

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

Organisation: Australian Association of Buddhist Counsellors and
Psychotherapists (AABCAP)

Date Received: 21 August 2020

AABCAP



AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF BUDDHIST
COUNSELLORS AND PSYCHOTHERAPISTS

Dear Secretariat,

Re. Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill 2020

I am writing on behalf of the Australian Association of Buddhist Counsellors and Psychotherapists (AABCAP). Our organisation's objective is to promote the Buddha's teachings and the intersection of Buddhism and psychotherapy to the helping professions and the wider community. Our organisation provides professional training in Buddhist psychotherapy to those in the helping professions within NSW and interstate. We are an active member of the Buddhist community in NSW and nationally.

We strongly oppose the Anti-Discrimination Amendment in its entirety. Religious freedom should never undermine human rights and this bill suggests that there may be grounds to do so in certain circumstances.

As Buddhists and members of the helping professions, we strive to do no harm first and foremost. The exercising of religious freedom should never be at the cost of exclusion or persecution of another person, regardless of their religious beliefs, sexual orientation or disability. It goes without saying that the effects of blatant discrimination and ostracism of religious groups for instance, towards the LGBTQ community have long lasting and traumatic psychological effects on individuals. This bill serves to facilitate the right to discriminate these groups further and hence, cause further harm to individuals in these communities.

AABCAP welcomes all members regardless of their affiliation as a Buddhist or other faiths. Removal of any members or imposing the Buddhist teachings on our members would be contradictory to the Buddha's teaching of compassion.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Joyce Man

On behalf of the Australian Association of Buddhist Counsellors and Psychotherapists