



Media Release

12 December 2019

Jewish Care Victoria and JCCV partner to support ban of LGBTQ+ conversion therapy

Jewish Care Victoria and Jewish Community Council of Victoria (JCCV) recently partnered to submit a joint position paper to the Victorian State Government in support of proposed legislation to ban LGBTQ+ conversion therapy practices.

As part of the legislative process, the Department of Justice and Community Safety recently undertook a six week, state-wide community consultation process to help shape the new laws. The *Department of Justice and Community Safety Community Consultation on the Legislative Option to Implement a Ban on Conversion Therapy Practices in Victoria* called for submissions from individuals and organisations, including the Victorian State Government's LGBTQ+ taskforce, conversion practice survivor groups, and religious groups.

JCCV and Jewish Care's submission, undertaken as part of the ongoing commitment of both organisations to LGBTQ+ inclusion and advocacy, emphatically denounced LGBTQ+ conversion therapy practices. The paper contended that a legislative ban should be placed on these harmful practices which are a contravention of a person's fundamental human rights and diminish, devalue, and attempt to erase the presence of LGBTQ+ people in society.

"The balance of religious freedoms and universal human rights is complex and can be argued, by some, to be the same topic. It is our view that it is fundamental that all individuals in our community are afforded the right to live without threat of, or actual, abuse, and to be provided the support to achieve this. Use of conversion therapy practices under the banner of religion should not be seen as any different those being used outside of that context," the joint paper stated.

Co-signed by JCCV President Jennifer Huppert and Jewish Care Chief Executive Officer Bill Appleby and developed in consultation with members of the Victorian LGBTQ+ Jewish community, the position paper also highlighted the emotional and psychological harm caused to people subjected to LGBTQ+ conversion practices, which can have immediate and long-lasting adverse effects on health.

"Further to detailed consultations with the Department of Justice and Community Safety, the Jewish Community Council of Victoria together with Jewish Care clearly support new legislation to ban conversion therapies in Victoria," said Huppert. "It is important to emphasise that the practice or treatment to seek change, modify, suppress, or eliminate expression of LGBTQ+ sexuality or gender identity is, in our view, unethical and abhorrent."

Huppert continued, "In addition to the changes in legislation which may lead to banning conversion therapy practices, the JCCV stands strongly with Jewish Care to offer educational programs across



our community to promote awareness campaigns, protect the vulnerable, and work respectfully with the LGBTQ+ communities to achieve positive advances.”

Of Jewish Care’s commitment to supporting and advocating for LGBTQ+ people, Bill Appleby said, “Jewish Care stands firmly alongside people who identify as LGBTQ+, in both the Jewish and wider Victorian communities. As we continue to ensure our own services are inclusive, we will also speak out against those that not only discriminate or exclude, but in fact cause long-lasting harm, such as conversion practices. It is perfectly okay to be gay, and practices such as these falsely deny LGBTQ+ existence and attempt to fix something that is not broken.”

*Jewish Care and JCCV would also like to acknowledge the important role played by the following individuals and communal groups that were consulted during the development of this paper. Our many thanks go to: **Aleph Melbourne, JCCV’s LGBTI Reference Group, and Sally Goldner AM***

For more information about Jewish Care and JCCV’s joint position paper, or to access a copy of the paper please contact rainbow@jewishcare.org.au

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