



9 September 2019

Religious schools don't need Federal Government's draft Religious Discrimination Bill

The Independent Education Union of Australia (IEUA) expresses its serious concerns with the Federal Government's draft Religious Discrimination Bill.

The IEUA is disappointed at the continuing practice of governments to polarize, disenfranchise and make a 'whipping post' of the rights of our members who work in faith-based education.

Yet again proposed legislation completely exempts religious schools from allowing their employees the same rights that all other Australians enjoy. Here it is not the freedom to love and marry who they wish but the freedom of religion and belief itself.

Religious schools don't need this Bill. The IEUA believes that the vast majority of employers in faith-based schools have no difficulty in employing staff of other faiths and in fact are not threatened by their staff or students expressing diverse views.

The IEUA has and will continue to lobby governments and politicians to remove the unreasonable and harmful exemptions from discrimination law enjoyed by employers in our industry.

As the IEUA has made abundantly clear in our recent submissions and appearances before Senate inquiries, we believe that these exemptions are not required by employers. Current contractual law obligations and legislation more than adequately provide for employers to manage their workforces consistent with their beliefs.

The IEUA will call upon the Parliament of Australia to reject this current Bill as it not only fails to improve the current undermining of rights of our members but is an untidy and problematic drafting of legislation that will cause further confusion.

The IEUA will continue to carefully examine the Bill, seek expert advice and engage with stakeholders to ensure that IEUA members' interests are paramount.

Further comment:

Mark Northam, IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Acting Secretary m: 0427 667 061

Carol Matthews, IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Assistant Secretary m: 0418 272 902

Media contacts: Sue Osborne (02) 8202 8900 sue@ieu.asn.au , Bronwyn Ridgway (a/h) 0433 373 109 bronwyn@ieu.asn.au

The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch represents over 30,000 teachers, principals and support staff in Catholic and independent schools, early childhood centres and post secondary colleges.

Authorised by John Quessy, IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary

