

T R A N S C R I P T

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL LEGAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

Inquiry into Anti-LGBTIQA+ Hate Crimes in Victoria

Melbourne – Thursday 25 June 2026

MEMBERS

Joe McCracken – Chair

Michael Galea – Deputy Chair

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WITNESSES

Dr Melanie Thomson, Acting General Manager, The Men's Project, and

Mischa Barr, Lead, Policy and Advocacy, Jesuit Social Services.

The CHAIR: Welcome back to the next session of the Legal and Social Issues Committee inquiry into anti-LGBTIQA+ violence. I am Joe McCracken, the Chair, and we will go through and introduce our committee members. I will go to those in the room first and then those online.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Aiv Puglielli, North-Eastern Metropolitan Region.

Michael GALEA: Afternoon. Michael Galea, Deputy Chair, South-Eastern Metropolitan Region.

Ann-Marie HERMANS: Ann-Marie Hermans, South-Eastern Metropolitan Region.

Sheena WATT: Hello. Sheena Watt from Northern Metropolitan Region.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Good afternoon. Anasina Gray-Barberio, also Northern Metro.

The CHAIR: Thanks so much. All evidence taken is protected by parliamentary privilege as provided by the *Constitution Act 1975* and further subject to the provisions of the Legislative Council standing orders. Therefore the information that you provide today is protected by law. You are protected against any action for what you say during the hearings, but if you go elsewhere and say the same things, you may not necessarily be protected by the same privilege that exists in this room as we are talking right now. Any deliberately false evidence or misleading of the committee can be considered a contempt of Parliament.

All evidence will be recorded, but you will be provided with a proof version of the transcript after the hearing is finished. Ultimately that will be made public, because it will be put on the committee's website.

Just for the Hansard record, are you able to please say your name, your title and the organisation you are appearing on behalf of. For my own sanity, I will do it from my left to right, if that is okay.

Mischa BARR: Sure. I am Mischa Barr, Policy and Advocacy Lead from Jesuit Social Services.

Melanie THOMSON: And I am Melanie Thomson, Acting General Manager of the Men's Project in Jesuit Social Services.

The CHAIR: Perfect. Thank you so much for making yourselves available today and for coming in to talk to us about your views. We have got around 10 minutes on the clock, but as we just talked about, you can take a bit more – all good. Welcome, and we look forward to hearing from you. The floor is yours.

Mischa BARR: Thank you very much, Chair, for the opportunity to appear before this important inquiry. I would like to start by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land that we are all meeting on today, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation, and pay my respects to elders past and present. I would also like to express my gratitude to First Nations people for their care for country and community over thousands of years.

I would just like to start by introducing Jesuit Social Services. Jesuit Social Services is a social change organisation working to build a just society where everyone can flourish. We began nearly 50 years ago supporting boys and men in contact with the criminal justice system and have expanded our services over time to include delivery of programs in other areas such as prevention of men's violence, mental health, housing, education, employment and training. Support for young people and adults in contact with the justice system remains a core part of our work, including restorative group conferencing and delivery of reintegration programs for people who have offended. We are a national organisation with a significant footprint in Victoria, New South Wales and the Northern Territory.

In 2017 we established the Men's Project because it was apparent from our work with people in contact with the criminal justice system that it was predominantly men who use violence and cause harm but that there was a gap in programs and services working with men and boys to prevent violence and intervene earlier, before these men and boys came to the attention of the justice system. The Men's Project aims to provide leadership and

develop new approaches to reducing violence and other harmful behaviours prevalent among boys and men, to keep families and communities safe and to improve the wellbeing of people of all genders. Our work in the Men's Project includes our Man Box and Adolescent Man Box research, which explores the association between adherence to masculine stereotypes and the attitudes and behaviours of men and boys. This research shows that homophobia and transphobia are embedded in dominant ideas about what it means to be a man in Australia. My colleague Dr Melanie Thomson will speak about this research in more detail. We also deliver violence prevention and early intervention programs across a range of settings where we can reach men and boys. This includes schools, sports clubs and male-dominated workplaces such as the construction industry. We also work with boys at higher risk of using violence. In all our work through the Men's Project we are committed to remaining accountable to and working in solidarity with victim-survivors of men's violence, women's organisations and LGBTIQ+ advocates and organisations. As an organisation, we are committed to safe, inclusive and affirming practice for LGBTIQ+ staff and program participants, and we have been a Rainbow Tick-accredited organisation since 2023.

