

**Thorne Harbour applauds Victorian Government announcement to ban conversion ‘therapies’**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

4 February 2019 - Following the an extensive investigation into conversion practices by the Health Complaints Commissioner and the release of a landmark report into conversion practices by the Human Rights Law Centre and La Trobe University, the Andrews Government announced that it will ban converserion practices in Victoria at yesterday’s Pride March in Melbourne. Thorne Harbour Health applauds the Government’s move to prohibit these intensely harmful practices targeting LGBTI people, and hopes this ban is inclusive of all communities affected.

This ban would be the first of its kind in Australia. This announcement follows the Health Complaints Commissioner’s recommendation for legislation to be introduced that prohibits conversion practices and seek to address the harmful and damaging toll these have taken on the health and wellbeing of LGBTI individuals.

The Government has announced that the development of legislation will begin immediately and will include consultation with communities impacted by these practices in the past as well as both LGBTI and faith-based organisations.

“This announcement couldn’t come soon enough. By tackling conversion practices, the Victorian Government is leading the way in addressing a longstanding issue standing between our LGBTI communities and better health and wellbeing,” said Thorne Harbour President Chad Hughes.

“Conversion practices have gone on for far too long and have hidden in the shadows, taking advantage of vulnerable people within our LGBTI communities that were led to believe they needed ‘fixing’. It’s an abhorrent practice that has no place in society.”

Thorne Harbour CEO Simon Ruth added, “We eagerly await further details on this legislation. The Government has committed to addressing any ‘practice or treatment that seeks to change, suppress or eliminate an individual’s sexual orientation or gender identity.’ We hope this legislation also comprehensively considers all funded or state-supported practices that involuntarily impose a gender, sex, or sexuality on individuals in our community.”

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