

**13<sup>th</sup> December, 2012**

**Senate Committee Submission**

**Re: Exposure Draft of Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill 2012**

To whom it may concern

Dear Sir/Madam,

While I am not opposed to the consolidation of Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation, this bill will impose unprecedented restrictions on freedom of speech and freedom of religion that are unacceptable in any democratic society, including Australia. Furthermore, it will isolate Australians from international norms, including Article 19 of the United Nations Charter of Human Rights that states:

*Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.*

Religious freedom and freedom of speech are human rights, protected by international law. These are issues at the heart of a free society – issues that wars are fought over! Therefore, there should be a limitation provision included in the definition of discrimination as part of the proposed bill which would protect religious freedom and freedom of speech (please refer to the submission made by the Australian Christian Lobby, with which I am in full agreement).

It is crucial that we protect the freedom of speech and religion, and not introduce any legislation that will threaten these basic human rights. Thank you for your consideration of my submission.