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Hi,

Please see below my comments with regard to the proposed changes to the Anti-Discrimination Act in the NT.

I am concerned about a couple of proposed changes outlined in the Act.

I think reviewing legislation from time to time is helpful to ensure that individual persons are protected in a way that balances the needs and rights of the community and individual interests. Legislation should in my opinion aim to balance the rights and enhance the functioning and well being of the community, however in doing so avoid taking away the existing rights of basic personal choice of those parties. It is an interesting topic indeed to explore whether an action is equated to true "discrimination", or the exercising of one's basic 'choice' or 'free will', which I would argue is a basic human right.

I would support that potentially reviewing whether prospective school students should be excluded based on their religion may be helpful. However, I would definitely regard removing an exemption permitting religious school to select and carefully exercise choice and consideration as to the type of staff that would support the values upheld and supported by that school a breach of the personal rights of that group.

I'm curious as to why an anti discrimination legislation review would seemingly ignore some other community groups whom seem to be free to exercise freely their own selection and choice as to their members and leaders. For example, the Darwin rifle club requires members to hold a current valid gun licence - is this a form of discrimination which we should also perhaps be reviewing? What about the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia; perhaps they are also at risk of breaching anti-discrimination laws by careful selection of their leadership team and volunteers, and exclusion of non veteran members or their family members. Perhaps they need to be included in this review of the Anti-Discrimination Act. In fact, isn't the fact that groups, such as those above, actually being notably absent from the review of this legislation, in itself perhaps a form of discrimination by only targeting a select group or population in this review?

Of course the above groups would never be mentioned as being discriminatory in their exercise of choice, so I do wonder then why employment of staff in a religious school is being targeted while these other groups are free to choose and select as per the identity, values and purpose of that particular club or group. Shouldn't schools too have the capacity to exercise choice in selecting leaders in accordance with the set of values that underpin that group, without that being deemed discrimination? I suppose then that groups such as LGBTIQ support groups for example, then should not be able to lawfully discriminate against employing Christian or religious leaders as well then too to run their programs, as that would be also discrimination or a form of hypocrisy should they be free to do so...

Also with regard to 'Modernising language' and hence removing the terms of mother and father, this again seems to remove the unique identity of parenthood. Sure, include the wording 'carer responsibilities' if you like to be more inclusive, however not at the expense of eliminating the language of being a mother or father. Wouldn't eliminating the words mother and father also be potentially a form of discrimination? I'm sure anyone working in the social welfare industry is aware that any further damage to the stability of family in our community has significant destructive social consequences. Work for child protection for a day or so as an experiment.... Family connection and love, whether by a parent or carer, is fundamental to a child's well being, education and social functioning. So include the word carer, but why eliminate the word parent? I thought the Territory was smarter than that. Expand the definition if needed rather than eliminate a big chunk of it.

Thank you and may God bless you and your families.