

Dear members of the Religion and Belief Inquiry,

I very much agree with Committee Chair, Mr Andrews, when he said, "Australia is fortunate to be one of the most free societies in the world; a country where citizens enjoy religious tolerance and where the right of individuals to practice the religion of their choice is respected and protected...Nevertheless, important questions touching on the right to freedom of religion or belief, and its relationship with other rights, have arisen in our own country in recent times."

It is these questions touching on the right to freedom of religion or belief that have recently arisen in Australia that I would like to focus on in my submission. In particular, I would like to address the link between diminution of religious freedom and the unprecedented success of the homosexual lobby in passing legislation not only to legalise homosexual acts, but also to force acceptance of this sin by the rest of the population.

Throughout the Western World wherever homosexual 'marriage' has been legalised, Christian businesses operators, particularly those connected with the wedding industry, have been threatened with persecution under 'human rights' and 'anti-discrimination' laws and have effectively had their freedom of religion taken away. In one case, for example, the McArthur family, owners of Ashers family bakery in Northern Ireland, stood up for their religious freedom but were found guilty of discrimination for declining to provide a cake with a pro-same-sex marriage slogan.

Could this happen in Australia if homosexual 'marriage' is legalised? Based on the many overseas examples, the answer is surely 'yes.'

I therefore call on the committee to consider the grave danger to religious freedom posed by legalising homosexual 'marriage' and recommend Australia does not proceed along that path.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Patricia Ride

The following 28 people submitted versions of a Form Letter which were identical or substantially similar to Form Letter 4.

Patricia Ryde
Colin Flynn
Kaye Harrison
Patricia Keane
Leanne Moesker
Peter & Morvyth Howard
Frank & Maureen Horwill
Brian Tideman
Elizabeth Stephens
Michelle Elliott
Martin Oldenburger
Anne Window
Matthew Grinter
Philip & Roslyn Brown

Rev James Houston
David Forster
Helen Allen
Irene Carter
Chris & Sharon Mason
Ian & Dianne Mullins
Annette Hill
Kim Toyer
David & Danielle Stein
Helen & Kevin Harwood
Margaret & Bob Lineage
Rhonda Murrey
Lenore Stevenson
Glen Wright