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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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# **GOVERNMENTS HAVE NO PLACE IN THE BEDROOM**

The Australian Privacy Foundation (APF), the civil society organisation concerned with privacy, has called on all state, territory and Commonwealth governments to follow Victoria's example and right a historic wrong.

This week the Victorian Government committed to changing that state's law to enable the expungement of criminal convictions for consensual same-sex activity involving adults. Until 1981 it was a criminal offence for men in Victoria to engage in same sex activity in the privacy of their own homes and other places away from the public gaze. That consensual activity, in private, was also an offence under the laws of the other states and territories.

Reflecting respect for human dignity and diversity, consensual gay and lesbian activities have been decriminalised in all Australian jurisdictions. Anomalously, however, people have retained criminal records for activities that are perfectly legal.

According to APF board member, Bruce Arnold, "Expunging the convictions will not compensate people for the fines, imprisonment and humiliation associated with a criminal conviction for activity that should never have been prosecuted. It will however acknowledge an historic wrong. Just as importantly it will free people from unjustified discrimination in employment and other areas of life."

The APF therefore now calls on all governments to emulate Victoria and embrace the reforms outlined by the Human Rights Law Centre at [http://www.hrlc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Gay\\_Sex\\_Convictions\\_Paper\\_January2014.pdf](http://www.hrlc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Gay_Sex_Convictions_Paper_January2014.pdf).

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