



Conversion Therapy

Uniting Network Australia calls for action to end formal and informal LGBTIQ Conversion Therapy

Uniting Network, the LGBTIQ network within the Uniting Church of Australia is not surprised by the horrendous impact on members of the LGBTIQ community reported in the study released this week entitled, "Preventing Harm, Promoting Justice – Responding to LGBT conversion therapy in Australia".

The report highlights the individuals interviewed:

- "knew from an early age, that they were same-sex attracted or transgender;
- Faith and service to their respective faith communities was at the centre of their lives during the period they were subject to gay conversion and related therapies;
- Each person carries deep grief, and, in some cases anger, over being told they were 'broken' and needed fixing; and
- All have experienced a profound sense of loss at the lives they had taken away from them."

We endorse the recommendations issued with the study's report and call on all levels of government in Australia as a priority to:

- Prohibit both professionals and other people from processes that aim to change, suppress, cure, heal or repair a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. Any person breaching such a prohibition should be subject to significant criminal charges.
- Provide urgent funding for support programs to support people still dealing with significant mental health and family issues resulting from 'conversion therapy'.

- Add clauses to Commonwealth Government Chaplaincy funding agreements prohibiting any attempt to change a school student's sexual orientation or gender identity either directly or by referral and establish training programs that all such chaplains must complete on the potential harm to children through such 'conversion therapies' and failure to validate their sexual orientation or gender identity.

- Make Counsellors a protected title under the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law, requiring Counsellors to be registered with an appropriate oversight body established in association with APHRA and in NSW HCCC/HPCA. A code of practice should state that providing LGBT conversion therapy and not supporting a person's sexual orientation or gender identity is a breach of professional standards.

Further, and outside of the report, we call on all religious organisations to denounce **the "call to celibacy" for LGBTIQ people**, which is another form of abuse being instituted by some religious organisations as they have realised the unacceptability of "conversion therapy".

Finally, we call on all religious organisations in Australia to explicitly state their rejection of LGBTIQ conversion therapy, and any statements along the lines that LGBTIQ people are disordered, broken or otherwise not whole individuals. It is our view that involvements in activities such as 'conversion therapy' and these types of statements fail uphold the fundamental premise and hope provided by Jesus Christ, who calls all of us to "Love God and to Love one another", with no exceptions.



Articles on Conversion therapies:

The report cited above "**Preventing Harm, Promoting Justice** – Responding to LGBT conversion therapy in Australia" is found here:

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/580025f66b8f5b2dabbe4291/t/5bc0311d8165f51dc10d0dee/1539322205421/LGBT+religious+conversion+therapy+in+Australia.pdf>

<https://www.un.org/press/en/2015/db150601.doc.htm> - **United Nations**

https://www.psychology.org.au/news/media_releases/26May2016 - **Australian Psychological Assoc.**

https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/human_rights/samesex/inquiry/submissions/314.doc - **Australian Medical Association**

<https://www.abc.net.au/radio/programs/the-hook-up-podcast/exgaytherapy/10418208?fbclid=IwAR3H-eXubE7hoKC9wygsEubzGsf2N7bB4lZo3VNOhYAX29KbrgAYSbXwUms> – **ABC radio**

A range of Australian resources from a **survivor of 'conversion therapy'** (Anthony Venn Brown) are available here. <https://www.abbi.org.au/conversion-therapy/>

