

SUBMISSION -

Protecting freedom of religion or belief

ISSUE 1 .

When does freedom of religion or belief become license to abuse ??

The current Royal Commission into Institutional Abuse of Children has highlighted several legal absurdities applying to a range of religious institutions .

Possibly the most pernicious of these is the legal fiction accepted by the Courts is that certain Christian religious organizations do not have any legal entity that can be sued. Then there is court decision that an Anglican vicar was employed by God and not by the Anglican Church and therefore the Vicar was obliged to sue God.

This freedom does **NOT** permit any religious group to be above the law. “ Religious “ organizations have a long history of considering themselves above the law and have been supported in this by various authorities.

In Australia , there have been and continue to be a number of underground religious wars, where the combatants treat the law of Australia with contempt.

Civil society requires tolerance, understanding and respectful discussions, however as Mr. Justice French said recently : -

“ I don't know whether it is possible ...in the age of social media and so forth, to recognize the value of thoughtful and courteous debate “

With so many entrenched vested interests, it will be difficult to give effect to freedom from religious groups , whatever their beliefs and practices are that they wish to force on others not of their particular religious system.

ISSUE 2 .

It is extremely difficult for any of the bodies mentioned in the second (2nd) term of reference) as they have no moral capital, having gone deep into negative capital, with their abuses, their manipulation of all forms of media, with their ***post truth*** platforms and lobby groups.

If ever they try to promote religious tolerance , they are attacked by wild mobs as being promoters of blasphemy and the “ rule of law” buckles and collapses under such overwhelming force.

Political expediency , situation ethics and populist programs that sometimes do not even last long enough to publicize , are the reputational currency in vogue and truth is blended with untruth, in an ever changing mixture .

Given that political parties at this time in Australia prevent their members from expressing the wishes of their constituents in parliamentary votes and that the national interest is irrelevant compared to the interests of the party machines, this situation is unlikely to change anytime soon .

This means that the defense of religious freedom and freedom to choose for yourself what to believe will be extremely weak and will lack a champion in any of the bodies mentioned in this second term of reference .

ISSUE 3

The basic right of **ANY** human being comes from their being a human being . They do **NOT need any Act of Parliament** or regulation to bestow the right to life on them. If people choose to describe themselves as a Jedi knight or as an Occultist , or whatever, they also have the right to change their beliefs without fear of **ANY** form of retribution or persecution .

If any such actions are taken against them, then the State should step in and prosecute those takings these actions.

HOWEVER, all the former elements of democracy are under threat, because of systematic watering down of the rights of individuals, under various guises, and divorcing rights from their accompanying responsibilities.

The “ rule of law” , “ natural justice “ ,” equality before the law “ are examples of principles that have been abandoned , being replaced by “ might is right” and “ pragmatism to the max “ .

It will take the creation of a balanced Moral Compass , accepted by the nation and supported by all sides of politics for any meaningful change in the current imbalance between those pulling the strings and the rest to come about

ISSUE NUMBER 4.

Are there any efforts being made at any recognized / authoritative level ? .

END OF SUBMISSION