

25 July 2018

Ms Karen Cusack
Health Complaints Commissioner
Level 26
570 Bourke Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

By email to: hcc@hcc.vic.gov.au

Dear Commissioner Cusack

Re: Inquiry into conversion therapy

The Victorian Branch of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP Victorian Branch) welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the inquiry into conversion therapy.

The RANZCP is a membership organisation that prepares doctors to be medical specialists in the field of psychiatry, supports and enhances clinical practice, advocates for people affected by mental illness and advises governments on mental health care. The RANZCP Victorian Branch represents almost 1500 members including over 1000 qualified psychiatrists and nearly 400 members who are training to qualify as psychiatrists.

The RANZCP Victorian Branch is committed to improving the mental health of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer population and has published [Position Statement 83: Recognising and addressing the mental health needs of the LGBTI population](#). We recognise the strong body of evidence which demonstrates how the discrimination and marginalisation experienced by the LGBTIQ population increases the risk of developing mental health issues.

The RANZCP Victorian Branch does not support the use of sexual orientation change efforts of any kind. Sexual orientation change efforts can cause harm to individuals, contribute to misrepresentations of homosexuality as a mental disorder and allow prejudice and discrimination to flourish. The RANZCP has published [Position Statement 60: Sexual orientation change efforts](#) outlining this position in more detail.

The RANZCP Victorian Branch is also opposed to the practice of trying to change a person's gender identity using psychological or spiritual interventions. These practices are harmful and unethical.

The RANZCP expects its members to adhere to its [Code of Ethics](#), which has recently been updated. The RANZCP strongly upholds the Code's principles, and practitioners who breach the principles may be subject to complaints procedures and disciplinary action, including

expulsion from the RANZCP. The Code of Ethics states psychiatrists shall not discriminate against patients on any grounds such as age, sex, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, language, religious or political affiliation, or socio-economic status; neither shall they attempt to impose their own values on patients and patients' families.

The RANZCP Victorian Branch would be pleased to provide further assistance to the inquiry, should you require.

If you have any questions about the content of this letter, please contact the RANZCP Victorian Branch Policy and Advocacy Advisor Adele Beasley on (03) 9601 4978 or at adele.beasley@ranzcp.org.

Yours sincerely



Associate Professor Richard Newton
Chair, RANZCP Victorian Branch