

**Submission
No 102**

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

Name: Rev Margaret Court AO, MBE

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20 August 2020

The Hon. Gabrielle Upton MP
Committee Chair

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AMENDMENT
(RELIGIOUS FREEDOMS AND EQUALITY) BILL 2020

NSW Parliament

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Dear Committee Chair

I applaud the New South Wales Parliament for their foresight and their support of the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill 2020 and the inquiry.

I trust the inquiry will confirm that the objectives of the Bill are valid and appropriate for securing its objectives, and that the passage of the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill 2020 through NSW Parliament.

I participated in The Expert Panel on Religious Freedom in Perth of which The Hon Philip Ruddock was the Chairman. I was so gravely disappointed that nothing has been activated on this important issue.

As I was born in Albury, NSW I have a great love and support for the premier state and I am encouraged that the NSW Parliament are continuing to lead the States.

I see the word "equality" has been included in the Bill's title which is asking the NSW Parliament to give equal status/protection to religious groups and individuals as it does to women, gay and transgender, elderly, carers and those with a disability.

Although the Bill seeks to protect people of all faiths not just Christians, I would mention the Judeo-Christian foundations of this country have played an important role in our history, heritage and the advancement of this great nation.

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Out of the millions of Australians who voted 'NO' in the same-sex marriage plebiscite, not all were Christians. Politicians need to know there are millions of Australians who want to keep our Judeo-Christian heritage/traditions and their freedoms.

People of religious faith, especially Christians, have become a minority group and are being discriminated against. As an Australia Christian and a Christian Minister, I have felt the continuing sting of relentless personal attacks over the past years. I have endured an onslaught of slanderous media and false reporting. It has attacked my previous tennis professional accomplishments and has attempted to discredit my contribution to the sport. Please note back in the 1960's tennis was an amateur sport and I was playing for my country.

This discrimination has impacted not only myself but also everyday Australians; it brings shame and embarrassment to Australia's international reputation and its obligations under international law.

I walk through the supermarket and cannot count the amount of everyday Australian's who come up to me and thank me for the stand I have taken; most pre-empt the comments to me with "I not a Christian, but thank you for standing up for Australia."

I believe this bill is asking NSW Parliament to apply the Ruddock Review recommendations, that NSW gives legal protection to people of religious faith.

I believe this is an issue of national importance that needs to be resolved. If the federal bill is at an impasse, NSW has the opportunity to lead the nation.

Yours sincerely



Rev Margaret Court AO, MBE