
MEDIA RELEASE

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Conversion Ban Will Prevent Parental and Teacher Guidance

Parents and teachers have lots of questions that deserve answers following the introduction of the Minns Government's *Conversion Practices Ban Bill 2024*.

Going well beyond their original commitment to outlaw gay conversion practices, the Bill plans to ban poorly defined 'gender identity' conversion practices, potentially criminalising parents who don't support their children identifying as a gender which does not align to their biological sex.

The Bill specifies that parents will only be permitted to 'discuss' matters relating to sexual orientation or gender identity with their children. There are no protections for further guidance or parental authority provided to their children that aligns with parent's own cultural belief or religious ethic on appropriate sexual behaviour or gender expression.

The Bill follows the Victorian legislation and combines the concept of "conversion practices" with the broader and more vague concept of "suppression". The Attorney-General in his Second Reading Speech stated 'Suppress is defined in the Macquarie Dictionary as "to keep in or repress" something or "put an end to activities".'

How can parents with any certainty know if their actions may be defined as 'supressing' their children's desires – with the potential for five years in jail?

- Will parents be forced to adopt their five-year old's preferred pronoun and allow them to cross dress?
- Do grandparents need to ask about their grandchild's gender identity before buying clothes as a birthday present?
- Will aunts and uncles be forced to take their nieces and nephews to the toilets they choose if they go out shopping with them?

The overly broad term 'suppression' also creates a minefield of uncertainty for Christian school teachers.

- Can a chaplain encourage students to avoid sexual activity before marriage?
- Can a teacher pray with a student who might ask for prayer to remain sexually pure?
- Will teachers face jail for not adopting a student's preferred pronoun?
- Can a school work with parents to support a young girl who is distressed with the onset of puberty to understand that it is a natural part of becoming a woman, or must they affirm her desire to be a boy, which the parents believe is a coping mechanism for this change?

Christian schools are calling on the Government to provide clarity and certainty for parents and schools by amending the *Conversion Practices Ban Bill 2024* to **remove gender identity** and provide a clearer definition of 'suppression' to avoid unintended consequences.

ENDS

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Who We Are

Christian Schools Australia (CSA) and Australian Association of Christian Schools (AACS) are national bodies that support and represent schools for whom religious formation is an integral part of the education process.

In combination, CSA, and AACS schools educate more than 110,000 students across more than 250 locations nationally. We **have 83 member schools educating over 35,000 students in New South Wales.**

Our schools operate as independent, locally governed, religious organisations. Some are closely aligned with one or more Christian churches in their communities, while others have their heritage in a group of parents coming together to start a school.