

Dear Senate Inquiry

Proposed Legislation to replace current Discrimination Laws

It would be the death knell of free speech to legislate in such a way that completely reverses the assumption of innocence until proven guilty as this dreadful draft legislation seeks to do. Even worse, it places the law in the hands of the most irrational, attention-seeking and immature people in our communities -- those who often appear to be perpetually offended. Anyone could take offence at anything, no matter how innocent the remark. It would also close down discussion of egregious practices such as the brutal sexual mutilation of little girls (whose tormentors could claim 'offence' at their work being criticised) or the silencing of debate concerning the political aims of those who seek to bring sharia law to Australia because it might offend certain Muslims. It could make politics too dangerous to discuss at workplaces or in other public places. It could also encourage a culture of spies.

The right to open and frank discussions is essential to the continued growth and health of our nation -- without the fear of death threats and/or violence. Freedom of speech actually prevents violence by allowing for differing points of view to be debated and resolved in a civil way.

Without the freedom to speak, to discuss, to debate and where necessary-- to discard or even legislate *against* - evil, cruel or ignorant practices, societies would not have been able to eradicate slavery, child-labour, foot-binding, widow-burning because the perpetrators would have been 'offended, insulted and or humiliated' by such critics - nor would present day Governments or NGOs be able to educate those new comers to Australia who want to continue the sexual maiming of little girls and the sexual and other stunting abuse of underage marriage which hides under the cloak of 'culture'

Sincerely

Gabrielle Lord