

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Anti Discrimination Law](#)
Subject: Religious schools must remain free to operate according to their ethos
Date: Thursday, 16 February 2023 6:58:28 PM

Dear Australian Law Reform Commission,

I would like to address several of the four propositions in the consultation paper into Religious Educational Institutions and Anti-Discrimination Laws.

Firstly, I disagree with the first points of propositions A and B which state that religious educational institutions should not be allowed to discriminate against current or prospective students and staff on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital or relationship status, or pregnancy. Concerning students, I believe that schools should have the right to enforce appropriate measures to address and prevent open promotion of ideologies that conflict with the school's beliefs (e.g. transgenderism, inappropriate sexual behaviour, homosexuality, etc.). And concerning staff, I believe that religious schools should have the right to employ or promote those who authentically live out their faith in accordance with the religious basis of the school – and to replace those say they agree with the school's beliefs but live contrarily.

Secondly, I was initially encouraged by point 3 of Proposition B, which states that, "Religious educational institutions should be able to require staff involved in the teaching of religious doctrine or belief to teach religious doctrine or belief on sex or sexuality as set out by that institution and in accordance with their duty of care to students and staff, and requirements of the curriculum."

However, point 3 of proposition D then says, "Respect for an educational institution's ethos and codes of conduct or behaviour should not require employees to hide their own sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital or relationship status, or pregnancy in connection with work or in private life, or to refrain from supporting another person with these attributes." So, even though Proposition B states that religious schools can require staff to teach a particular worldview, this becomes of no effect when teachers are given complete freedom to live completely and openly opposed to these teachings. I therefore call upon the ALRC to remove point 3 from Proposition D.

I also believe that this will mainly affect Christian and Jewish schools, as they are often seen as 'easy targets' for those who wish to push or share their version of tolerance of sexuality and gender, rather than Islamic schools.

The prevalence of faith-based schools in Australia shows that they are valued by a significant proportion of families. The ALRC should therefore not seek to 'fix' something which is not broken. In particular, I believe that the basic freedom of religious schools to operate according to their ethos must continue unfettered by discrimination legislation. At the end of the day, anyone who disagrees with a religious school's code of conduct can simply attend a different school.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Yours faithfully,

Michelle White

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