



18 December 2024

Mr Dominic Fernandes  
Executive Director, Legislative Services  
Department of Justice  
David Malcolm Justice Centre  
28 Barrack St  
Perth WA 6000

By email to: [conversionpractices@justice.wa.gov.au](mailto:conversionpractices@justice.wa.gov.au)

Dear Mr Fernandes

**Re: Conversion Practices Consultation Paper**

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) WA Branch welcomes the release of the consultation paper and thanks you for the opportunity to provide input informing the prohibition of conversion practices in WA.

The Branch represents over 680 psychiatrists and registrars in the state. We offer a substantial resource of distinguished experts dedicated to understanding the risk factors of mental health conditions, treating individuals and families, developing models of care, and promoting public health measures that will reduce costs of mental ill-health in our community.

The Branch supports the intent behind the proposed legislative change to prohibit conversion practices. There is no scientific evidence that a person's sexual orientation or gender identity can be changed, making conversion practices fundamentally harmful to individuals' mental health. The Branch acknowledges the evidence that the spectrum of human gender and sexual diversity has existed across the civilisations and cultures and should be accorded full respect and recognition.

Members of the LGBTIQ+ community are valued members of society with equal rights to healthcare, including a right to protection from conversion practices. Discrimination and marginalisation of LGBTIQ+ individuals increase their risk of developing mental ill-health. Our strong position on the importance of recognising and addressing the mental health needs of the community is articulated in the [RANZCP Position Statement 83](#).

Psychiatrists are bound by the [RANZCP Code of Ethics](#) Principles One (*psychiatrists shall respect the humanity, dignity, and autonomy of all patients*) and Three (*psychiatrists shall provide the best attainable care for their patients*) to provide or facilitate access to gender-affirming care.

The [RANZCP Position Statement 60](#) notes that people distressed by their sexual orientation or gender dysphoria, *should be assisted with treatment approaches that involve acceptance, support, and identity exploration, and aim to reduce the stigma against the LGBTQIA+ community.*

Further, the [RANZCP's Position Statement 103](#) states that *in all cases, trans and gender diverse people should be provided with person-centred, evidence-informed mental healthcare in a supportive, ethical, non-judgemental, and culturally safe manner should they seek and require it.*

While the RANZCP [opposes all forms of conversion practices](#), we emphasise a distinction between affirmative forms of therapy and 'conversion practices'. In affirmative forms of therapy, particularly in psychotherapy, *the patient's autonomy and self-determination is respected and the therapist does not impose predetermined notions of gender or sexual orientation on the patient.* Health services should take steps to accommodate all needs, including therapeutic needs, of LGBTQIA+ people.

The Branch hopes that the prohibition of harmful conversion practices will lead to improved training in medical schools and postgraduate programs, and better mental health outcomes for the LGBTQIA+ people and their families.

The Branch is interested in working with you to ensure that the draft legislation supports trained and competent psychiatrists engaging in identity exploration and performing clinical assessments with sex and gender diverse people.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss details of this submission, please do not hesitate to contact Dr Jasmina Brankovich, Branch Policy and Advocacy Advisor, via email at [jasmina.brankovich@ranzcp.org](mailto:jasmina.brankovich@ranzcp.org)

Yours sincerely



Dr Murugesh Nidyananda  
Chair, RANZCP Western Australia Branch Committee