The recommendations in our submission can be summarised under four main themes. First, while criminal justice responses to violent offending against LGBTIQ+ people play an important role, we know that if we want to end this violence criminal justice responses are not sufficient. They do not necessarily target the anti-LGBTIQ+ prejudice underlying this violence, and of course they come too late. One of the important reform directions emerging from Victoria's Royal Commission into Family Violence was recognition of the need to focus on primary prevention, preventing violence before it starts, by addressing the underlying drivers of that violence. Violence against women and violence against LGBTIQ+ people share common drivers, including adherence to harmful masculine norms. Homophobia, transphobia and other forms of anti-LGBTIQ+ prejudice are additional drivers of violence against LGBTIQ+ people. We have seen considerable progress in addressing gender-based violence since the royal commission. In fact a recent report from ANROWS, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety, shows that most forms of violence against women have actually decreased in Victoria since 2016, and that is not true to the same extent in other Australian jurisdictions, suggesting that Victoria's reforms are making a difference. But there is clearly more to do in terms of integrating an explicit focus on addressing anti-LGBTIQ+ prejudice, homophobia and transphobia into existing violence prevention and early intervention programs, including Respectful Relationships education, and scaling up these important efforts to reach more people, especially boys and young men. Promoting equity and inclusion for LGBTIQ+ people in the places where we all live, learn, work and play is also an essential part of primary prevention. That is why programs like the Rainbow Tick are so important.

The second theme in our submission is the need for governments to take stronger action to ensure young people are protected from harmful online content. We know from our work with some of the young people who have been charged with violent offences against LGBTIQ+ people, as well as our Adolescent Man Box study and other research, that online platforms and influencers play a significant role in shaping the attitudes and behaviours of boys and young men. Protecting young people, both victim-survivors and those who use violence, from harmful online content has two parts to it. Governments need to give parents, schools and young people themselves practical tools and support to safely navigate online spaces. But it should not be entirely up to individuals to protect themselves and those they care for. Technology companies must take greater responsibility for preventing, detecting and disrupting online harms that occur on or are facilitated by their platforms. While the federal government has more regulatory levers in this space, state governments have an important role to play in putting pressure on the federal government to take assertive action, including ensuring the proposed digital duty of care addresses the ways algorithmic recommender systems contribute to the spread of hate speech and online platforms can be used to engage in hate speech and facilitate hate-motivated offline attacks. While online platforms can be used to amplify hate and facilitate harm, they also offer opportunities to disrupt and deter people from engaging in harmful behaviours and to provide support to victims of harm and abuse. We believe there is an opportunity to learn from the work of the CSAM – child sexual abuse material – Deterrence Centre established by Jesuit Social Services and the University of Tasmania to trial and evaluate online deterrence initiatives that seek to address online hate directed at LGBTIQ+ people and other marginalised groups.

Thirdly, we see a need for restorative and rehabilitative approaches to working with young people who have engaged in this type of offending as part of a suite of interventions for changing young people's behaviours. Although it is not appropriate in every case, restorative justice approaches can be valuable in holding young

people who have caused harm accountable for their behaviour, helping them to understand the harm they have caused and reducing recidivism. These processes can also support healing for victims when they choose to be present. There is also a need to incorporate an explicit focus on addressing harmful gender norms and anti-LGBTIQ+ prejudice into rehabilitation and reintegration programs for young people leaving custody.

Finally, we want to highlight the vital work done by LGBTIQ+ organisations in both preventing anti-LGBTIQ+ violence and supporting victim-survivors. They also play a critical role in building the capacity of mainstream organisations like ours to provide safe and inclusive workplaces and services for LGBTIQ+ people. Often this work is done without dedicated resourcing or they are not funded adequately to meet demand. One of the most important things the Victorian government can do to combat anti-LGBTIQ+ violence is to increase resourcing for LGBTIQ+-led organisations. I will now hand over to my colleague Dr Melanie Thomson.

