

Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2019

Dear Committee Secretary,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission relevant to chapter 5B on pages 15-20 of the November Bill.

My name is Brendan John Scarce

I am **the Director** of the Courage ministry within the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane. A ministry I will explain further below.

My contact details [REDACTED]

My email address is [REDACTED]

Daytime phone number: [REDACTED]

I am a member of the Australian Labor Party – Membership No: [REDACTED];

And a regular member of the Geebung ALP Branch.

I find it difficult that the State Labor Party is legislating to ban what it calls “Conversion” Therapy. The Bill does not accurately define what “Conversion” Therapy is. This lack of definition could compromise counsellors in their work in many and various places in Queensland. I was a Social Work Counsellor with Teen Challenge thirty five years ago when same-sex clients/patients were referred to me for counselling. Not one of them was counselled by me to alter their sexual orientation, for that was and is not my role as a counsellor. My task is to listen compassionately and encourage men to live out their desires freely and without compromise. Their will and freedom of choice is a fundamental human right. A right that is not being honoured in the Bill.

[REDACTED]

██████ I know of other Christian bodies/organizations in Queensland which counsel and support men and women with same-sex attraction and I do not know any one of them that actually practices “Conversion” Therapy. I responded to the ALP member and questioned her statistics and asked if they were USA figures, for no reported suicides have emerged in Queensland.

I wonder why the Queensland ALP is utilizing its time to prohibit a legitimate practice of Reparative Therapy which it misnames “Conversion Therapy.” A therapy that is so rarely performed if at all in Queensland. It seems to me as an energetic and dedicated ALP member, who has worked in State Election campaigns for Leanne Linard and Bart Mellish, that State Parliament could be more efficacious in legislating issues that deal with the poor, homeless, unemployed and the desperate state of people in rural areas.

Twenty five years ago I was appointed by the founder of the International Catholic Courage ministry as the Brisbane Director. The five goals of Courage are the fundamental bedrock of the ministry, and they are:

Chastity: *Live chaste lives in accordance with the Roman Catholic Church’s teaching on same-sex attraction.*

Prayer and Dedication: *Dedicate one’s life to Christ through service to others, spiritual reading, prayer, meditation, individual spiritual direction, frequent attendance at Mass and the frequent reception of the sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist.*

Fellowship: *Foster a spirit of fellowship in which all may share thoughts and experiences to ensure that no one will have to face the problems of same-sex attraction alone.*

Support: *Be mindful of the truth that chaste friendships are not only possible but necessary in a chaste Christian life and in doing so provide encouragement to one another in forming and sustaining them.*

Good Example/Role Model: *Live lives that may serve as good examples to others with same-sex attraction.*

I have provided information about the Courage ministry to indicate the positive force for good it is for those who freely come to ask for help. I repeat my concern about the Bill’s wording of “Conversion “Therapy. The lack of a clear definition of the term will hamper the integrity of virtually all counsellors.

Yours sincerely

Brendan Scarce (Friday 3rd December 2020)

wish your committee a happy, fruitful and competent examination of the issues.
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