

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Anti Discrimination Law](#)
Subject: My submission to the Religious Educational Institutions and Anti Discrimination Laws Inquiry
Date: Thursday, 16 February 2023 11:53:24 AM

Dear Australian Law Reform Commission,

Please allow me to address one of the propositions contained in the ALRC Religious Educational Institutions Inquiry consultation paper. I'm extremely concerned about this ... If jobs can be advertised for Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander persons specifically, and for Muslim Schools, then why can the same rule not be applied to Christian Schools?

Proposition B prevents religious schools from discriminating against current and prospective staff on certain grounds such as “sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital or relationship status, or pregnancy.” But this would significantly curtail the perfectly reasonable rights of schools to take into account these important factors when employing staff members. Everyone understands the right of political parties to employ only those who are aligned with their values. Religious educational institutions should therefore not be denied this same right.

Religious schools must be allowed to select staff based on these grounds, because issues such as “sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital or relationship status, or pregnancy” are often directly related to important religious doctrines. Religion, and particularly Christianity (which is the religion underpinning the vast majority of faith-based schools in Australia), is not just a simple set of adaptable beliefs or observances but a complete worldview containing teachings on many different aspects of life.

For this reason, a school grounded in Biblical teaching would not wish to employ someone who engages in homosexual acts or sex outside of a marital relationship because these expressions of sexuality are morally harmful and hence forbidden in the Bible. Similarly, this school would not wish to employ someone who identifies as “non-binary” or seeks to act like someone of the opposite gender – not due to hatred of these individuals – but solely because this kind of person, if employed at the school, would undermine the religious ethos of the institution by publicly refuting Jesus’ words: “But from the beginning of the creation, God ‘made them male and female.’” (Mark 10:6)

Surely, as long as the ethos of the school is made clear to all parents considering enrolment, this so-called discrimination on grounds of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, etc. is therefore entirely reasonable, and – I may add – much appreciated by parents who value schools which are not just Christian in name only.

This is why I call upon the ALRC to realise that these rights of religious schools are entirely reasonable and must be protected.

Yours faithfully,

Lesley Schwetz

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