

# Agenda & Notes for meeting with Senator Rex Patrick

Tues 5 Feb 2019 11.00AM

## re: Proposed Changes to the Sex Discrimination Act

Deputation from concerned Christians:

- Bill Wright - Convenor of Adelaide Arise, a Christian election advisory network
- Chris Brohier - SA Director of the Australian Christian Lobby (ACL)
- David d'Lima - State Director SA & ACT & National Secretary of Family Voice Australia
- Rev. Ian Clarkson - Chairperson, Hope Network of Uniting Churches in SA.

### 1. INTRODUCTIONS - say 15 mins - brief intro by:

- a. **Senator Rex Patrick** (inc. personal background, why becoming an MP, approach on this proposed Bill when Senate last met etc)
- b. **Bill Wright** - 1 min report on last meeting and meeting with Chris, David & Ian
- c. **Chris Brohier** - short intro - say 3 mins (inc who ACL is and who do they represent, personal experience with this topic & meaning of "discrimination", attitudes of Christian organisations, personal overview about the Bill)
- d. **David d'Lima** - short intro - say 3 mins - similar
- e. **Rev. Ian Clarkson** - short intro - say 3 mins - similar

### 2. SHORT PREAMBLE - - say 2 mins - any agreement?

Some quick points about our world-view and attitude - to put our objections in context.

- **Christianity value-add** - the contribution of active Christians has been enormous for hundreds of years, particularly as the foundation for Western philosophy and democracy, because Christians try to seek the public good rather than dominant self-interest (often characterized by driving desire for power, recognition and financial gain)
- **God focus** - active Christians seek to put God first on all matters, knowing that individuals and governments rely on His blessing (as evidenced by the preamble to the Australian Constitution). Accordingly, His sovereignty and authority is to be acknowledged - before man's laws and philosophy.
- **History repeats itself if is ignored** - even our founding fathers knew the truth learnt from history - that time and time again when the State forgets God and elevates their "wisdom" over His written moral code, tyranny prospers and humanity suffers. This Bill is part of a totalitarian package.
- **Rights origins** - throughout history Bible-based Christians have been extremely active in the area of human rights and equality, knowing that all people are equal in His sight and all have God-given rights to freedom,

respect and dignity. We believe rights come from God and come with responsibility.

- **PC extremism** - The Bible stresses that truth and love are key drivers for humanity. Instead today, in this paralysing downtrend of socially-engineered authoritarian political correctness we so often see unsubstantiated claims, divisive speech and aggressive behaviour.
- **Gambling the future** - State endorsed political correctness must be reversed before it further paralyses our freedom of thought and speech. If we don't, we are gambling with the lives of our children, grand-children and sustainability for future generations. They will look back and say "why and how did they let this happen?"

### 3. **GROUND'S FOR OBJECTION** - say 13 mins - Chris, David & Ian to comment as we go

There are serious objections to removal of the existing exemptions in this Act for Christian schools and Christian organisations. These objections relate to 5 levels of life - the individual level, the inter-personal level, the organisational level, the community level and the national level.

#### **(a) At the individual level**

If these exemptions are removed the following scenario should be sufficient by itself (without even relying on the objections raised in the other 4 levels) to exercise caution and reject the amendment Bill:

- **closing student minds** - closing doors to truth and alternative opinion closes minds, weakens character and each individual's fundamental rights to freedom of thought, speech and religion. The State favours its elitist unvalidated writings over God's and resents competition. That's why truth suffers under tyrants, as history shows
- **confusing student minds** - young people have to learn to discern truth from lies, reality from fantasy and to think freely and openly at a conscious level about choices between what is right and what is wrong. When the State pits itself against God, young minds will get confused, particularly if the student is used to a strong Christian ethos at home
- **sexualisation of children** - State endorsed promotional programmes (like "SafeSchools") promote homosexuality, focus on sexual experimentation and sexual identity by choice rather than biological sexual identity, often with drastic results. If parents were well-informed what goes on in some schools, they would be shocked
- **student and teacher persecution** - Christian students and teachers are already being targeted and persecuted for their beliefs by those claiming offence yet causing great offence to Christians through virtue-signalling and organised harassment. We believe the hidden agenda is for Christians to be shut down as enemies of the State.
- **teacher effectiveness** - Christian teacher effectiveness will be weakened by State intrusion to the detriment of the child's development and children will learn to be

submissive and trade individual thinking and conversation for group-think loyalty and propaganda

