

To the Senate Committee regarding the Draft of Human Rights Bill and Anti-Discrimination Bill 2012;

I wish to oppose any proposal to consolidate the existing Commonwealth of Australia anti discrimination legislation that threatens the freedom of religion and freedom of speech. A basis of our society is the toleration of different points of view. Without the freedom to express those points of view toleration ceases to exist. Toleration necessitates allowing the expression of ideas, philosophies and actions that offend some, including at times ourselves. Otherwise there is no toleration. There are limits to toleration, but our society has achieved a balance with current legislation, and we do not need to impose more restrictions. It is only by open and sometimes confronting dialogue that we can have true freedom with our opinions, and to change our opinions.

If the proposed legislative changes discrimination to include offence or insult there is no way to govern it. It reduces the law to subjective whim and allows some to derail productive dialogue, and destroy freedom of religion and speech.

Thankyou for your time
Andrew Vallance
11/12/12