

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, 9 November 2017 9:21 PM  
**To:** Policy AGD  
**Subject:** concerns regarding the proposed changes to the anti discrimination act

To Director, Policy Coordination,

## Concerns regarding the proposed changes to the anti-discrimination act.

My family have lived in the NT for 12 years and we have enjoyed the freedom to send our 3 children to a Christian school for those 12 years. Our family has been involved in serving the Darwin community through Girl Guides and Scouts groups. My daughter is now studying Social Work at CDU and volunteering in a variety of youth programs in Darwin. My son has worked in school holidays for a software company, and been involved in UN Youth, and in running computer programming clubs for primary school students at his school. My family are heavily involved in sporting clubs, and in fund raising for many aspects of the Darwin community. The distinctive Christian schooling that my children have received, has helped shape them into functional and significant contributors to the NT community. Contributors that do not discriminate, however, ironically, will become the recipients of discrimination if proposed changes to the anti-discrimination act were to occur.

### **Should any exemptions for religious or cultural bodies be removed?**

As a parent I have enjoyed my fundamental right, and because of the freedom that is highly valued in Australia, to send my children to a Christian School. I am very concerned that the proposed changes to the anti-discrimination law regarding removing the exemptions for Christian schools ability to employ only Christian staff.

I believe that in removing this exception you are actually *discriminating against my family and our religious choice* to send our children to a religious school. My free choice is to send my children to a school where my faith will be practiced and taught. These schools are distinctive because they only employ Christian staff who I entrust my children to be influenced by, and taught by. This includes all of the staff of the school For instance the office staff who serve their needs when they go to the 'sick bay' or have a question about payment for a camp, and the gardeners who interact with them when setting up for school functions. I believe this staff interact with, serve, impact and teach my children according to my faith.

Teachers and others seeking employment, who don't hold these religious beliefs, are free to seek employment in many other places. However, if you removed these exemptions for employment in religious schools, I have no other place to send my children. I am the one who will have my options and freedoms taken away from me, therefore my family will become the ones who will become discriminated against!

### **Question: Should the attribute of gender identity be included in the Act?**

Deeply ingrained in the Christian faith that I am free to have my family observe and be taught, is beliefs about sexuality, gender identity, and a biblically-informed view of traditional marriage. These religious beliefs, and my right to have my children taught them in a Christian school, should be protected – NOT discriminated against! If gender identity and intersex status are included as protected attributes, this will be in direct conflict with religion as a protected attribute. Once again, an attempt to change the protection will result in discriminating against my family and our right to observe and practice our religious beliefs.

### **Question: Should a representative complaint model process be introduced into the Act? And Question: Should vilification provisions be included in the Act?**

I am concerned that if this model were introduced, 'interest groups' could bring a complaint about something they find offensive, and religious groups will not be given equal protection to exercise their freedom of religion. This,

once again will cause my religious beliefs to be discriminated against. Further, vilification language proposed is very subjective. I would like my religious right to hold a view of gender identity, and voice to my children a Biblical informed view of traditional marriage, to be upheld as my democratic right.

Thank-you for your consideration of these concerns. I ask that you please release the report from this public consultation,

Regards,

