

Formal Submission to ALRC regarding the anti-discrimination law.

I am a parent of children who currently attend schools in the Catholic system, both primary and high school. Living in a rural area in Qld gives us little choices for private education, hence our decision to choose Catholic schools.

My opinions on the current ability of religious educational institutions to discriminate against students and staff over sex, sexual identity, marital status, faith or other attributes is completely out of step with modern society and goes against the overall health and wellbeing of the community. The fear that is felt by various students or staff members who fall into these categories has damaging effects on them every time they set foot onto school grounds. The knowledge that they could be fired or expelled legally, fills them with anxiety.

The religious institutions should not be able to use the basis that they want to build a 'community of faith' as grounds to infringe on peoples' human rights. The system as it currently stand allows discrimination against a certain part of the community which facilitates blatant prejudice and intolerance hiding behind the veil of religious priority. Everyone is entitled to education or work within that institution on the basis of qualifications, character and ability not irrelevant attributes. A maths teacher who is divorced means nothing to his/her ability to teach maths effectively. The only instance that religious educational institutions should be allowed to preference members of the same religion in the discriminatory fashion allowed currently is to fill the role of Religion teacher.

As a final note, I'm surprised that the fact around alleged crimes of sexual and physical abuse perpetrated in some religious educational institutions past and present has not smothered the self-righteous attitudes discussed in this platform. These items that supposedly go against their ethos pales in comparison.