

12 December 2012

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

By email to: legcon.sen@aph.gov.au

To the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee members

**Re: Submission to the Inquiry into the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill 2012
– Exposure Draft Legislation**

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Inquiry into the Human Rights Anti-Discrimination Bill 2012. The RANZCP has reviewed the Exposure Draft Legislation and supports the consolidation of existing Commonwealth anti-discrimination law into a single Act.

The RANZCP supports the inclusion of “Disability” and “Medical history” as protected attributes under the Exposure Draft Legislation. The RANZCP has consistently supported initiatives to lessen the stigma for people with mental health issues. However, the RANZCP considers that having “Disability” and “Medical history” as protected attributes is only the beginning. It is only through better educating and informing the community about mental health that governments and the community can effectively address the problem of discrimination and the stigma of mental illness.

The RANZCP calls for the Commonwealth to support and fund an anti-stigma campaign, similar to the respected New Zealand anti-stigma campaign, *Like Minds, Like Mine*. The New Zealand anti-stigma campaign has been successful in reducing stigma and discrimination related to mental illness.

If you would like to discuss any of the issues in regard to this letter, or would like any further information, please contact

Yours sincerely

Dr Maria Tomasic
President

cc: Mr Andrew Peters, CEO, RANZCP.

Ref: 2721