Melanie THOMSON: Thanks, Mischa. I would like to acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation and also acknowledge the people who have been harmed by anti-LGBTIQ+ hate crimes and the organisations who work tirelessly to advocate for their rights and safety.

Research over recent decades has shown that homophobia and transphobia play a significant role in policing masculinity, and as Misha said, exploring anti-LGBTIQ+ sentiments has been a core part of Jesuit Social Services research on masculinities. The Man Box and Adolescent Man Box studies examine the degree to which men and adolescent boys subscribe to a set of stereotypical masculine norms, which we refer to as the Man Box rules, including rules related to homophobia and transphobia. There is a lot in these research reports, but I thought I would highlight five points that relate particularly to this inquiry.

The first point is the Man Box and Adolescent Man Box research shows homophobia and transphobia are embedded in dominant masculine norms. The 2024 *Man Box* report found that among men aged 18 to 30, 25 per cent agreed that a gay guy is not a real man, and an even higher percentage, 39 per cent, agreed that a transgender man is not a real man. The 2025 *Adolescent Man Box* report found that 48 per cent of teenage boys believed that being thought of as gay makes them seem like less of a man.

The second point is that not only are these attitudes present but our research found particularly high levels of endorsement of these homophobic and transphobic rules compared to other rigid masculine norms. For example, the 2024 Man Box study found that 43 per cent of young men agreed that a transgender man is not a real man, but only 11 per cent agreed with the rule that a man should not have to do household chores. The Adolescent Man Box study in 2025 found that 48 per cent of boys believed that being thought of as gay made them seem like less of a man, while only 14 per cent of boys believed it is hard to respect a teenage boy who shows his feelings.

The third point is that homophobic and transphobic attitudes appear to be more prevalent among younger adolescents. In general, endorsement of the Adolescent Man Box rules, including rules related to homophobia and transphobia, was higher among younger boys aged 14 to 15 than the older boys aged 16 to 18. So for example, 58 per cent of 14- to 15-year-old boys think it is hard to take a teenage boy seriously if he wears nail polish, compared with 50 per cent of 16- to 18-year-olds.

The fourth point is that, concerningly, our research suggests that homophobic and transphobic attitudes are persisting over time. Not all masculine norms are changing at the same rate, and while some masculine norms do appear to be shifting, homophobic and transphobic attitudes appear to be more resistant to change. So for example, when we compare attitudes for men in the 2018 study with the same age group of men in the 2023 study, there is a very modest decrease in homophobic attitudes compared to other Man Box rules. So for example, there is a much bigger shift over that time period in the reduction of men who hold on to rigid ideas about who should do housework or violence being okay.

The fifth point is, importantly, these rigid masculine attitudes are also associated with harmful behaviours. The more strongly boys and men hold rigid views about masculinity, the more likely they are to condone and use violence. A related point: boys who most strongly endorse the rigid masculine rules were more likely to report watching pornography with aggressive acts towards gender-diverse people. And these attitudes also shape how boys respond when they witness abuse. We asked adolescents how they responded when they last witnessed verbal or physical harassment of certain groups, and adolescent boys said that they were less likely to be

bothered when they had witnessed harassment of a transgender person – 22 per cent said they were not bothered by this – compared with when they witnessed harassment of a woman or girl, where 5 per cent said they were not bothered. Boys who most strongly endorsed these restrictive masculine rules were less likely to be bothered and less likely to intervene when they witnessed harassment compared with those who rejected those rigid rules.

