

**Submission
No 17**

**ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AMENDMENT (RELIGIOUS FREEDOMS AND
EQUALITY) BILL 2020**

Name: Rev David Maher

Date Received: 15 August 2020

Rev David Maher

Email: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

15th August 2020

Joint Select Committee on the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill
By email: ReligiousFreedomsBill@parliament.nsw.gov.au

SUBMISSION OF RESPONSE

Dear Committee members,

I support the passing of this Religious Freedoms and Equality Bill by the NSW Government.

I have followed the progress of the federal government's Religious Discrimination Act over the past couple of years and I was critical of its approach. This Religious Freedoms and Equality Bill, by contrast, provides clarity and fairness in a difficult area of law. It may become a blueprint for a national response in the future, and I hope it does.

I especially like the inclusion of definitions for "genuine belief" and "religious ethos organisations" within the Bill. Section 22M is very helpful and will resolve the anxiety of many charities and schools.

I also support the limitations contained in Sections 22N—22U, which protect people's freedom to express their faith openly outside of their workplace. I am aware of numerous cases where Christians have lost their professional accreditations, or been forced to resign, after posting their Christian views online. I am encouraged by the equitable way in which these rights are defended within the Bill.

I give consent for my submission to be published.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Rev. David Maher
Minister, Burwood Presbyterian Church