



DiversityACT
COMMUNITY SERVICES

Diversity ACT Community Services
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The Chairperson Conversion Practices Ban Consultation

Diversity ACT Community Services is an LGBTIQ+ support service located in South Canberra. We are a registered charity which receives no ongoing funding and is fully volunteer run. We provide a service hub, social worker, support networks, groups and resources to assist the LGBTIQ+ community of the ACT Region.

Diversity ACT welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the plan to ban LGBTIQ+ “conversion “ or “reparative therapies” in the ACT. We join the ACT government in our abhorrence of practices which seek to change or suppress an individual’s gender identity or sexual orientation and are delighted at the commitment from the ACT government to prohibit these practices in the Territory.

We note that the practices likely to be prohibited are any practice or treatment by any person that seeks to change, suppress and/or eliminate a person’s sexual orientation, gender identity and/or gender expressions. We also note that practices and treatment that provide assistance to an individual undergoing a gender transition, provide acceptance, support and understanding for a person’s identity exploration and development, and/or seek to prevent or address unsafe sexual practices will be exempt from the prohibition. We believe that this covers the correct range of actions and activities.

We believe that the penalties associated with enforcement of the ban on conversion practices should be penalties under both civil and criminal law ranging from fines, good behaviour bonds, community corrections orders, and potentially even custodial sentences for repeat offenders. We recommend for your consideration that any person who conducts conversion practices should be placed on a register like the sex -offenders register, and such persons should not be eligible for working with vulnerable persons registration in the Territory. We further recommend there are provisions to allow victims of this practice to be able to sue for compensations from the perpetrators and/or groups which facilitated or supported conversion practices.

Given their greater responsibilities and authority, professionals that elect to practice conversion therapies should attract higher penalties. Such penalties should include the cancellation of their permission to practice in the ACT.

The introduction of a ban on conversion therapies will not change the nature of our work at Diversity ACT. We will of course publicise the introduction of the ban and ensure that the information we provide to individuals who contact our service is up to date in relation to the ban.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please feel free to contact us on 6231 3126 or via email at info@diversityact.org.au

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SLLS', written in a cursive style.

Shay-Leigh Willis
President
Diversity ACT Community Services