I think an important implication of the research is that while there has been some encouraging progress in shifting some masculine norms, like shifts in condoning violence or emotional restriction, homophobia and transphobia attitudes seem to be persisting more, and I think this suggests the need for more targeted attention on those elements. At Jesuit Social Services we are currently in the process of integrating the findings from the research into our work, and that includes homophobia and transphobia – addressing those specifically. In practice, we help program participants to understand the harms associated with rigid masculine norms, both to themselves and others. We encourage detachment from these rigid norms – for example, getting boys to reflect on their own values and exploring diverse and healthy alternatives, including celebrating positive masculinities of gay and trans men. This includes proactive attention, so actually including explicit scenarios of homophobia and transphobia for discussion with program participants, as well as responsive action such as opening up a reflective conversation if homophobic or transphobic comments are made by program participants during the program. We have included LGBTIQ+ representatives on all of our research advisory groups, and we continue to really value our collaboration with those organisations in the translation of these research findings into practice. Thank you.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much. We will go straight into questions. We will go to us in the room first, then we will go to those guys online. I will start off; I do not know where I am going to start off, though. I noticed one of the things that you might have said earlier on, Mischa, about social media companies having an obligation. We had Grindr in here earlier today talking about the different things that they do. Sometimes they work in consultation with Victoria Police. Sometimes there are different limitations on what information they can give due to privacy concerns. What obligations do you see for dating apps, websites and the like? What obligations should they have in protecting those people that engage on those apps?

Mischa BARR: Yes, absolutely. As I said in my opening statement, there are two sides to that question: there is supporting people themselves to be able to safely navigate those online spaces but of course, perhaps more importantly, actually putting obligations on tech companies to prevent, disrupt and deter.

The CHAIR: I might just say too one of the big challenges that a lot of people have raised is the fact that some people who are unsure of their sexuality want to explore it during those engagements but want to remain anonymous. That is a really hard challenge to balance with verification of identity and those sorts of things. I am really interested to hear.

Mischa BARR: Yes, absolutely, and perhaps we may not be able to give you definitive answers on some of these questions.

The CHAIR: No, that's fine.

Mischa BARR: I think we would go to, of course, the digital duty of care – obviously that sits with the federal government, and there is an intention, I believe, to legislate that later in the year – so making sure that that really goes to anti-LGBTIQ+ forms and other forms of hate online so that tech companies are taking proactive measures to actually address these types of hate online. In relation to the dating code of conduct, to dating apps, as we mentioned in our submission there is currently a voluntary code of conduct, but it is voluntary and there is no enforcement or compliance.

The CHAIR: Would you like it to be mandatory?

Mischa BARR: We would recommend that that be made mandatory – that it be legislated. The other example I think that we would point to – and maybe Mel can speak to this more – is the opportunity for deterrence messaging. As you say, there is not a hard and fast line necessarily. For example, the work that we do with the CSAM Deterrence Centre – obviously child sexual abuse is clearly illegal, so it is a more straightforward process for detecting if someone puts in a search term that is looking for that kind of material or that kind of thing – to be able to pop up a message that says, 'You are trying to access illegal material,' and potentially send them to a support service, for example. That is illegal. It is obviously less clear-cut in this case.

We think there is an opportunity to trial and evaluate similar kinds of measures, so deterrence kind of messaging, but obviously because of the different contexts it would need to be designed –

The CHAIR: In an appropriate way.

Mischa BARR: in an appropriate way. Through the CSAM Deterrence Centre we have been working with tech companies on that deterrence messaging, so that is a collaborative process. We work with them to understand the specific user experience with their platform and how a deterrence message would best fit within the parameters of the platform that they operate.

The CHAIR: That makes sense. Unfortunately, my time is up. We could probably talk for a lot –

Mischa BARR: Sorry.

The CHAIR: No, no, it is not your fault. It is just the conversation. We could talk forever, I think, but I will pass over to Mr Galea.

Michael GALEA: Thank you, Chair. Thanks, both, for joining us today. I would just like to dive into some of the stats that you were talking us through, Melanie, in particular the data points that show higher rates of homophobia or transphobia among 14- to 15-year-old boys compared to 16- to 17-year-old boys. Is this something that you are seeing that is different from previous surveys – a higher incidence – or is it a case perhaps of a bit more maturity kicking in as boys mature?

