

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 30 January 2018 8:00 PM
To: Policy AGD
Subject: Confidential - Comment on potential future amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act, The Discussion Paper – Modernisation of the Anti-Discrimination Act.

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Confidential

To the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice
Policy.AGD@nt.gov.au
 28th January 2018

Dear Director

I am writing in regard to your department's invitation to comment on potential future amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act, The Discussion Paper – Modernisation of the Anti-Discrimination Act.

I ask that you publish the response and feedback you get from the community related to this discussion paper. This is important because from my perspective, especially concerning "Removing Exemptions for Religious or Cultural Bodies" there has been no public request for change, significant or otherwise.

Of particular concern to me are (numbers from Summary of Questions):

- 2. Gender identity. 3. Intersex Status.

Including these attributes will be in conflict with the freedom of belief we tolerate in a multicultural Australia. Everyone (within reason) has a place to be who they are and believe as they choose in the rich fabric of our nation.

- 20. Definitions of man and woman be repealed.

For medical and biological reasons at the very least this, respectfully saying, is silly and must be left alone.

- 4. The specific anti-vilification laws.

It must be ensured that thresholds are set high enough and robust enough to protect all respectful expressions of faith, belief and lifestyle. Running the risk of decent people going about their daily lives living in fear of complaint is not a desired outcome.

- 10. Introducing the representative complaints model.

Respectfully I say do not do this. For whatever reason this likely will turn into a petty, exasperating nightmare ruining lives, clogging the courts and denying people and organisations charged with complaints the right to live their chosen lives in peace. The resulting persecution of a group or individual runs counter to the cherished Australian ideals of freedom of belief and association.

- 14. Removing exemptions for religious or cultural bodies.

Again I ask do not do this. It will mean protection for religious and cultural bodies will be lost. Australia has the earth's oldest continues living culture, it is right that their sacred sites are protected. This paper, in suggesting the exemptions be removed, says religious groups and cultures in general have limited value.

The document (quote page 22 ... ensure that cultural and religious bodies are more accountable for their actions and more inclusive.) is suggesting that someone who has no experience of any particular faith based group or culture can serve with understanding or empathy within that or any other group in a highly defined position? To be fair, for

example, an Aboriginal elder is a highly unique position that rightly demands occupation by a very specific person. So also a teacher teaching in any position in a faith school needs to be unique in professing and understanding those beliefs in order to support the authentic ethos of that institution.

Celebrating religious and cultural difference will be diminished. Removing these exemptions is wrong and shows little understanding of the importance of the cultural values and beliefs, religious or otherwise, that define the fabric of Australian society. It is my understanding that Australia wide nearly all attempts to do away with these exemptions have been unsuccessful.

- 21. Replacing the term "parenthood" with "carer responsibilities".

As a parent this will downplay my relationship with my children. I am more than a "carer with responsibilities". I am a father and the term parenthood has defined the role I play in their lives.

Regards

