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Dear Director,

I am writing in response to reading the Discussion Paper on the Modernisation of the Anti-Discrimination Act September 2017.

Firstly I would like to congratulate you on reviewing the anti-discrimination act. I believe in these current times changes in society are rapidly occurring therefore we do need to review, reflect and modernise appropriately.

In saying that I believe that in reviewing and reflecting we also need to research and have a need for change.

I have thoroughly read the discussion paper and have given a number of areas a great deal of thought and in doing so processed my values, beliefs not only for myself but what I personally believe is the best for our community. I have lived in Darwin since 1994 therefore feel that I am entitled to an opinion and to be heard hence why I have decided to write a response to parts of the discussion paper. There are particular areas I feel strongly convicted by.

It intrigues me that people and especially the governments of the nation believe that we can all be equal and are striving for that to be the case. The reality is we are not. In this country we will never all be equal, unless of course we become a communist nation where the government controls the people – their employment, wages, education, family situations, accommodation etc. I'm not keen on this idea as I suspect you, the reader, are not, as well as a great deal of the population. Our nation is built on democracy, our values are based upon this concept that each person has the right to vote, freedom of speech as such.

In order for each person to be deemed as equal we would all require our parents to bring us up under the same rule book or boundaries. We would all gain the same education, let's face it there are huge differences between schools here in the Top End, differences between each school in the public system, differences between the public and the private sector and differences in the private system alone.

All wages would be the same no matter what your role or your contribution to society is or the amount of training gained as we would not like to discriminate against those who do not have the intelligence to become the Director of Legal Policy.

Considering my response to question 8 in the discussion paper 'should socioeconomic status be included as a protected attribute' I honestly do not see how that will happen. Our governments bend over backwards to assist those of a lower economic status. These people need to want to work towards change. I believe they have the capacity to change and the resources to do so.

In looking at question 4 'should vilification provision be included in the Act?' I believe that the wording within this proposed change needs more consideration. I feel that words such as insult and offend are too subjective. I have a couple of neighbours who swear at each other, to them this is normal but to me I am frequently offended by the language used. Some behaviours come down to a value system, which I believe are changing and not for the better. We are generating a society who feel they are entitled to everything and do not need to work or earn status. I do believe that the Governments, both State and Federal, need to better manage insulting, discriminating and offensive comments that people believe they have the right to make due to freedom of speech, especially in

regards to social media. Freedom of speech is not always helpful in creating a productive and supportive society.

In relation to religious exemptions I do have personal issues with this section. There are a number of schools within the NT who have been established, not at the direction of a church but by a parental body who desired and still desire to have their children to be educated in Christian values and beliefs such putting others before yourself a concept which is counter cultural these days. These schools have served the Darwin community without controversy. The parents want to partner with the school and have a say in the running of the facility. These schools create safe, welcoming learning environments where all students are valued for who they are not what they can or can not do. I believe that in amending this part of the act will affect the ability of these schools to be able to be distinctive in what they do. I believe the fact they are enabled to employ staff members who believe and adhere to the school's policies makes a difference and is a major component of what makes the school distinctive and effective.

I think that it would be an absolute tragedy if schools were mandated over who they had to employ. If a Buddhist were to seek employment at the Christian school would it mean that they would have to be employed even though their values and beliefs do not align?

Parents consistently sent their children to Christian schools, in fact parents of many faiths as the schools do not discriminate enrolment based upon religious beliefs or not.

The fact that the government look to amend this part of the act itself is discriminatory. These schools uphold the values of service, care, compassion and respect. Surely the government want to produce civilians to uphold these same values. Students graduate from these schools knowing they are valued, loved and supported.

I have it on good word from a police constable last year that he rarely, if ever, heard of any students from Marrara Christian College requiring the school based constable. Isn't this evidence that this school is empowering its students a set of values which is benefiting society. Why change their ability to do so and in doing so serving the community.

Thank you for taking the time to read my response.

Kind regards,

