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Christian Schools Report Card on Conversion Practices Bill Says Government “Must Try Harder”

Christian Schools say that the Tasmanian Government “must try harder” on the proposed *Justice Miscellaneous (Conversion Practices) Bill 2024*.

Mark Spencer, Director of Public Policy for Christian Schools Australia expressed concerns about the Bill, “we believe these laws are a solution in search of a problem as there is no evidence that conversion practices are a widespread issue in Tasmania.”

“I’m particularly concerned about the inclusion of gender identity in the bill,” he said, “when nobody can provide us with any clear indication or examples of what the problem is that the government is trying to solve”. Mr Spencer said that “if there is a problem the government needs to address it involves the regret increasingly being felt by young adults after being provided with little real support for alternatives to medical transition at an early age.”

The concerns regarding the inclusion of practices related to gender identity have been strengthened following the recent release by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists of updated [guidance materials](#) which recognises that there “are methodological limitations in studies which assess the effectiveness of all models of treatment on the mental health of children and adolescents with Gender Dysphoria” and indicates that “[p]sychiatric practice will be informed by further emerging evidence”.

It then goes on to say in relation to treatment of children and adolescents that “[t]he risk of intervention needs to be weighed against the risk of non-intervention, in consideration of the individual circumstances.”

“Health practitioners should be free to treat young people experiencing gender dysphoria without fear of being constrained by unnecessary gender conversion laws. We support laws which outlaw harmful, coercive practices related to sexuality or gender identity and call upon the Tasmanian Government to ensure there are no unintended consequences impacting the best care and support for young people”, indicated Vanessa Cheng, Executive Officer of Australian Association of Christian Schools.

“Parents, teachers and church leaders must be able to have open, honest conversations with children about these sensitive topics without fear of being silenced by overbearing laws as we have seen in states such as Victoria,” Mrs Cheng said.

The Australian Association of Christian Schools and Christian Schools Australia will both provide a submission to the consultation and encourage concerned parents, teachers and churches to also have their say to ensure the voices of all Tasmanians are heard as part of this process.

ENDS

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