



Mahi Mihinare

**Anglican Action**

justice through service

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7 September 2021

## Submission on:

# Conversion Practices Prohibition Legislation Bill

### Position:

Anglican Action **strongly supports** this Bill, and we welcome the opportunity to make the following points and recommendations.

We also welcome the opportunity to speak to this submission. Please contact:

#### **Wade Aukett**

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### Summary:

We begin by acknowledging all those who have campaigned and supported attempts to bring this legislation before Parliament, as well as all those takatāpui and LGBTQI+ New Zealanders whose lives have been damaged or destroyed by the practice of so-called 'Conversion Therapy'.

Anglican Action is a faith and Treaty-based social service organisation in Kirikiriroa Hamilton. In our daily work we see those who are marginalised and vulnerable; We see addiction and abuse; We see the effects of discrimination and incarceration; We see intergenerational disadvantage; We see both victims and perpetrators of violence; And we see the struggle that so many have in overcoming the trauma of their past in order to achieve a flourishing future.

We are committed to making Aotearoa New Zealand a more just, loving, and equitable society, and for this reason we wish to express our strong support for the objectives and provisions of the Conversion Practices Prohibition Legislation Bill.

As a faith-based organisation we believe that human sexuality is a gift of God to be cherished and honoured. It is an intrinsic part of who we are as human beings, and an expression of God's glorious diversity in creation. Anything which seeks to suggest that there is something inherently wrong or sinful in those who are takatāpui and LGBTQI+; or which seeks to change or suppress a person's sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression; is, we believe, wrong and has no place in the modern world.

We believe that any practice which seeks to change or suppress a person's sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression is both abusive and damaging. Abuse in any form is completely unacceptable as it violates our fundamental belief that all people deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

We are proud to take guidance from our Anglican Archbishops Don Tamihere and Philip Richardson with the following submission points.

## Submission Points:

1. The New Zealand Government has a moral and legal obligation to the care and protection for all New Zealanders, and this includes our LGBTQI+ community.
2. As an employer we have a legal and moral commitment to provide for the wellbeing and care for all in our employment, and provide a safe space for all to fully be themselves without fear or prejudice. This mandates our commitment to inclusion and celebrating all of creation. We see conversation therapy as undermining this commitment and for this reason we support this Bill.
3. We see the immense harm that has historically been felt by the LGBTQI+ community globally and in Aotearoa. We see that prejudice and harm continue at present and is experienced in families, workplaces, communities, institutions and churches. The legal provision of conversion therapy continues to normalise the idea that some sexual orientations, gender identities or gender expressions are not normal, and are something that should be changed or fixed. For this reason we support this Bill.
4. All people are created in the image of God. Conversion therapy is an act of violence against a person created in God's image. Evidence speaks to the dangerous, lifelong traumatic impact that conversion therapy can have on individuals and families. The Anglican Church of Aotearoa has a commitment to non-violence, and for this reason we support this Bill.
5. We do not consider that this Bill impacts upon the ability for the Christian community to continue to promote the teachings of peace, love, and justice that is foundational to our Christian faith. Expressions of faith that seek to other and change people because of who God created them to be, is to us, to the contrary of our shared Christian fellowship. Religious "freedom" should not result in suffering. The so called religious freedom to hold homophobic views is in our view not a valid religious freedom and far too many churches are hiding their homophobia and discriminatory attitudes behind their religion. For this reason, we oppose any exemptions to be granted for churches or faith communities in the prohibition of conversion practices.
6. We recognise the diversity of takatāpui and other expressions of gender and orientation as unique from Te Ao Māori in Aotearoa. We see that measures to erase these, including conversation therapy, are acts of colonisation. Therefore, we support this Bill as an act of decolonisation.

## Further Recommendations:

1. Extend the meaning of conversion practices to protect intersex people.
2. Ensure there is adequate support for survivors of conversion practices through ACC legislation.
3. Conversion practices should be added to the list of criminal offences in schedule 3 of the Accident Compensation Act 2001.
4. Remove the age distinction to ensure people of all ages are protected – including those over the age of 18.
5. Amend the Mens Rea requirement for Section 8.
6. Remove the requirement for consent from the Attorney General to prosecute.

## Conclusion:

We are committed to ensuring that abuse in all its forms is eradicated from our communities, and whole-heartedly support the New Zealand Government's objectives in prohibiting conversion therapy thereby offering protection to the takatāpui and LGBTQI+ people of Aotearoa from this abusive and damaging practice.

No reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

**Karen Morrison-Hume**  
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