



MEDIA RELEASE

Inquiry into Religious Discrimination Bill 2021 and related bills

On 26 November 2021, and pursuant to the section 7(c) of the *Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011*, the Attorney-General [asked](#) the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights (the committee) to inquire into, and report on, the religious discrimination legislative package that was introduced into Parliament on 25 November 2021; namely the [Religious Discrimination Bill 2021](#); the [Religious Discrimination \(Consequential Amendments\) Bill 2021](#); and the [Human Rights Legislation Amendment Bill 2021](#).

The committee is seeking submissions in relation to this legislative package, with a due date of **21 December 2021**. The committee will seek further information from selected participants at public hearings to be held at Parliament House **on 21 December 2021 and 13 and 14 January 2022**.

Important information about making submissions and details for the public hearings is available on the committee's inquiry [website](#).

Committee Chair, Dr Anne Webster MP said "The Religious Discrimination Bill and associated legislation, remedy a significant omission from the federal anti-discrimination framework. The bill will ensure Australians are protected from unlawful discrimination on the basis of religious belief or activity – just as they are protected from unlawful discrimination on the basis of age, sex, race and disability."

Committee Deputy Chair, Mr Graham Perrett MP, said: "This is complex legislation that engages many human rights. It is vitally important that all stakeholders and every individual who is concerned about this legislation should have the opportunity to be heard. Labor members of the committee, while welcoming the opportunity to hear diverse views, have concerns about the process imposed on this committee, including the timing of the referral and the short timeframe to hold hearings and report back to Parliament. It is particularly concerning for this inquiry, as important religious events including Hanaka and Christmas occur during this time, and many people, whether religious or not, will be focused on spending time with family rather than writing submissions for this inquiry."

The committee is due to report to both Houses of the Parliament by **4 February 2022**.

30 November 2021

For further information: Please visit the committee's website: https://www.aph.gov.au/joint_humanrights/ or contact the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 3823 or by email to religionbills@aph.gov.au.