Melanie THOMSON: Thank you. It is a good question. This Adolescent Man Box study was the first of its kind last year, and so we do not have comparative data. We suspect that the difference between the younger and older boys is probably related to a range of things, and one of those would probably be developmental in the sense that as boys mature they are more likely to have a more diverse friendship group. They are more likely to be friends with girls or have girlfriends and different people in their lives who kind of influence their views. But there is potentially a generational difference occurring as well.

Michael GALEA: Thank you. From your data, can you identify a correlation? For example, is it the same cohorts where you are seeing more misogynistic views also sharing homophobic or transphobic views? Can you see from that data that it is aligned, or is it a bit more diffracted?

Melanie THOMSON: It is something that we would like to dig into more. We have not done a huge amount of analysis to bring those data points together. But we do have data that shows that boys who most strongly endorse rigid masculine norms are more likely to express misogyny and they are also more likely to express transphobic attitudes. So we assume that there is a lot of commonality there, but we have not brought that together in a really thorough way.

Michael GALEA: Yes. Of course I am conscious of my time as well. But the research is obviously designed to help us to support young men and not to say, ‘You’re a problem,’ because I am sure that is probably the worst thing that we could be doing, but to better understand them so that we can address these and create more positive environments for them and for the broader community. Is that fair?

Melanie THOMSON: Absolutely, yes. It has been really important to us with this research that this is not about shaming or putting blame on young people who are feeling a lot of pressure to be a certain way. The research shows really clearly that boys are under quite significant pressure to live up to certain masculine norms. So we see our role as supporting them to reflect on those pressures, acknowledge them, detach from those norms and explore other more flexible ways of being a boy or a man.

Michael GALEA: Thank you very much. Thanks, Chair.

The CHAIR: No worries. Mr Puglielli, over to you.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Thank you, Chair. Good afternoon. Just to touch on the opening statements that you have given, you told us that through your research you found that homophobia and transphobia are embedded in what it is to be a man in Australia, which is so deeply concerning to hear. You spoke about things like the policing of masculinity. Can I ask: did the research explore how men and boys are spending their time? I ask because in a lot of this conversation around prevention we need to know where we are going to reach people in

the first place. A lot of it has been about schools. But did any of the research cover where men and boys are spending their time? Where can we reach them outside the school setting?

Melanie THOMSON: Thank you. The research with the Adolescent Man Box did look at some elements of where they are spending their time. For example, there was a question about whether they agreed that their online social lives were more engaging and rewarding than their offline social lives. We found overall about a third of young people said that their online lives are more engaging and rewarding, and for boys who most strongly endorse rigid masculine norms that number actually goes up to almost 50 per cent. I think it is 47 per cent of boys who really hold dear to those rigid norms and say that their online lives are more rewarding and engaging. We understand that online life is central to young people's experience, but at the same time it is quite fragmented. We asked young people to name an influencer they follow, and we were quite staggered at the number of influencers named. There were I think over 400 influencers named. Most of those were only named once, so there is real fragmentation in terms of who people are following.

Another relevant data point from the research is we gave a number of parts of society or groups of people and asked young people to rate which of these have a big impact on their attitudes. We were really interested to find that media was named as having a big impact, including social media and pornography, video games. But actually what came out as higher than that were relationships in real life. Family was perceived to have a greater impact, particularly parents, and so were formal institutions and individuals including teachers. So we see a really important role for people in the lives of young people to be able to have informed, constructive conversations. So teachers, as you said, but also parents and friends – people in their lives.

Aiv PUGLIELLI: Thank you. Thanks, Chair.

The CHAIR: Thank you. I will now go to our committee members online. The first one up is Mrs Hermans. I will just check in to see if they are working. Can you hear me, Ann-Marie?

Ann-Marie HERMANS: I can hear you, but I am having trouble turning my camera on.

The CHAIR: No, that is all right. If you just want to go without the camera on, that is all okay. We can hear you, so I will hand it over to you. Okay?

