

Slipped into the middle of the 'ho-hum' Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2019, to be tabled in Queensland Parliament tomorrow, is legislation that will remove the human right to seek and receive help for unwanted sexual and gender pre-occupations. Not only will the right to provide counselling to the disturbed become illegal for any kind of therapist, from psychiatrist to school counsellor, its practice may incur 18 months incarceration.

If passed, so-called 'conversion therapy' will become illegal and I, as a paediatrician, would be obliged to refer a child to a gender clinic if he or she had become influenced to wonder about sexual identity. The approved clinic would then have the option, if not the likelihood, of initiating the process of 'affirmation' to an identity incongruent with sex chromosomes. In other words, if he were born a boy, I could go to gaol for not referring him to those who would do their best to turn him into a girl. They would do this by 'affirming' his social identity...female pronouns, names, dress and toilets, by neutering puberty with hormonal blockers, and evoking external features of the opposite sex, in this case breasts, by the life-long administration of cross sex hormones. Some-where along the way, the boy's genitalia are likely to have been removed, with the exception of the scrotum, which may have been inserted into an artificial orifice in front of his anus, in order to fashion a vagina.

All this, despite the wide-spread recognition that the great majority of children confused over gender will orientate to an identity decreed by their chromosomes through puberty, under a 'watchful waiting' programme, based on individual and family psychotherapy, with special care for the co-morbid mental disorders, such as autism, that affect many if not most of the confused children.

All this, despite any evidence to support the manipulating argument that, unless 'affirmed', self harm and suicide will ensue. And, despite any acknowledgement that the rate of suicide in transgendered adults has been shown to be 20-30 times higher than that in the general population.

Therapists, including paediatricians, will be forced by this legislature to participate, one way or another, in a grand experiment on children that defies human rights legislation derived from the egregious abuses in the Second World War.

Such legislation insisted on biological plausibility for experimentation, but there is no known biological cause for this risen phenomenon which bears the hallmarks of a psychological contagion, fanned by an uncritical media (and politicians), taught in some schools, directed by various websites, affecting vulnerable minds.

Proper experimentation should be preceded by animal studies and, in this case, results on sheep should preclude the use of puberty 'blockers' in children. Despite the repeated assertions of safety, blockers have been shown to inflict sustained damage on the limbic system in sheep, reducing performance in mazes and increasing emotional lability. They have also been shown to influence brain development in a human, and to interfere with the function of nerve cells, eg in the intestines of adults. Nevertheless, part of the 'affirmation' process to be mandated in parliament will permit the giving of 'blockers' to children at the

first sign of puberty, then to be continued for several years, to be overlain with 'cross sex hormones'

These cross sex hormones have also been shown to affect the development of the brain. In adults the brains of males on oestrogens have been shown to shrink at a rate ten times faster than ageing, after only four months. The brains of females on testosterone hypertrophy. No-one knows what might happen to the growing brain of an adolescent. Their application is a blind experiment.

An essential part of experimentation is provision of knowledge. In so-called 'Standards of Care' and in records of the Family Court of Australia, there is no mention of the effects of hormones on the brains of children...merely the assertion of safety.

There is, however, an almost utopian conviction that 'affirmation' will bring happiness, even to children who are not capable of understanding what is going on. Of the higher rate of suicides in transgendered adults, there is only the argument that society is at fault for ostracism. There is no questioning of the role of associated mental disorder, the brain altering effects of hormone therapy, or the simple conclusion that, after all the intervention, there was no gold at the end of the Rainbow.

In presentations earlier in the year, the Queensland Government was made aware of the illusory benefits and the side effects of 'affirmation' by representatives of lesbian, feminist, psychology, psychiatric, paediatric and Christian opinion. Proponents could not come up with any evidence that coercive, aversion therapy was being or had been practiced in Queensland for many years. One parliamentarian asked 'why should we pass a law, imposing incarceration, on something that does not exist?'

Precisely! Why pass a law that would incarcerate a therapist for not participating in experimentation that defies international rights for the protection of children.