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## Private member's Bill provides a clear pathway to close discrimination loopholes

The introduction today of a [private member's](#) Bill dealing with discrimination in non-government schools provides a long-overdue pathway to close discrimination loopholes.

Under [current laws](#) staff and students in faith-based schools can be subjected to discrimination that would be unlawful in all other workplaces. Today's Bill introduced by [Allegra Spender MP](#) would finally bring these outdated discrimination privileges to an end.

Due to sweeping exemptions in discrimination and workplace laws, [IEU members](#) can be lawfully discriminated against because of personal attributes such as marital or relationship status, gender, pregnancy, IVF treatment, family responsibilities, gender identity or sexual orientation.

Students in these schools are also denied full protection against discrimination.

The problem goes beyond [heartbreaking individual cases](#). The exemptions deny basic rights, contribute to psychosocial harm and conflict with community standards of inclusion and respect.

The Bill is a sensible approach to repairing the laws. It would narrow the exemptions while still meeting the needs of schools, such as allowing preference to be given to employees of a particular faith for promotional or religious education roles. This balanced approach would allow schools to maintain their special character without exposing staff to discrimination unrelated to their work.

Discrimination is [still happening](#). Teachers have been sacked on suspicion of being in same-sex relationships, staff denied promotions because of a previous divorce, a graduate teacher faced threats to their employment for seeking access to IVF and a young unmarried teacher dismissed after becoming pregnant. These shocking cases would be condemned in all other workplaces.

The Bill is consistent with the government's own [2022 commitment](#) to modernise the exemptions and the [Parliamentary report](#) commissioned from the Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC).

There has been no progress from the government since their ALRC report was tabled in Parliament two years ago. The special privileges that permit discrimination remain in place and unchecked.

There is no reason for further delay. The government should match Allegra Spender's leadership and pass these laws. School staff, students and the community have waited long enough.