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Director, Legal Policy
Department of the Attorney-General and Justice
Policy.AGD@nt.gov.au

29th January 2018

Dear Director,

I am writing to you regarding the proposed changes to the discussion paper: Modernisation of the Anti-Discrimination Act.

As an [REDACTED] within the NT Christian Schools, and an active member of the [REDACTED] Community, I agree that legislation needs to be reviewed to remain current to the people it serves, however I do not believe that some of the proposed changes to modernize the Anti-discrimination Act are necessary or required.

The question I will address is:

Question: Should exemptions for religious or cultural bodies be removed?

The main point I will address is the proposal for removing section 37(A) – *‘that permits religious schools to discriminate against employees on the grounds of religious beliefs, activity or sexuality if done in good faith to avoid offending the religious sensitivities of people of the particular religion.’*

These exemptions for religious or cultural bodies should not be removed for the following reasons:

- a) It seems obvious to me that there would be consistent conflict if a prospective employee is hired but does not agree to values of that particular religion that underpins that school. It would like Microsoft hiring an employee who thinks Apple products are the best products on the market.
- b) If a Christian school is hiring staff to promote and advocate for the biblical values and principles, then the school cannot maintain integrity, transparency and accountability to the students they teach if they hire a person who does not agree to those values. It would be a discredit and disservice to the students and families. A business wouldn't hire someone who doesn't believe or agree with their product, why would a school?
- c) There is no evidence from the community demanding a change to the way our Christian school hires staff. In fact our school community consisting primarily of students and families have chosen to enrol their child in our school because it IS a Christian school promoting Christian values and morals that they agree with.
- d) Parents have a right to choose how they educate their kids, by removing this exemption, you remove the right for parents to choose Christian education for their child which is a democratic freedom in Australia.

Thank you for your consideration and time reading my response to this discussion paper. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]