



The Human Rights Council of Australia Inc.

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Item 8: Follow-up and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action

41st Human Rights Council Session

Statement by: Human Rights Council of Australia

Delivered by: Cristyn Davies

Mr President, the Human Rights Council of Australia Inc. and the Human Rights Law Centre commend the Australian government and other States for supporting the renewal of the Independent Expert on protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Protection against violence and discrimination for people of diverse SOGI must start at home. We call on the Australian government to continue to work productively with and consult relevant civil society organisations and experts representing people of diverse SOGI to eliminate *all* forms of violence and discrimination in Australia.

Conversion ‘therapy’ has been condemned by 12 UN agencies as a breach of human rights[1] and by the medical profession as harmful and ineffective.¹ Nevertheless, unethical practices aimed at the reorientation of LGBT people continue in Australia and must stop [2].

In Australia, religious schools and universities can claim exemption from anti-discrimination laws in certain circumstances. This has been used by government funded religious educational institutions to discriminate against students and teachers of diverse SOGI in education and employment. Removing these exemptions is critical if Australia is to uphold the Independent Expert’s mandate against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity [3-7].

Thank you.

This statement is made by the following accredited NGOs: Human Rights Council of Australia, Inc., and the Human Rights Law Centre.

¹ The Australian Medical Association unequivocally condemns conversion ‘therapy’ (practices), as does the World Medical Association.

It is also supported by Equality Australia, and Twenty10 Inc. GLCS NSW.

References

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6. Brown, A. and L. Carnie, *All schools, same rules: Submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee inquiry into the Sex Discrimination Amendment (Removing Discrimination Against Students) Bill 2018*. 2019, Equality Australia: Melbourne, Australia.
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