

To the Senate legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee

I wish to strongly oppose any such law, and ask that you do not endorse the Bill in any form.

I note that the Bill already has "protected attributes" in large number, the great majority of which take away the right of free speech for which many have died over the centuries. Proposed additions are "sexual orientation" and "gender identity". I seek to have these two and also "religion, political opinion and marital or relationship status" removed from the Bill.

I understand that the Bill applies to *all areas of life*. This is yet another gag on free speech, and if included, should only apply to a very small area such as employment, and then in any case it would potentially impinge on say a Christian church employing a committed Christian? A very real danger is disinterested secularists saying by law, you can't do that. I also note that Aged Care is specifically intended to be an area where the heavy hand of law says you cannot employ people here with any discrimination. To this I say again NO to the Bill. Leave say, Christians to care for Christians, even with Government funding, just like Christian schools having Christian teachers. The proposed Bill fundamentally tears at the fabric of the good in our historic society, and I would see it as the thin edge of the wedge of change, that would in time move to schools, welfare, foster care and adoption.

Following on, the very definition of "discrimination" is tragically broad. "Insult or offend" . You have surely heard the quote, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder". And so would the definition give a legal field day, with no guarantee of a fair outcome. This is not a Muslim country, but perhaps you have heard of the abuse of their blasphemy law, by those seeking a vendetta on others. I recommend that Section 19 (2) (b) be removed. That is "(b) other conduct that offends, insults or intimidates the other person".

A further "hidden" point but very clear to the community, is the right of defence and appeal. On the one hand the limitless coffers of Government are not available to a person appealing, but it is to the Government. Again it may be a body of people who accuse, who allow in their plan to fund their cause, but this is not the automatic availability of the accused. You may say this is historic, but such a Bill as this with its loose or wide definitions, as I said before, is a legal field day.

Such an already demonstrated area is, in my opinion, "Racial Vilification", which again like "Religious vilification" in Victoria is "bad law".

Where are we intending to go in our society? Do we think that law will stop every niche and cranny, will stop massacre of innocents? No, we just provide a legal field day.

We need a good belief system that will yield good practice in Society.

Thank you

Paul Smithers