

RESPONSE TO PETITION

Petition No. 1 of 2023 House of Assembly

SPONSOR: Lara Alexander MP

ANSWERED BY: Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP and Hon Elise Archer MP

The Petition of the undersigned Citizens of Tasmania draws to the attention of the House:

The recently released Tasmanian Law Reform Institute (TLRI) report into conversion practices, including the 16 recommendations, has taken by surprise many parents, health practitioners, counsellors and the teaching profession.

Whilst acknowledging that some consultation has taken place, we are concerned that:

- A great number of people in our community have been left out of the discussion including parents, schoolteachers, counsellors, medical professionals, faith representatives and those from non-English speaking background/multicultural communities;
- The implementation of the 16 TLRI recommendations will not only restrict parents and medical practitioner's capacity to choose what is in the best interests of their children and patients, but potentially criminalise them and others who seek to assist;
- The report has given little weight to the evidence (in Australia and overseas) of physical and mental harm done to children through transition treatments and has downplayed the globally available evidence of this damage;
- The report recommends the law to set guidelines that would specify which medical professionals can assess and treat conditions like gender dysphoria and what procedures they must use. Parents should be free to choose their preferred specialist and the medical profession should be free to exercise their profession.

Your petitioners, therefore, request the House to:

1. Assist gender confused children and others by protecting the rights of parents, health practitioners and others as they seek best outcomes; and
2. Support a rigorous and impartial community consultation being conducted prior to the drafting of any legislation, to include discussions with health practitioners, legal experts, religious and ethnic community leaders.

GOVERNMENT POSITION:

Our Government wants Tasmania to be a place where everyone feels valued, included, encouraged and supported to be the best they can be.

The Attorney-General and I have each considered the Tasmania Law Reform Institute's Report and have met personally with people who have been subjected to conversion practices in the past. We have always acknowledged the harm and distress that these practices have caused.

We are aware that other jurisdictions have introduced various laws in relation to this matter. The Tasmanian Law Reform Institute has looked into this matter to consider options and areas that might need review in terms of our laws.

It is a complex matter, and it is important we get this right.

The Departments of Health and Justice have been undertaking policy analysis to properly evaluate the TLRI's recommendations and provide further advice to the Government around reform.

Our Government will always make decisions on the basis of expert advice and best practice.

While I have indicated we will be legislating to ban conversion practices, it is important the Tasmanian community have adequate opportunity to participate in consultation.



Hon Jeremy Rockliff MP
Premier
Minister for Health

Date: 23/7/23



Hon Elise Archer MP
Attorney-General
Minister for Justice

Date: 25 July 2023