

**Submission
No 118**

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

Name: Jeff Truscott

Date Received: 21 August 2020

Dear Committee,

Proposed NSW Religious Freedom Bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer a submission to the above-mentioned Bill.

The purpose of this submission is to bring to the attention of the committee some critical provisions for consideration, in formulating the proposed NSW Religious Freedom Bill.

I recognise that progress towards effective legislation – ultimately serving the best interests of all Australians - does demand considerable research, thought, time, and effort. The Bill should not to be rushed, nor considered lightly. At the end of the day, the resulting legislation will underpin the critical values on which both NSW and Australian society is based.

Locating those critical values requires an investigation into the brief history of NSW and Australia. And acknowledgement that the freedoms and privileges that we enjoy in NSW and Australia didn't happen by chance. Especially given our penal background....

Right across NSW – and the rest of Australia – stand many, many church buildings, from which the message of Christianity was preached to previous generations. (And continues to be preached...)

In brief, the message of Christianity is:

- The Biblical proclamation that God himself created heaven and earth, and continues to uphold their function and destiny.

- The Biblical proclamation that God himself is sovereign over all human life and societies.

- The Biblical proclamation that God - revealed in Jesus Christ - demonstrates the benevolence of his sovereignty by having willingly forfeited his life on a cross: for each and every person, of every generation.

- The Biblical proclamation that Jesus Christ forfeiting his life on a cross was necessary due to every person's inherent fallen and corrupt nature: estranging us from God - and harm to each other.

- Final proof of God's sovereignty in Jesus Christ occurred when he was raised back to life after being dead three days.

The pre-eminent values that came to be enshrined in our institutions is that God is the giver of all life, that Man's inherent corruption pre-disposes him to harm others, that protections must be instituted to prevent (or at least minimise) such harm, and that the standard of truth governing our society must not be arbitrary, nor relative, but firmly aligned to the Scriptures (the Bible – the only authentic historical account of God's dealings with mankind).

The extent to which the message of Christianity was accurately promoted and preached (based on the Scriptures) progressively determined the extent of peace and prosperity across Australia - inc NSW.

Despite the – in some cases – flawed preaching, and refusal of many to heed the authentic message of Jesus Christ, Christian values were gradually incorporated into our institutions, underpinning a safer and generally prosperous NSW, which our current generations are privileged to enjoy.

The future of a prosperous and egalitarian Australia requires recognition of this foundation on which Australia - inc NSW - as a nation was established. Vis: A society that recognises Judeo/Christian

values being at the core of all our institutions; be they family, educational, parliamentary, governmental, judicial, business etc...

The mandate of Scripture is, of course, to proclaim Jesus Christ as God's Son - offering reconciliation between God and every person, by us truly believing in Jesus Christ having purchased our redemption with his own life.

Out of that mandate it is also clear that the church (collectively people who so respond) is *not* to assume *direct* institutional governance over any nation. There is - and should be - a separation of church and state.

However, it is also clear that, as creator of heaven and earth, everything is ultimately subject to the will and purpose of God himself. In fact the Scriptures are very clear that *every* person will one day stand before God, and we will all be required to give an account of our lives. The determining factor will be whether or not we really believed, trusted, and embraced Jesus Christ as God, and lived out our lives accordingly.

Our believing, trusting, and embracing Jesus Christ as God, can **only** occur at a personal and individual level: a mirror image of this process is us falling in love and thereafter committing ourselves to our spouse of the opposite sex. (Which is why God declares marriage to be between one man, and one woman, only, for life). Our believing, trusting, and embracing Jesus Christ constitutes him entering into, and maintaining, a vital relationship with us.

So, although there is a separation between church and state, we who believe are expected, as part of God's creation, to also influence the operation of our institutions in such a way that their governance results in outcomes that promote the benevolent will and purpose of God himself. (That plan is revealed in the Scriptures). The majority of Australians generally acknowledge, at least, the positive impact of Christianity in the formation of NSW and Australia.

To continue this positive impact requires - in this discussion - robust and definitive Christian provisions in the Religious Freedom Bill that not only protect, but encourage and underpin Christian practice and values— at both an individual and institutional level.

I am aware - as you are - that there are competing claims from other religious organisations.

But I am also aware – hopefully the committee are too - that no other religion can make a successful claim to their founder being dead and raised back to life after three days. This factor highlights the absolute authenticity and priority to protect the claims of Christianity - and Judaism, the historical bedrock of Christianity.

God himself, revealed in Jesus Christ, is operative to bring about outcomes that do, in fact, tangibly benefit us at every level.

At a governmental level Scriptural Christianity - alone - promotes peace without violence. This is a major factor that warrants absolute priority being given to Christianity. History is proof that nations who have resisted, maligned, or rejected Christianity have inevitably descended into internal conflict, war, and oppression. So far in Australia we have avoided such distress – but danger signs are showing as Christian values are being legislated against. (eg. Scripture condemns abortion and euthanasia as being directly contrary to God's value of every human life) The welfare of a nation-state can only flourish if its citizens and institutions embrace real peace: that only occurs when the gospel of Jesus Christ is available to all.

This outcome of peace has characterised the influence of Christianity upon Western Civilisation. Even despite misrepresentations through the centuries - which have indeed resulted in hurt; some even in wide-spread tragedy. One such Australian tragedy, of course, was the treatment of Aboriginals. Although it is unclear to what extent their mistreatment was at the hands of Christians. Historical records do confirm many influential Christians being grieved at the mistreatment and slaughter of Aboriginals, and taking action to prevent the same ...

Regardless, even serious misrepresentations of the Christian message don't invalidate the claim of Jesus Christ over our lives according to Scripture, or the fact that Christianity has brought peace and prosperity. The history of NSW is definite testimony to the influence of Christianity.

Rather than misrepresentation being grounds to dismiss the claims of Christianity, the real need is to ensure priority is given to ensure legislative provisions in the Religious Freedom Bill accurately reflect *and allow* Gods heart to be accomplished, as mandated in Scripture, in NSW and Australia. If Christianity offends, ultimately it offends only because (some) people absolutely refuse to come face-to-face with truth and mercy being revealed in Jesus Christ.

I am deeply disturbed that our society is progressively tearing down values enshrined in Christianity. The result can only be (and is) increasing pain and suffering at every level. Even a cursory reading of Scripture will reveal that God's gracious benevolence is equally matched by his deep concern for truth and justice: accounts of pain & suffering abound in Scripture ...and they are not recorded by accident(!).

LGBTIQ+ and other so-called 'progressive' groups also oppose provisions favouring Christianity in the Bill. They are in fact seeking to destroying the foundational values of our society. Their belligerent implementing of intolerant notions of truth will court eventual disaster for all of us. As history testifies ... (consider, for instance, the catastrophic effects of homosexuality rampant across both the Greek and Roman empires).

LGBTIQ+ attempts to use the Religious Freedom Bill as an instrument of "cancel culture" against Christianity are totally unacceptable.

The formulation of the Religious Freedom Bill is a tremendous opportunity to *expand* the influence of genuine Scriptural Christianity to have a positive and long- lasting influence on all Australians. Our nation needs healing.

It is on this basis that I respectfully submit this email to you. In the hope that you will pursue priority protection for Christianity in the formulation of the proposed NSW Religious Freedom Bill.

Thank you for reading this email.

Kind regards,

Jeff Truscott

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