

Response of Hindu Council of Australia

Inquiry into the framework of religious exemptions in Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation

Hindu Council of Australia is a federation of Hindu temples and organisations with chapters in all states except Tasmania. Hindu Council advocates issues affecting Hindus living in Australia. These Hindus have migrated to Australia from India, Fiji, Sri Lanka, Nepal and many more countries.

Hindu Council mostly agrees with the balance worked out in the propositions of the ALRC proposal to balance various rights. However, this law does not protect Religious Australians or non-religious Australians from Religious Coercion.

Although item 73.10 on page 35 of the Consultation Paper says

“The Australian Government should ensure that any future legislation to prohibit discrimination on the basis of religious belief or activity contains exceptions in relation ...”

We believe that an NSW legislation to prohibit religious discrimination should be introduced either along with or before the proposed amendments are implemented.

We strongly advocate that Religious Coercion be a part of the definition of Religious Discrimination and be made a punishable offence.

Employers (schools in this case) over teachers and Teachers over students hold a position of power. This power should not be used to either lure someone or to threaten them with consequences to perform religious practices or religious conversion against their will.

As an example, it should be an offence for a school to offer better work conditions, job promotions or continuity of employment as an inducement or as a threat aimed at religious conversion of its staff. Similarly, students should not be humiliated or shamed to force them to participate in religious activities.

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