

Dear Sir / Madam,

I wish to express my views to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee which is calling for submissions regarding the proposed draft 'Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill 2012'.

I am very strongly opposed to this Bill which, if implemented, would severely limit free speech. I believe more than any democratic country in the world. This bill is really over the top!

I object to the notion that it should be illegal to offend someone on the basis of their political opinion or religious beliefs. To legislate this would be Political hypocrisy as politicians are offending each other on a daily basis. The general public will not respect politicians who practise offence which legislating to make specific offence illegal. *I request that the notion of offence be deleted from the legislation.*

I am opposed to increasing the number of attributes (eg gender identity) on which discrimination is forbidden. I believe this can only escalate division and conflict as well as litigation rather than helping. You cannot legislate for harmony.

I believe it is against natural justice to deny respondents the right to have a legal adviser at conciliation.

I am deeply concerned that Section 124 of the proposed legislation reverses the onus of proof such that the respondent will have to prove why their conduct was justified. This is contrary to the way our legal system operates in which proof of offence must be established before any conviction is made. *I request that section 124 be deleted from the proposed legislation.*

*I request that section 33,3 be deleted from the proposed legislation.* I am concerned that according to section 33,3 of the proposed legislation, church-run aged care facilities will not get any exemption and hence be forced to act against their free will conscience to discriminate (eg. discrimination on sexual orientation or gender identity) where a person's lifestyle is opposed to the church's beliefs and the beliefs of most of their clients. It is nonsense to suggest exemptions for churches but not allow the same exemptions where the church puts its faith into practice, such as in church-run aged care facilities.

Yours faithfully,

William James Grant