

**Submission
No 37**

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

Organisation: All World Gayatri Pariwar

Date Received: 20 August 2020

Dear Committee Chair,

Thank you for inviting comment on the above Bill from All World Gayatri Pariwar.

Having read the Bill, it shows that parts of the Bill will actually reduce religious freedom and will allow large and dominant religious organizations to discriminate against minority religions when it comes to employment, providing services etc.

While the Bill aims to provide equality and freedom to religions, it may be doing so for established and well-resourced religions in Australia. But for newer religions like Hindu, Sikhs, Jains, Parsis, Buddhists, who do not have the same massive infrastructure, assets and funding like the well-established religions, this Bill will in fact rescind freedom and equality and may in fact make the smaller religions an easier target of conversion. Some of the consequences of this new Bill are :

1. A famous sports or religious person or a leader or an actor, will get freedom to call members of other religions heathens and that we are going to hell. They can do so in their private capacity and their employer cannot fire them.
2. Religiously inspired organizations like charities, schools, colleges, hospitals etc can refuse treatment, services, employment to us unless we belong or convert to their religion. All in the name of equality and freedom of religion. This is a fundamental breach of human rights.
3. The Bill fails to provide freedom from denigration i.e. it does not stop people of faith from denigrating/insulting those of other faiths. The Bill overrides religious rights over other human rights. Hence, the right to ridicule/conversion may be given a higher priority over right to dignity.

The following considerations must be made to the Bill :

1. Definition of "religious organization" should be limited to organizations that teach/practice faith i.e. churches, temples etc. and should not be extended to charities, schools, hospitals and businesses inspired by religion. These bodies should remain areligious.
2. Religious organizations and schools should be allowed to recruit only people of their own faith when it comes to teaching/practicing and conducting religion and for other core duties. So, a church can insist that its Pastors, Priests, etc, and others performing religious functions or a school recruiting teachers to teach religion should be of the same faith. But they cannot refuse employment to a teacher of another secular subject purely based on their faith. Each organization, whether inspired by religion or not, can ask all its employees to adhere to its ethos. Thus, a temple can ask all its employees (e.g. electrician) to remove their shoes before entering and not to consume meat consistent with the sanctity afforded to the place of worship.

3. Religious freedom should include freedom from being denigrating. Nobody can insult a person of faith for adhering to their faith.

Yours sincerely,

Anand Jaiswal
President
All World Gayatri Pariwar