

To Whom it May concern,

Re: Religious Educational Institutions And Anti-Discrimination Laws

Thank you for the privilege make a submission to this committee. I am writing my submission from my personal experience growing up in a Christian school and also now as a parent of children enrolled in a Christian School. I first want to thank the committee that they have acknowledged several times that “Proposition A has the potential to interfere with institutional autonomy connected to the right to manifest religious belief in community with others, parents’ liberty in relation to their children’s religious and moral education, and freedoms of expression and association” (section 49) and section 55. “The proposed reform has the potential to interfere with institutional autonomy connected to the right of individuals to manifest religion or belief in community with others”. I write to express that my opposition to any such changes that “Interfere with institutional autonomy”. I appreciate that the committee has a greater understanding how laws intersect with each other I only humbly ask that your consideration be given to the following points.

1. Organisations discriminate every day based on their own determined criteria. Take banks, they are bound by a code of practice but can choose to reject or accept anyone they chose. Granted they are not going to discriminate based on gender or sexual orientation because it has nothing to with their core business. The case in question is that the core business of a Christian school and it is to employ and support families that want to be taught the tenants of that school. In the context of the Christian school gender and sexuality are core beliefs that schools should be free to self-determine and any laws that remove such a liberty should not be perused.
2. As a Christian I place no expectation upon anyone else who is not a Christian to live as the Bible speaks or as we personally desire. The reason Christians view sexuality and sexual expression with so much disdain is that it is representative of the old ways that we no longer want to live in since coming to Christ. We do not look down on a person that choses to live that way, we simply long and pray that a person finds out what we have found out; that true liberty is not finding yourself or expressing yourself, but rather liberty comes by accepting that Gods ways are perfect.
3. Another organisation that discriminates is the NSW AECG (NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group), which requires an employee to be “Aboriginal”. This organisation is actively able to discriminate based on culture or ancestry. It might sound strange to some (but not the committee, I’m sure!), but we live in a free society and the basis for such

freedom comes from the ability to be self-determining. I don't have a problem with that discrimination, not because I am Aboriginal but because they are a free entity to choose who they want or don't want on their books. They are obviously serving the community because they have been around for a long time. If they weren't they would have wound up long ago.

4. Christians have long sought the welfare of their fellow citizens. This is demonstrated by the fact that slavery was abolished in England by a Christian in the person of William Wilberforce. The first schools started in Australia were started by the Christian ministers. My only point is that Christian influence is only to benefit others. We are not trying to stop others doing what they like, we aren't restricting someone from believing what they want to, we are humbly asking for the privilege to believe and practice what is written in the Bible that we may live a quiet and peaceable life.
5. Christian schools do no use or abuse any of the current laws – Christian schools are places that are welcoming and accepting. The Christian school I went to had a student in my year that was expelled from a state school. Please don't think Christian schools exist to exclude people or send them away.
6. I don't understand why someone who believed the direct opposite of what a Christian school was teaching would apply work or enrol there? Our main concern is that the removal of the current provisions would open litigation by activists now and into the future.

Thank you for your desire to unify our great country. We do not count it a small thing to be living in arguably the most blessed country on the planet. We humbly pray for wisdom for those in authority and the grace to follow those laws to the glory of God.

Sincerely Yours,

Chris Foster