

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, 6 January 2018 2:45 PM
To: Policy AGD
Subject: response to Modernisation of the Anti-Discrimination Act

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Response to the proposed modernisation of the Anti-Discrimination Act NT

I want to address the Religious Exemptions section in particular.

The document as a whole is reflecting the cry in our society for different groups to be treated fairly. Difference makes up our Australian society. We are multi-cultural, multi-faith etc.

To demand however, through legislation that people who hold one belief cannot exist without exclusiveness denies what it is to be Australian. We are a society where differences juxtapose.

Removing the ability of religious schools to operate in an exclusive manner in some regards could be interpreted as a removal of a right to be different. The teaching profession demands that teachers be 'fit and proper', and this definition is left deliberately broad – why is this definition not also being examined in this same discussion? The reason why is that we cannot legislate against all acts of human error: deliberate or not. The right of a private school to determine who works there and even who attends is their right. What this document seems to be catering for is the individuals who are being told no, sorry. You don't fit with us. I would not be a fit in a Muslim school (as my beliefs and lifestyle are different) and so would not even attempt to gain employment there. To try and force a Muslim School to then employ me would be pointless. Some differences matter. We cannot legislate away differences rather, we must help people to be more tolerant.

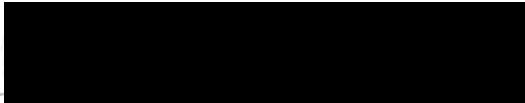
Making a system fairer would assume that there is something broken with the system already. How many, if any, instances are there of non-adherents being excluded from employment in religious schools? What is the problem with religious schools choosing who they employ on the basis of what they see to be 'fit and proper'. Being religious is about life-style.

I believe that parents who send their children to any school expect that their child will receive a rounded education – a parent who chooses to send their child to a private school (religious or not) expect that their child will receive the advertised and promised education. While parents still have the choice of school in our country, don't they still have the right to the kind of school they want and the kind of teachers they want? Removing the ability of religious schools to employ those who adhere to the same faith and lifestyle would deny parents their rights.

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So, this proposed change is not about equality for Australians, it is about the rights of one group being more viewed as more important than another. This is not Australian. Being different and having choice is a right we have in our blessed country.

Sincerely,

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