

Dear Mr So and So,

Upon hearing of the law reform, I am obliged to present my opinion that this reform is not fair on the people who have taken Australia, a secular country as a place they are free to practise their religion safely and without fear of retribution. But this is obviously being rebutted by the implementation of this law. I would like to argue to stop this movement here and now.

Firstly, the point of a separate religious school is to teach religion in a place where only it is practiced and taught to its true form. Otherwise, it could easily be taught at home without unwanted influence at a young age. Ofcourse, living in a secular country our children are taught not to be mean to anyone, but as this is a free country everyone has a right to choose who they want to associate with, no one should be forced to associate with someone who is against their principals. It is taking away the essence of a religious school, if people who's ideas so greatly conflict are introduced as perfectly fine, it confuses the children. Everyone is entitled to agree or disagree with a way of life, they should not be obliged to include conflicting ways when an institution was separately made precisely, for the conflicting ways to stay out for the childhood of religious kids.

Secondly, school is a place to learn and religious institutions are established for learning the way their religion teaches them. If a group of people go against ideas and teachings it is unfair on the community who strives for a purely religious education to be mixed with them, when the whole point of a religious school is to keep the school full of only religious aspects. Laws on such groups of people are set by Australia, and Australia is the place that has allowed religious institutions to operate the way they want as long as the curriculum is the same, but its is unfair to purposely add conflicting groups of people into a steady environment forcing them to accept what they will not. It will not make people at ease, rather it will create more conflict and obstruct learning. Islam specifically does not teach to bully or give hate speech to conflicting groups, in fact the person who is cutting a thief's hand off for thieving is not even allowed to call the thief a thief out of making him feel bad, ofcourse they have done bd but no taunting is allowed. If this teaching is not widely followed it is the fault of the people, not the fault of culture. And has anyone ever came to accept something whole-heartedly after being forced to? (NO)

This modification in the law also constricts the voices of religious communities. Australia is a free country and everyone is supposed to be allowed to practise their religion freely while following the laws of Australia. When Australia itself denies these basic rights to rear your children any way you wish, what kind of inclusive country is Australia? Forcefully putting an LGBTQI+ or person with conflicting views into a community who has no interest in associating will make them the odd one out, and without doubt increasing discrimination on them. Parents have every right to raise their children any way they want and ensure that they have a good religious upbringing. If Australia is not ok with this, don't give weak prods to annoy religious people into fury, tell them straight out that you are not ok with religions being practiced completely. This is not right. 70% of Australian schools are public and the remaining 30% are not all religious either. With this abundance of schools that are happy to accept the LGBTQI+ community, why force the struggling minority to accept them too? Unless there is of course a problem with religions being practiced freely. Forcing any opposing view into a united community will not get the results your board hopes for, ever. It will only squeeze out more grudges and trauma for the LGTBQI+ people. No one hates them, we disagree we don't want to have close ties with them, and no once can deny that it is a persons own choice who they associate with, not the government. The government is in charge of keeping peace, if peace is by staying away from each other, WHY force the two groups together. Like trying to mix oil with water, it's pointless, the oil will not budge form its views neither will the water, forcing them together will, I repeat, only bring out more grudges and differences.

As a student at the Islamic College of Brisbane and Al-Taqwa College (Melbourne) myself, I know the safety that comes from being in a group of people who understand your situation and they don't think you're a nutter for following a set of rules because they follow it too and actually learn why they are followed. Breaking traditions of thousands of years for the sake of a bound-to-be-unsuccessful unification is just unexpected from a government that has achieved so much elsewhere. Religious schools are created for the purpose of being surrounded by people of the similar view and being able to discuss your beliefs without modifying them all the tiem to please the irrelevant likings of others. When you are not going to let this peace stay, you are defeating the purpose completely. Public schools are designed to be secular, private religious schools are not, and for the reason of their religion, so why on earth disturb them. Religion is NOT to be secularized it is to be followed, and if you do not follow that religion you have no right to say wether it should be secularized or not.

As for the group of 'religious' people who are LGBTQI+ and claim to be Muslims, Jews, or Christians. They don't have a right to be Muslims. In our religions you can't be part of a religion you don't follow half the teachings of. As I said religion is not to be secularized, it is not up to the people in our religions who are astray to decide that Islam or Christianity is wrong and this new version we have presented is right. Religions like these cannot be molded for what the people like, if they attempt it- it has clashed. The religion is written, for example the Quran, it has never changed since it was revealed, that is what we follow and anyone who suddenly pops up against it and still claims to be Muslim, is never going to be welcomed, they can go on about how they are right but it will not change the religion's true teachings. They will only suffer in a religious setting. As for admitting completely non-religious kids into religious schools you tell me, does that actually make any sense? A person does not actually follow this religion and they want to be submitted into a school that is based on this group of beliefs that they so clearly deny, is there any point of ruining the sanctity of these schools when there are plenty of public schools for people who want secularism. I see no reason for any of these laws to help religious institutions be more efficient in anyway, but actually these laws constrict and deny the voices of institutions.

I realize that this law revolves round discrimination, you tell me, does it not count as discrimination to force religious people to associate with ones they don't want to? Or force religious people to accept ideas that are so squarely against everything they stand for? Is it not? It is not only the LGBTQI+ community that is discriminated against it is also us.

Every parent has the right to choose exactly what their child knows as good and bad, and infiltrating religious schools which were made for the purpose of only including selective attendees and staff, you are denying this right squarely. You are not bringing up the child and you have no interference in its future; therefore, you cannot force the child's parents to include in their childhood what they do not want to. By implementing this law, you are taking away the rights of parents as the people who spent and cared for their children.

I am a Muslim, and my own best friend, and I only have one, is a Catholic Christian. We both agree on the big picture of being pious and obedient to God. We both also disagree with LGBTQI+ people. But will a Muslim school allow her into the school? No, they will not, so why is it so important to let people with even more differing views into a community made on the sole purpose of educating children on a single basis of religion. Ofcourse children will learn to deal with people such as the LGBTQI+ community in school kindly. No religion demands reprimand against them, but if they are forced to put their kids at risk of going astray – there will be grudges and disagreements and no one will be happy. I will not plead anything with something that is not in my power, but I will say I have tried my best to show you why this is just wrong and unacceptable, as it denies rights of the religious community of Australia and favors a minority for reasons that aren't even valid. It is the truth, whether you want to see it or not.

Best Regards,

Fatima Zahra Tarar (14 yrs) –