

My response to some of the questions raised in your proposed review of the Anti-Discrimination Act (1993), from the point of view of what is just and reasonable in a democratic society, but particularly from my interest in Christian schooling.

Should any exemptions for religious or cultural bodies be removed?

Definitely not. In a free society, every parent must have the right to choose what kind of schooling their children should have. Parents are absolutely free NOT to attend a Christian school, which - at the same time - have proven to be consistently good, responsible and reasonable citizens of the NT. Faith-based schools are founded on fundamental beliefs and values that drive everything that is done in the school. Critical to this is the employment of those who share these beliefs - otherwise it becomes a nonsense. Although a government is, in theory, elected by a majority of voting citizens, this does not give that government a mandate to ride roughshod over the beliefs and values of any minority, no matter how much it may disagree with them. Furthermore, no government can legislate/dictate belief - unless, of course, it is an authoritarian regime only interested in imposing its will on the population, which is not the system of democracy we have in Australia.

Should a representative complaint model process be introduced into the Act?

No. Such a body would provide a platform for any individual or group to vexatiously attack those it disagrees with, particularly those who may be bent on destroying them.

Should vilification provisions be included in the Act?

Not unless the provisions are objectively watertight, so that any subjectivity is removed.

Should the attribute of gender identity be included in the Act?

No as a protected attribute as it would conflict with the freedom to hold and practice religious beliefs that may not agree with such definitions.

Should the term "parenthood" be replaced with "carer responsibilities"

Is there any reason why both cannot be included?

Finally, I would encourage you - in the interest of transparency - to publicize the results of this consultation.