Ann-Marie HERMANS: All right. No worries. Apologies if I have been rustling paper when you were trying to talk to me. Thank you so much for the data that you are producing. I noted that you made a very – for me – concerning observation in your data that you had picked up, that there were higher levels of violence in young people watching pornography that also dehumanises transgender people. I think that is what you said. In some of the data that has come out too – I mean, obviously we have got a very real problem with pornography in Australia. I think it is exceptionally high. I am imagining that you have got that data too. Can you inform us a little bit more in terms of what percentage of these young people had, first of all, engaged in any form of pornography and therefore what percentage had engaged in the dehumanising of young people, and what age group are we looking at here? Were there any particular platforms? Is there anything that we can do to be filtering it? This is what I am trying to think through of things that are obviously giving people ideas to do copycat crimes for hate crimes. That is what I am thinking. I am trying to look at what avenues we can somehow plug up here and whether there was any additional data that you had.

Melanie THOMSON: Thank you. Thank you very much for the question. The data I mentioned was that boys who strongly endorse these rigid masculine rules were more likely to be watching pornography that had aggressive acts. We asked about different types of aggressive acts, including punching, slapping, physically aggressive acts. What we saw in the data was that boys who endorsed rigid masculine norms the most strongly are more likely to be watching that kind of pornography. We specifically asked about who that aggression is directed towards, and so that trend was the case regardless of who the violence was directed towards, but that included aggressive acts towards gender diverse people. In terms of the percentage of young people watching pornography – you are testing my memory slightly there and I can get back to you with more specifics.

Ann-Marie HERMANS: Yes. Happy to take that on notice if you want to send us back more specifics.

Melanie THOMSON: Yes, I would say we know from this and other research that it is a high percentage of young people, it starts at a young age and that increasingly this pornography does include choking and

aggressive acts towards people. We did not ask specifically about the platforms that young people were engaging with, but we know online pornography is very easily accessible.

Ann-Marie HERMANS: So just to clarify –

The CHAIR: Sorry, we are out of time, but if you just want to quickly get through this part and read that, then that would be really helpful.

Ann-Marie HERMANS: Can I take it on notice just to get a percentage of violent pornographic engagement. You have given us some data, but it would be really good if we could have a little bit more insight into that. If there is any more data that you can send to us, that would be helpful for us to be able to examine the behaviour, the trends, the things that are leading to this in terms of pornography, because it may be something that we can put filters on that might make a huge difference.

The CHAIR: Are you happy to help us?

Melanie THOMSON: Absolutely. Thank you.

The CHAIR: Thanks very much for that. I might hand over next to Ms Watt. Sheena, over to you.

Sheena WATT: I was thinking you might go to my colleague Ms Gray-Barberio.

The CHAIR: I am trying to trick you.

Sheena WATT: You are tricking me, Chair. Thank you both for coming and presenting to us today and telling us a little bit about the depth of the experience of Jesuit Social Services. I want to ask about recruitment methods for young people. Do you have any insights about any differences or how these young folks are being recruited to be perpetrators? And are we seeing any differences geographically on how folks are recruited?

Mischa BARR: I am not sure we have any data on that that I can share with you today, but we can certainly take that on notice. From the work that we have done with some of the young people who have been charged with these kinds of offences, they have generally been engaged through a group, and there is usually one main person who is motivating people to do it, and they have been motivated by, in many cases, YouTube content. We can get back to you with some more specific data on that in terms of geographic locations and that kind of thing. But obviously we work with some of those young people doing restorative conferences, so it is not necessarily all the young people who have been charged but those who opt to participate in that kind of process.

Sheena WATT: So YouTube – are there any other sources that folks might have come through? Reddit groups or any others that you might –

Mischa BARR: When we spoke to our justice team colleagues before coming here, they spoke specifically about YouTube, but we can ask them. I mean, they are only hearing this anecdotally from the young people, who may or may not share some of this information, but we can have a follow-up conversation with them.

Sheena WATT: That is particularly helpful. Thank you. You have talked about restorative justice, and to my mind it is certainly something that I think needs a bit more of a bright shining light on it, because it can be certainly a very effective process. From the perspective of Jesuit Social Services, what would that look like? What has worked well? How do we continue to support restorative justice processes for young people?

