

Submission for proposed amendment to the Public Health Act 2005 Queensland.

Renew Ministries is a Christian ministry and is not a health provider. However, we are responding to the request for a submission regarding the amendment proposed to the Public Health Act 2005 (Qld)

As an organisation we agree that no one should be coerced regarding change of sexual feelings, nor should people be given unrealistic expectations of what this means. These values we already and earnestly hold to. The only people that contact us do so voluntarily.

As an organisation, our practices and values are stated below.

### **WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO.**

Renew Ministries (Exodus Asia Pacific) is a non-profit, Christian ministry in the Asia Pacific region helping men and women find a way to follow Christ and to apply their desire for discipleship within their sexuality.

We are members of Exodus Global Alliance. Which is a registered, non-charity Christian organisation based in Canada.

Our purpose is to glorify Jesus Christ by proclaiming his desire and incredible power to offer freedom to all who seek him. Such freedom begins with repentance from sin, and faith in Christ as Saviour and Lord. This is common to all Christian churches and organisations. Followers of Jesus develop maturity through their ongoing submission to the Lordship of Christ and his inspired, authoritative Word. They experience God's compassion and mercy through fellowship within a church body of like-minded Christians.

As a ministry, we do not support or practice shock treatment, aversion therapy, nor any attempt to force people to change. We do not endorse bullying in any form and respect the right for all people to be given dignity as all are created in God's image.

Our ministries do not practice any form of 'therapy'. Help for people is generally providing understanding and a way out of isolation for Christians who experience same—sex attraction or family members who have LGBT loved ones. This is through personal connections and provision of biblical encouragement.

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### **Choice not Conversion Therapy.**

For those individuals, especially adults, who decide to self-determine their own outcomes regarding their sexual orientation through pastoral care, Christian counsellors, and reading material, the proposal of banning any form of help, would not be beneficial. We ask instead

that laws be put in place that people voluntarily seeking help, might be treated with respect, rather than dictated to as to the kind of direction that they want to choose. If anything within the definition of conversion therapy is banned, they may not legally be able to follow their own convictions.

Even though the bill's meaning of Gender Identity needs to be taken as a whole, it also includes someone who does not struggle with their biological and scientific birth gender. In the definition for Gender Identity it states( 213G (1) "**whether or not** (gives the option) it corresponds with the sex assigned to the person at birth".

Therefore, if a child who was not confused about their biological birth gender, prior to the introduction of the Safe School program into their classroom, but now questions that, as a result of such teaching. Would that be considered Conversion therapy? As it has changed the internal view that child held fundamentally, into something different.

2) Without limiting subsection (1), the **gender identity**, of a person, includes—

**(a) the person's personal sense of the body;**

Therefore, should it be concluded that if the person's personal sense of body, (from gay, transgender, or many of the other sexual identities now available) was to shift back in line with their biological birth gender, according to these definitions, then that would be acceptable. Therefore, a person has the right to shift according to their personal sense of body.

Many who voluntarily come to us, are such adults who seek for themselves to realign their life, back to their birth genders or to change the direction and focus of their life. These range in age from their 20's to 60's. This is the kind of people that seek out Renew Ministries for help. Some no longer choose to identify with the "personal sense of body," that defines them as gay or transgender. These people, by their own free will and choosing, would like to move back to identifying with their biological birth gender. This should not be considered Conversion Therapy. But should be given full support. Others recognise that their experience of same-sex attraction feelings, may continue, but do not want to act on this and we respect their personal choice for self-determination. Most of the people connected to our ministry have also made this choice and have good and positive experiences from meeting with others like themselves. Some have gone on to marry members of the opposite gender, while others continue as single. Our emphasis is not to focus on the change of their sexual orientation, but to encourage them into a deep and loving relationship with God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Due to the nature of our ministry we are aware of numerous individuals who have moved away from a homosexual lifestyle along with those that have de-transitioned. (in whatever form that means to them) Many of their stories are available on websites such as:

[www.twoprisms.com](http://www.twoprisms.com) and <https://changedmovement.com/>

Therefore, we would also like to know how ex-gay and ex-trans people will be protected? As their real-life experiences and stories are being silenced and ignored and the level of bullying and hate that has been experienced by many is becoming harmful. With the introduction of laws such as the one proposed, some are anxious that they may not be able to ask for help from Christian counsellors or even pastors. They are concerned that if they want support for other related issues such as anxiety or depression, that they will be denied this due to being incorrectly labelled as LGBT. Yet their first conviction is that of being a Christian.

### **Is prayer considered Conversion Therapy?**

#### **213F Meaning of *conversion therapy***

We are concerned that the definition of 'Conversion Therapy' as a term created by people outside of our ministries, is first aligned with secular, psychiatric processes such as shock treatment that was practiced up until the 1970's. No ministries, or churches that we are aware of have access to this equipment, yet alone would use any of these antiquated and discredited practices. They are not 'hidden', they simply do not exist today in ministry. However, secondly the inference is that Christians may in the future be dictated to as to what they may believe, say, or choose to follow. This is looking to be an attack on Christians who are same-sex attracted but want to live according to their own personal definitions of their sexuality.

If prayer was to become considered an aspect of Conversion Therapy, would both the person offering prayer and the person seeking help, be criminalised? If support groups were criminalised, this would remove life-saving encouragement for those who want support? Eliminating any form of help to people who by their own free choice are moving away from same sex attraction, is removing personal freedom of choice. Especially from adults. This then becomes a dictatorship and the harm from this may be far more wide-spread than might be expected with some reaching life-threatening despair.

As a Ministry we too are deeply concerned regarding those that struggle with same sex attraction and gender dysphoria. It is our goal to see those that choose to do so, continue to find Freedom in Christ.

Renew Ministries.

Authored by the Renew Management Committee

This is a national organisation.

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