ community.

Pride in Law is Australia's first and only LGBTIQ+ Law Association. Since launching in July 2017, Pride in Law has continued to provide visibility, education and advocacy around LGBTIQ+ issues in the legal profession. We represent and promote legal professionals, increase community understanding of the law, help protect the rights of individuals and advise the community about the many benefits legal professionals provide. Pride in Law also assists the public by advising government on improvements to laws affecting Australians.

Pride in Law welcomes and supports the recent law reforms in Queensland that bans conversion therapy when provided by a health service provider. In general, this means conversion therapy is prohibited in Queensland to the extent that it involves the provision of a health service. Faith-based institutions, which includes religious or spiritual interventions such as prayer or religious guidance, are not prohibited even if these practices aim to change a person's sexuality or gender identity. Under the new law, healthcare professionals could face up to 18 months imprisonment for attempting to change or suppress a person's sexual orientation or gender identity using practices such as aversion therapy, hypnotherapy and psychoanalysis.

Factors that may influence whether a practice is a health service provider (now prohibited) or would be considered as faith-based (currently permitted) include:

- (a) The setting where the practice is performed (for example, office, clinic or church);
- (b) Whether the person performing the practice does so in a professional capacity as an advocate of religious or spiritual teaching; and
- (c) Whether the person performing the practice makes health related claims, such as that the individual has disease or disorder that can be cured by the practice, or that the individual's experience of stress, mental health issues or other health issues will be alleviated by the practice.

Pride in Law recognises the banning of conversion therapy by health providers is a good step forward, however there is still a long road ahead to outlaw all abhorrent practices that target our rainbow communities. Conversion therapy has long been discredited by the medical community and is not evidence-based. There is overwhelming and growing research that demonstrates that conversion therapy is harmful. Further, that conversion therapy correlates with higher rates of self-harm, including suicide.

To truly outlaw conversion practices and protect all Queenslanders, we must ban the practice absolutely, including by faith-based institutions.

Pride in Law requests further research and legislative reform to protect all Queenslanders and Australians from all forms of conversion therapy, including forms not provided by a health service provider. Our Association has members who have directly or indirectly experienced conversion therapy, and they all acknowledge that those experiences caused them trauma. Queensland and Australia should not allow any further trauma to occur lawfully to the LGBTIQ+ community.

We are stronger together; we are united in our commitment to end conversion therapy in all forms. Conversion therapy does not have a place in modern society. We all have a part to stand up, stand out and protect the LGBTIQ+ community.

Yours sincerely,



Dean Clifford-Jones
National Director, Pride in Law



Emily Phillips
National Director, Pride in Law



Michael Bidwell
National Director, Pride in Law