Mischa BARR: Yes, absolutely. That is a great question. Thank you. We certainly think that restorative justice approaches play a really important role as part of a suite of options for responding to this kind of offending. Obviously, it is not appropriate in every case, and it is very important that we work with the victim to understand the particular expectations and needs that they have from that kind of process and whether they are willing to participate. The victim does not have to participate in that process if they do not wish to. The evidence that we have says that restorative justice processes are really useful in terms of holding young people to account for their behaviour, helping them to understand the harm that they have actually caused and also reducing re-offending, because they really understand the impact of what they have done. On the other hand, they also can have really beneficial impacts for victims in terms of supporting healing and recovering and reducing post-traumatic stress. So they can really be helpful from both sides of the coin. Certainly one of the findings, for example, from the most recent financial year across all of our programs in Victoria and the

Northern Territory restorative justice programs is that I think 94 per cent of the nearly 300 participants in those programs showed increased empathy as a result of participating in that kind of process.

We engage in, at the moment, pre-plea youth diversion conferencing through the Children's Court and also pre-sentence youth justice group conferencing. We facilitate both of those types of conferences. Under the new *Youth Justice Act* I believe there is going to be an expansion of options for restorative justice, which is great to see. We would like to see it become an opt-out process, so rather than having to be referred, that that is an option for all young people. It is not appropriate for everyone. They may choose to not participate in it. At the moment there has to be a direct referral, whereas we would like to see that be an opt-out process so it is a default mechanism that is available for young people.

Sheena WATT: Thank you, Mischa. I think that is my time, Chair. I will return to you.

The CHAIR: Thanks very much, Sheena. And over to you, Ms Gray-Barberio.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Thanks very much, Chair. I appreciate it. And thank you both for your presentation and appearing before us this afternoon. I want to start with your submission. You spoke about Victoria's youth justice system not having a framework for identifying or programs for responding to misogynist, anti-LGBTQA+, religious, racist and other forms of prejudice or radicalisation among young offenders. Is there a jurisdiction that does good work in this space that we should be looking to for potential recommendations?

Mischa BARR: That is a great question. That might be one we need to take on notice in terms of other jurisdictions and any international evidence in that regard. From what we understand, there is not a great deal of evidence in terms of what works to deradicalise young people outside of those engaged in religious extremist ideology, so there is probably a need for more research into that space. But yes, there is certainly a gap in terms of working with young people who have offended to actually change those attitudes and behaviours. We know that prison is not a rehabilitative environment. There is really an opportunity as part of reintegration and rehabilitation programs for young people who are leaving custody to integrate some more explicit focus on addressing some of those kinds of attitudes. We can look into what evidence there might be from elsewhere.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Thank you. I appreciate that. How does racism appear in your research, and are there any findings that you can share with us related to this?

Melanie THOMSON: Thank you very much for that question. It is something that we are really interested in. To date the Man Box and Adolescent Man Box surveys have not specifically asked about racism, but we are about to conduct a new piece of research that will look into how different masculine norms and attitudes relate to all types of prejudice and discrimination, so misogyny and anti-LGBTQIA+ sentiments as well as attitudes about racism. At this point, I am afraid, our research has not looked at that specifically. It is something we want to do carefully with key stakeholders. We are looking forward to our next piece of research looking into that.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: Thank you. I think that will be really interesting. Oh, just as I was about to ask a question –

The CHAIR: If you want to just quickly finish off your one, Anasina, that is okay.

Anasina GRAY-BARBERIO: No, that is okay, Chair. It is going to take me a minute just to ask it.

The CHAIR: Okay. All right. We have probably only got a minute left, so we may as well finish up, I think, because we are done at a quarter to. That does bring this session to an end. Thanks so much for your time today; I really appreciate it. I think there are a couple of little things that you took on notice. If you are happy to provide them – when you can of course. Take your time to collect it and have a look through it all. But from us, thanks very much. As I said, you will be provided with a proof version of the transcript so you can have a look over that too. Thank you.

Witnesses withdrew.