

Conversion Practices Ban Act 2024

What is a conversion practice?

A conversion practice refers to a sustained effort or series of practices that seeks to change or suppress a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. These harmful practices are founded on the misconceptions that LGBTQIA+ people are broken, wrong or in need of fixing.

In certain circumstances, these practices are unlawful, and may be subject to criminal prosecution.

Expressing a belief through sermon, taking offence at religious teachings, and seeking guidance through prayer are not banned under the legislation.

What is the Conversion Practices Act?

On 22 March 2024, the Conversion Practices Ban Act passed the NSW Parliament.

This Act bans practices directed towards changing or suppressing the sexual orientation or gender identity of an individual.

A correct understanding of a person's sexuality is not relevant. This means that if a person falsely believes a person is LGBTQIA+ and directs treatment towards them, an offence may still have been committed.

When does the act come into effect?

The Conversion Practices Ban Act comes into effect from 3 April 2025 and only applies to offences committed on or after this date.

Is a conversion practice an offence?

Yes, in particular circumstances.

The practice must be consistent in effort and directed towards changing an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity.

The practice must be causing mental or physical harm to an individual.

What are these circumstances?

The legislation includes two new offences:

The first is where a person provides or delivers a conversion practice to an individual:

- With the intention of changing or suppressing the individual's sexual or gender identity, and
- Causes mental or physical harm to the individual that,
 - Endangers the individual's life, or
 - Is substantial and protracted.

This offence carries a **maximum punishment of five years imprisonment**.

The second offence is committed where a person:

- **takes** another from New South Wales, or
- **arranges for them to be taken** from New South Wales, with the intention that a conversion practice is delivered or provided to the individual outside New South Wales, or

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- **Engages a person outside New South Wales** to provide or deliver a conversion practice to an individual in New South Wales.

This offence applies even if the person who is subject to the planned conversion practice consents to the practice being carried out or if they cannot consent, a parent of the individual consents.

This offence carries a **maximum punishment of three years imprisonment**.

What circumstances DO NOT constitute an offence?

The Act contains important exclusions that make it clear that general conversations around religious beliefs, or how religious beliefs might be reflected in a person's life, are not conversion practices. This includes personal prayer or seeking spiritual guidance, the teachings of a religious leader or expression of a religious belief through sermon.

Similarly, conversations of a general nature between parents and children (including siblings, the wider family, and even friends), are not covered by this new law.

This law does not cover a psychologist or medical professional providing advice or counselling to an individual.

What can I do if I believe I have been subject to a conversion practice?

You can report the matter to the NSW Police Force or the [Anti-Discrimination Board](#).

What happens if I want to report this to police?

The police will need to speak with you about what has happened. This is to determine whether an offence has been committed. The allegation will then be referred to a Detective, for further investigation. This may result in police taking formal statement from you, and that information may be used in court.

Police may offer for a Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officer (GLLO) to be present when you speak with them. GLLOs provide specific support to LGBTQIA+ Community members and are available in most police commands.

What if the police don't think an offence has been committed?

Where police do not believe an offence has been committed, you can make a complaint to the [Anti-Discrimination Board](#) under the civil complaints scheme.

Is there somewhere I can find more information?

Yes, you can visit your local Police station or contact the Anti-discrimination Board:

Phone: 1800 670 812

Email: complaintsadb@justice.nsw.gov.au