



ACT Multicultural Council Inc.

ACTMC's Response to the change of Section 18C of the RDA

The ACT Multicultural Council (ACTMC) which represents a large group of Multicultural Communities in the capital region is greatly dismayed at the Government's decision to make changes to Section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act (RDA). The Government's decision to announce this on Harmony Day added insult to injury!

Considering how long we have come since the Apartheid -a system of institutionalised racial segregation and discrimination, it is disheartening to see we are going back to fighting for basic rights to live together harmoniously.

Section 18C was added to the Racial Discrimination Act in 1995 and makes it an offence to offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate an individual or people based on race.

There have been many discussions and debates and preceding incidents leading to these, which provoked the Government to add the Section 18C to the RDA in 1995. This was followed by more extensive discussions and debates in 2014 which again settled to retain Section 18C. So why are we revisiting these proposals when they have been rebutted again and again in the past?

Australia is known for its reputation for promoting and embracing multiculturalism. This change to Section 18C, will tarnish the international image for Australia as it literally is weakening its protections rules and espousing discriminatory policies, leaving the multicultural communities feeling threatened and insecure.

The ACTMC opposes any change to the Section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act (RDA) by the Government. The ACTMC also urges the Government to include more multicultural groups and national bodies in the discussions and inquiries before making decisions on this matter.

For more information, please contact:

Chair, ACT Multicultural Council