- **parents rights** - Christian parental rights for Christ-centred education and character development will be compromised by conflicts between Christian ethos and State endorsed ideology. Family cohesion and development will suffer.

## **(b) At the inter-personal level**

We see removal of the exemptions will usher in:

- **increasing division and disunity** - rather than unity and open exchange to discover truth. Power-seekers often seek to divide and conquer.
- **fruitless conversation and cooperation** - "sex discrimination" thought and conversation will crowd out healthy discussion and agreement on more important issues that need to be dealt with, producing a negative rather than positive culture
- **school-life politicization** - a dangerous trend for young minds as they get hooked and regurgitate slogans, cliches and group-think propaganda

## **(c) At the organisational level**

For Christian schools, churches and organisations we see:

- **weakening of Christian ethos** - this potential problem was recognised and partly remedied by giving exemptions to religious groups.
- **loss of the historic freedoms** - of association, speech, religion and contract - as the ability of the school or institution may no longer operate according to its founding faith-based principles.
- **fear and compromise** - State intrusion via "offended" parties will create fear and compromise and lead to a lowering of educational outcomes, character, integrity and respect for the dignity and potential of every human being.
- **inequity of moral education** - Christians are restricted in government schools (contrary to the right of freedom of thought and speech) yet secular ideology seeks far greater access in private schools than Christianity has in government schools

Hence, religious schools and faith-based organisations currently enjoy the freedom to ensure staff and students behave in a manner which does not contradict the institution's founding ethos. In the case of faith-based schools, sexuality issues have mainly been handled with compassion and care without punishing or expelling students on the basis of their sexual inclination or self-understanding. So, where is the problem facing students that requires any widening of anti-discrimination law? Where is the need for change? Why take the risk?

If the exemptions are removed, faith-based schools will be forced to accept teachers and students whose conduct contradicts founding precepts. Accordingly, school students or staff who (for example) might be same-sex attracted and are exposed to Christian sexual

teaching, could take action against the institution, suing it for damages on the basis of hurt feelings and owing to restrictions that arose.

In a recent Victorian case, a former student sued a school that had prevented her dressing as a male. This person demanded the school adopt radical transgender policies and ensure transgender activists “train” the staff. The case was settled confidentially, but was not the only school the person has sued.

Weakened exemptions would empower more people to likewise try to force their views on others. We believe most Australians would agree that parents should retain the existing freedom to choose faith-based schools or other institutions for their children, in accordance with parental expectations.

#### **(d) At the community level**

- **erosion of social capital** - when social capital (the common good) erodes every parent, family, individual and community will suffer. We will see increased division (a totalitarian tactic) rather than unity and massive erosion of our human resource base for critical thinking, open conversation and participation in higher matters related to being, belonging and becoming
- **widening division, distrust, fear and confusion** - to usher in authoritarian rule
- **diminishing individual responsibility** for community health and well-being and a decline in volunteerism

#### **(e) At the national level**

- **move to centralisation** - when grass-roots decentralisation should be encouraged
- **anti-God culture** and morality (thus a loss of blessing - meaning a downwards spiral - this is a huge risk)
- **loss of national identity** - as we favour the globalist agenda
- **erosion of democracy** - because democracy is an offshoot of Western culture and is based on the Reformation

#### **4. CLOSING ROUND-UP FROM ALL PARTIES - say 10 mins**