



PARLIAMENT of AUSTRALIA

MEDIA RELEASE

HUMAN RIGHTS SUB-COMMITTEE

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE

Inquiry into the status of the human right of freedom of religion or belief

Issue date: 3 April 2019

Second interim report on freedom of religion or belief

Australia's laws must change to align with international conventions on freedom of religion or belief, according to [a new report from the Australian Parliament](#).

The report was tabled today by Chair of the Human Rights Sub-Committee of the [Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade](#), [Kevin Andrews](#).

Mr Andrews says the report makes two recommendations as to how Australia can strengthen its commitment to protecting the human right of all citizens to freely practice their faith, follow the belief system they choose, or choose to have no beliefs at all.

"The right of individuals to believe in, and a society's tolerance towards, differing religions or beliefs is a fundamental component of any healthy democracy," Mr Andrews said.

"Striking the balance between these human rights and giving everyone the opportunity to pursue their faith whilst respecting the human rights of others in society is not an easy task for societies to accommodate, but the importance of doing so is self-evident."

The report recommends that Australian law be reformed to fully align with Articles 18 of both [Universal Declaration on Human Rights](#) and the [International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights](#) and recommends that the states, territories and Commonwealth governments work together to achieve this.

With the 45th Parliament nearing dissolution, the report also recommends that the inquiry be continued in the 46th parliament,

[Second Interim Report: freedom of religion and belief, the Australian experience](#) is available online.

Media comment:

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