

# Detransitioning over the rainbow

Victoria wants to criminalise counselling

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**N**ext month, the Victorian parliament is preparing to enact the 'Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Bill 2020'. The Bill intends to protect Victorians from the 'injury' it alleges is inevitable in attempts to alter 'orientation' by what is now generically condemned as 'conversion therapy'.

According to the gospel of gender fluidity, 'no sexual orientation or gender identity constitutes a disorder, deficiency, or shortcoming ... in need of fixing'. 'Orientation' means not only 'a person's emotional, affectional and sexual attraction' to others, but also 'intimate or sexual relations', in other words, behaviour.

Invoking the spectre of archaic and unethical historical attempts to alter 'orientation' through electric shock treatment or castration, the Bill seeks to criminalise ethical interventions such as 'providing a psychiatry or psychotherapy consultation, treatment or therapy or any other similar consultation, treatment or therapy (including) religious practices' and 'informal practices, such as conversations with a community leader ...'.

Advocates of the new law claim that these clinical and pastoral services, willingly sought by mature adults, are so injurious that they should be punished with gaol sentences of up to ten years and fines of hundreds of thousands of dollars 'whether (administered) with or without the person's consent'. Even 'inducing' someone to seek change will become a criminal act, with implications for the suppression of public debate. Of course, a special Commission (a Cheka?) will be created to ensure compliance. It will be empowered 'to investigate' whether a 'person or organisation' is practising or promoting 'conversion therapy' to an 'individual' or a 'class' of people, to assess the extent of 'injury' inflicted, and to refer the crime to the Victorian Police or regulatory authorities. Along the way, it will produce 'educational programmes'.

The 'science' behind the Bill is a report from La Trobe University based on 15 anonymous replies to a request from people in the LGBTI network for testimonies of harm suffered from 'con-

version therapy'. The collation of stories from this small, statistically insignificant, self-selected sample, with no control group, gives no data worthy of being called 'scientific', but has proved useful to the Andrews Government's ideological purpose. The frequent depictions of crucifixes and Christian churches throughout the report reveals its ideological emphasis. There are no mosques.

The final, egregious story of the kidnapping, incarceration and torture of a teenage girl should defy credulity. Why is it not a matter of media and police investigation? Was there really a man of the cloth reading Bible verses to a girl immersed in any icy bath? Were electrodes really connected to her genitals? This spurious La Trobe study asserting harm should be compared with a larger study asserting benefit which is being undertaken by the Melbourne-based Coalition Against Unsafe Sexual Education (CAUSE) which is now available on [www.freetochange.org](http://www.freetochange.org).

Employing the same means as La Trobe, with the same scientific limitations, CAUSE has amassed five times the number of testimonies as La Trobe but gets none of the political attention. CAUSE documents 78 declarations from people who testify to help they received from compassionate counsellors in dealing with the burden of unwanted sexual pre-occupations. The therapies which are now to be criminalised have, in fact, worked well for them. Unlike the La Trobe collection, their testimonies are not anonymous and many are available on video.

Despite these testimonies, the Victorian Bill denies the possibility of change, and even the right of an adult to seek it. The only change that the Bill permits is change in sexual orientation away from heterosexual and chromosomal restraints.

The Bill also criminalises attempts of parents of gender-confused children to seek and receive help through individual and family counselling to explore the origins of the confusion and to reduce its intensity. Instead, the Bill will mandate the referral of such children to clinics that

practice 'affirmation' (transitioning) to an identity incongruent with chromosomes by means of social transformation, administration of 'puberty blockers', cross sex hormones and surgery to evoke the alternate physical characteristics. This attempt to change a child's physical appearance is surely an extreme case of 'conversion therapy', with proven harms, yet it is mandated in this Bill.

There will be no possibility of escape to another jurisdiction for parents not wishing to entrust children to the Victorian pathway: gaol sentences and crippling fines will apply. Nor will there be any refuge in the family home; the Commission has the power of entry and assessment of parental counselling. Online therapy from other jurisdictions is also a criminal act.

The power of the Bill will reach into schools. Gnosticism will suppress biology in science curricula: feelings in the mind will transcend the reality of chromosomes in the cells. The educational programmes of the Commission will see to that.

Only the brave will teach the binary sexuality of animals and humans and join women's sporting groups in complaining about the physical advantages of males identifying as females, and female reluctance to abandon privacy.

Only the brave in the medical and allied professions will continue to remind parents of the reassuring fact that almost all children confused over gender will revert, through puberty, to a binary identity congruent with chromosomes. Few will be game to complain about the experimental nature of hormonal and surgical 'sex change' for children and adolescents, its biological implausibility, the lack of evidence that it works, and the substantial evidence that it harms.

Few will join the judges in the recent UK High Court declaration that children do not possess the maturity required to make decisions of such immensity. And few will acknowledge the growing numbers of detransitioners whose dreams have not come true over the rainbow despite all the hormones and surgery.

The Victorian Bill represents the attempt to enforce a totalitarian ideology upon an unwitting public: one based on superstition, pessimism, and revolutionary fervour. It is superstitious to view modern counselling through a Medieval lens. It is pessimistic to believe human behaviour is irreducibly determined by instinct as Marx believed it was determined by economics. It is utopian to hope that order can result from destruction of restraint. It is Leninist to believe 'all morality is subject to the (sexual) struggle', and forcibly traduce the human rights of freedom of choice for adults and freedom from experimentation for children.