

To the Senate Committee Investigating The Nicola Roxon's Human Rights and  
Discrimination Bill 2012.

There are a number of reasons why we are putting forward this submission:

1. The contents give us grave concerns and make us feel strongly that the Bill should be rejected in full.
2. It appears to make it an offence for a person to merely 'offend' another person on the grounds of their political or religious beliefs.
  - (a) Would it therefore automatically apply to approx 50% of our politicians.(Labour and Coalition)?
  - (b) How could it be applied to a Christian, a Muslim, a Jew, a Buddhist etc. who obviously would disagree and could easily offend each other without trying? Who would be the judge?
3. How would you know that what you are about to say would offend? Whichever way you look at the problem **IT SHOULD NOT BE MADE ILLEGAL!!** How can just offending someone be a crime? We think it is more of a crime to restrict freedom of speech. Unless you know the person well enough how can you possibly know if they are going to be offended? What offends one person doesn't necessarily offend another.
4. Discrimination is very reasonable in many cases and may often be valid, but we think the bill goes beyond the bounds of reality when discussing discrimination.
5. The presumption of innocence seems to be laid aside and the burden of proof is with the innocent party and not the accuser, as it ought to be. (clause 124).
6. Finally, real freedom of thought and speech is a special gift we have in most Western countries. It would be a tragedy if these gifts are eroded because of such a controversial bill. Why do we need bills of this character in what is supposed to be a free and Democratic society? This bill, if passed would turn this country into a typical communist state and we think we are too far down that road already.

For these reasons we ask you to reject the Nicola Roxon Bill 2012 totally.

Yours faithfully

Doug and Jean Holmes. (20<sup>th</sup> December 2012).