



eccv

The Voice of Multicultural Victoria

Organisational Statement

Tuesday 15 December 2020

An important step to end harmful practices to suppress and change gender identity and sexual orientation

ECCV supports the *Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Bill 2020* currently before the Victorian Parliament. This Bill is an important and historic step towards ending harmful practices that attack the identities of LGBTQA+ people and cause ongoing distress and mental health issues.

Conversion practices have no basis in evidence. They are based on damaging notions that see LGBTQA+ people as dysfunctional, “broken”, “sinful”, “immoral” and in need of spiritual “healing”. Such practices are both unethical and ineffective, and result only in lifelong trauma and suffering, including self-harm, suicidal ideation, mental ill health, and detachment from both LGBTIQ+ communities and cultural and faith communities.

LGBTQA+ people of faith have a right to practice their beliefs and participate in their many communities of belonging that embrace all their identities, free from fear of being targeted by these harmful and misguided practices.

ECCV has heard of LGBTQA+ people from migrant and refugee backgrounds being taken overseas by their family in order to change or “cure” them. LGBTQA+ people from migrant and refugee backgrounds have been taken to religious leaders or medical practitioners in attempts to rid them of what is seen as problematic, unnatural and sinful. We also know that some LGBTQA+ people from migrant and refugee backgrounds have been subjected to violence to pressure them to change and deny the very essence of their identities based on who they are and whom they love.

The legislation currently before Parliament will enable LGBTQA+ people from migrant and refugee backgrounds to participate in their faith communities and practice their spirituality based on their faith and belief systems.

ECCV also emphasises the importance of the Victorian Government engaging with faith leaders and community groups, including those who do not speak English as a first language, to effectively communicate the nature of this legislative change and stop the spread of misinformation. An open and honest dialogue is needed to counter negative stereotypes, build understanding and strong interpersonal connections so we can be inclusive of all human beings. This is imperative for the safety and dignity of LGBTQA+ people from migrant and refugee backgrounds where faith and spirituality are an integral part of their identities.

ECCV stands in solidarity with the Australian GLBTIQ Multicultural Council and the Brave Network in their efforts to ensure that people of all backgrounds are free to practice their identities and belong to their communities, as a matter of human rights. ECCV would also like to acknowledge the advocacy work of countless individuals and community-led organisations who have worked tirelessly in the background to change negative perceptions, establish dialogues, and embrace differing views in order to reconcile faith and LGBTQA+ identities.

ECCV will work with its members and the Victorian Government towards the creation of safer and more inclusive communities for LGBTQA+ people from migrant and refugee backgrounds in Victoria so they are able to reconcile, embrace, and follow their faiths and belief systems without sacrificing any aspect of their identities.

For interview opportunities, please contact:

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