

The Federal Government's Religious Discrimination Bill

The Federal Coalition Government has introduced a religious discrimination bill into federal Parliament. What does this mean for us?

As it stands, it is currently okay for anti-Christian activists to vilify the church, but if the church speaks out against homosexuality, genderfluidity, marriage as between male and female only, etc., Christians can get hauled before a government commission.

We need to keep this in mind as Labor and the "modern Liberals" go into overdrive to kill off the Morrison Government's attempt to re-balance freedoms in the wake of the same-sex marriage debate.

The reality is that freedom of religion and freedom of speech have been lost over decades through creeping anti-free speech anti-discrimination laws at state and federal level. It's been death by a thousand cuts, or amendments.

Section 18C of the federal Racial Discrimination Act is the most famous because the Abbott Government had a good go at removing subjective clauses which allow people with hurt feelings to sue.

A severe backlash from woke cultural elites and the mainstream media forced Abbott into retreat and the law was never reformed so free speech could be restored.

Speech inciting violence should obviously be outlawed, but how is "vilification" and "hatred" defined and policed?

Similar 18C-type subjective clauses exist in other state and federal anti-discrimination instruments making freedom of speech and religion a minefield for anyone challenging elite orthodoxy on gender, sexual identity and race.

Tasmania's law is the worst because "offence" is all that's needed for an upset activist to embroil a fellow citizen in years of litigation.

Lyle Shelton, a former councillor of the Toowoomba Region, and also the former managing director of the Australian Christian Lobby, now actively involved in the Christian Democratic Party, was recently forced to attend two compulsory "conciliations" and spend \$70,000 in legal fees because two LGBTIQA+ drag queens lodged a complaint with the Queensland Human Rights Commission alleging vilification and incitement of hatred because Shelton had said they were "dangerous role models for children."

Both drags queens promoted genderfluid ideology, which has harmful outcomes, and one was an advocate for the pornography industry. Shelton was seeking to protect children by warning their parents about Drag Queen Story Time being given pride of place in council libraries. This warning was apparently seen as "hate speech".

It is unclear whether the Religious Discrimination will protect people who wish to warn others of the dangers of genderfluid ideology.

However, any concern we have as Christians about drag queens who flout genderfluidity to children and promote the porn trade are not exclusive to religious people. No doubt, "modern Liberals" will be doing all they can to make sure the bill impacts as little as possible on flawed anti-discrimination law as it is shunted off to a Senate Inquiry for further watering down.

But what's concerning about the debate is the mainstream media's mischaracterisation of what is sought.

According to a headline recently made in *The Australian*, the bill is now about protecting gay children.

The same-sex marriage campaign, which morphed into a well-funded standing political advocacy machine after it won the 2017 plebiscite, has characterised the religious freedoms debate as a crusade to beat up on gays.

Nothing could be further from the truth, but Equality Australia's advertisements are powerful propaganda.

All that is sought by faith organisations is the freedom to preserve and promote their beliefs. Yes, often these beliefs clash with the LGBTIQA+ prescriptions for marriage, family and gender. But why can't we have diversity?

That means being free to employ staff who support the idea of marriage between one man and one woman and the scientific view of gender and to decline employment to those who don't.

Christian people want to be free to preach the Bible's vision of human flourishing, even if it is "controversial" in the way Israel Folau expressed it. But alas, the "modern Liberals" killed the "Folau clause" in the bill.

Will their watering down of the bill to "protect gay kids" mean that Christian schools have to put up with boys taking their boyfriends to the school formal in defiance of the school community's wishes? Does it mean that a year 12 boy identifying as a girl can't be disciplined for entering the girls' toilet at school?

Media reports breathlessly label the bill "controversial". Yet it's the so-called "moderates" who think forcing schools to destroy girls' sport by allowing boys who identify as girls to compete with girls who are the true radicals.

Sadly it seems the Morrison Government's religious discrimination bill will do little more than protect statements of religious beliefs, but will not take away the possibility of an activist feeling "vilified" and therefore able to initiate legal action through a kangaroo commission for so-called equal opportunities.

Institutions may be allowed to retain some freedom in hiring staff but the provisions, as reported so far, look anaemic.

No one expects political parties to employ people who are opposed to their beliefs, yet even under the religious discrimination bill it will be difficult for religious organisations to exercise the same freedom.

Sadly the LGBTIQA+ political activists are well-funded, have the ear of the media and cultural elites and have no intention of allowing plurality to exist. Everyone must bow to their ideology, even within private organisations. RIP freedom of association.

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