

Senate committee

Dear Honourable Members

Thank you for the opportunity to address your committee via email. I will endeavour to be succinct.

I not with some great concern a proposal by the member, Nicola Roxon to introduce a new Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill 2012 into parliament and that you have been given the charge of analysing the proposed legislation.

I note too that several in the public media have spoken out against the proposal.

While taking a strong stand against discrimination, I strongly object to this attack on free speech in Australia. Free speech is not discriminatory, for it allows ALL to have their say, without fear of committing a criminal offence. To stifle this freedom is to move toward dictatorship.

I believe laws are currently adequate in protecting citizens from abuse in all its forms, with good recourse for victims through the police and judicial system.

Our whole justice system in the free world is based on the premise of "Innocence until proven guilty," whereas this proposal seems to reverse this basic human right.

It seems to me that Religious and Church based bodies are particularly singled out for "discrimination." These groups exist primarily on the basis of their beliefs. If they are involved in the aged care and community service sectors they will be required to make no distinction for staff or clients on the basis of gender or sexual orientation. This arbitrary compliance is in itself discriminatory in nature. To attempt to override those beliefs by making organisations comply with a; "You can't say or function according to what you believe basis," will cause some of them to close down their services completely. This is foolhardy economically for the Government, since the not-for-profit sectors saves the tax payers literally millions of dollars each year.

Finally, the experience of 2 pastors in Victoria in recent years and the backlash in other countries around the world where similar legislation has been

proposed or introduced should cause this proposed bill to be scrapped outright. I believe it to be

1. Unnecessary.
2. Deeply flawed.
3. Discriminatory in nature.
4. Divisionary in practice, rather than anything that is unifying for our country

I trust that you will advise the house accordingly.
Thank you for your time.

Ken Brunjes