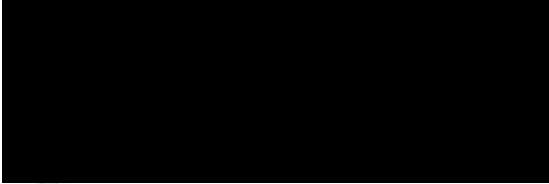


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To: policy.agd@nt.gov.au

Anti-Discrimination Act Review

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on proposals to update the Anti-Discrimination Act. The legislation needs to be updated in both language and content. As a member of Rainbow Territory, I support the proposals included in its submission.

I'm adding a personal submission with an emphasis on proposals that would remove content of the current Act that enshrines discrimination (questions 14 and 15 in the Modernisation of the Anti-Discrimination Act discussion paper, September 2017), and in particular the religious exemptions currently in the Act, which I believe should be removed altogether.

It is inappropriate, offensive and even bizarre that an anti-discrimination act explicitly allows discrimination on the basis of sexuality, even more so when some of the circumstances where discrimination is allowed are in relation to services that receives public funding.

My preference is that discrimination should not be allowed in any circumstances. Human rights – including the right to equal opportunity and freedom from discrimination – should take precedence over religious and cultural beliefs.

However, an acceptable compromise would be that organisations wishing to discriminate on the basis of religious or cultural belief should have to apply for any exemption. Discrimination on the basis of one particular attribute (LGBTI status) should not be provided in any circumstances. Religious and cultural bodies wanting to discriminate on any basis should have to apply for and justify why they require a particular exemption.

I support the proposal to remove the current exclusion in relation to assisted reproductive services. The current act has allowed – not required – discrimination on the basis of sexuality. It has been a source of much distress to friends and colleagues and is long overdue for removal. The fact that the only provider in the NT has recently stopped discriminating on the basis of sexuality doesn't mean the current exclusion should be ignored. In addition, there should be a stand-alone piece of legislation in relation to assisted reproductive services.

I look forward to the outcome of this process, and hope the end result is an updated, comprehensive act that supports equal opportunity and protection from discrimination for all Territorians.



31 January 2018