

# Religious Freedom Across Australia

# Federal

- Religious Discrimination Bill
- Sex Discrimination Act
- Productivity Commission review into Philanthropy
- AHRC Costs Protection Bill
- Human Rights Charter
- Misinformation / Disinformation
- Religious Vilification

# NSW

- Conversion Practices Act
- “Equality” Bill
- Anti-Discrimination review

# Queensland

- Anti-Discrimination re-write
- “Respect at Work” Bill

# Tasmania

- Conversion Therapy

# South Australia

- Greens bill removing religious exemptions

# Western Australia

- Conversion Therapy

# Elections

- NSW – March '23
- Tas – March '24
- NT – August '24
- Qld – October '24
- ACT – October '24
- WA – March '25
- Federal – May '25?

God has been good

# We are making progress

- NSW Conversion Practices
- NSW “Equality” Bill
- Qld Anti-Discrimination re-write
- ALRC proposals on faith-based schools
- Productivity Commission recommendations

# Religious Freedom Across Australia



# Productivity Commission

## Recommendations:

- Extend tax deductibility to all charity categories
  - Except for “promoting religion”
- Remove tax deductibility from:
  - School building funds
  - Religious education in Government schools
- Remove “Basic Religious Category”

# Productivity Commission

“We’ve been clear that we understand the important role our schools play in supporting communities, families and students – that includes religious schools of all denominations. While we consider the Productivity Commission’s recommendations, **we will not be considering changing the tax arrangements around schools, including donations for religious education.**”

- The Hon Dr Andrew Leigh



# AHRC Costs Protection Bill

“...the applicant must not be ordered by the court to pay costs incurred by another party to the proceedings”

“...if the applicant is successful in proceedings on one or more grounds, the court must order each respondent against whom the applicant is successful to pay the applicant’s costs”

# AHRC Costs Protection Bill

Will allow consequence-free weaponisation of the Federal court system:

- Sex/gender/identity Discrimination
- Religious Discrimination
- Vilification

# Human Rights Charter

## Intention:

- Make a positive statement of human rights
- Write international treaties into Australian law
- Benchmark legislation against human rights

## General concerns:

- Takes power away from Parliament
- Gives power to the judiciary

# Human Rights Charter

ICCPR 18.1:

Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.

# Human Rights Charter

## AHRC Proposal:

- Emphasises “anti-discrimination”
- Down-plays religious freedom
- Waters down ICCPR 18

# Misinformation / Disinformation

Disinformation is ... information that is false, misleading or deceptive [and ...] is reasonably likely to cause or contribute to serious harm.



# Misinformation / Disinformation

harm means any of the following ...

- b) disruption of public order or society in Australia;
- c) harm to the integrity of Australian democratic processes or ... government institutions;
- d) harm to the health of Australians;
- e) harm to the Australian environment;
- f) economic or financial harm to Australians ...

# Misinformation / Disinformation

harm means any of the following:

- a) hatred against a group in Australian society on the basis of ethnicity, nationality, race, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion or physical or mental disability;

# Misinformation / Disinformation

Online providers must remove all posts that are:

... false, misleading or deceptive [and] reasonably likely to cause or contribute to ... hatred against a group on the basis of ... gender, sexual orientation or religion

... or face a \$6 billion fine

# Misinformation / Disinformation

“We want to make it as explicit as possible that nothing in this bill can inhibit religious expression ...

That would be a new area that wasn't considered at the time of the original consultation being commenced, but it clearly is important and we want to address it.”

- The Hon Michelle Rowland

# NSW Conversion Practices Bill

March '23	Election Candidate Forums Labor Commitments
July '23	DCJ Proposal
August '23	Alex Greenwich's legislation "Contact Your MP" Campaign
March '24	Government Bill Passed
April '25	Act comes into effect

# NSW “Equality” Bill

50 pages long , over 80 changes to 20 laws

- slash protections for churches and schools
- birth certificate sex change from age 16
- children bypass parents for medical treatment
- legalise commercial surrogacy
- liberalise and elevate prostitution

Scheduled for August 16

# NSW Anti-Discrimination Review

Term of reference:

- whether the **range of attributes** protected against discrimination requires reform
- whether the **areas of public life** in which discrimination is unlawful requires reform
- whether the existing tests for discrimination are **clear, inclusive and reflect a modern understanding** of discrimination

# NSW Anti-Discrimination Review

- the adequacy of protections against **vilification**
- the adequacy of protections against sexual harassment and whether the Act should cover harassment **based on other protected attributes**
- whether the Act should include **positive obligations to prevent harassment, discrimination and vilification**, and to make reasonable adjustments to promote full and equal participation in public life



# QLD Anti-Discrimination re-write

- 1) A person may discriminate ... on the basis of the other person's religious belief or religious activity in relation to work for a religious body if—
  - (a) participation in the teaching, observance or practice of the religion concerned is a **genuine occupational requirement of the work**; and
  - (c) the discrimination is **reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances**.

# QLD Anti-Discrimination re-write

To remove any doubt, it is declared that a person can not rely on subsection (1) to discriminate against another person on the basis of a protected attribute other than religious belief or religious activity.

# QLD Anti-Discrimination re-write

A Jewish school could refuse to employ someone if they eat pork, but not if they are a prostitute

A Christian church could require employees to say they believe that sex should remain within heterosexual marriage, but cannot require them to live that way

A Muslim women's group could refuse to employ a woman who is not wearing a hijab, but not if they were a biological male who has 'transitioned'.

# QLD “Respect at Work” Bill

conduct on the basis of—

- (i) the other person’s sex; or ...
- (iv) a sex the other person is presumed to be, or to have been at any time, by the person engaging in the conduct; or
- (v) a sex the other person has been, even if the person is not that sex at the time of the conduct

# QLD “Respect at Work” Bill

engages in the conduct—

- (i) with the intention of offending, humiliating or intimidating the other person; or
- (ii) in circumstances where **a reasonable person would have anticipated the possibility** that the other person would be offended, humiliated or intimidated by the conduct.

# QLD “Respect at Work” Bill

[organisations] must take reasonable and proportionate measures to eliminate the discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment on the basis of sex or other objectionable conduct as far as possible.

# QLD “Respect at Work” Bill

1. A person must not, because of the age, **gender identity**, impairment, race, **religion**, **sex**, **sex characteristics** or **sexual orientation** of another person or a group of persons, engage in a public act that **a reasonable person would consider hateful towards**, reviling, seriously contemptuous of, or seriously ridiculing the other person or members of the group.

# QLD “Respect at Work” Bill

*a reasonable person would consider hateful ...*

The ordinary English meaning of “hateful” includes:

- arouses hate
- deserves to be hated
- full of or expressing hate
- unpleasant; dislikable; distasteful



# QLD “Respect at Work” Bill

2. For subsection (1), reasonable person means a **reasonable person who has the same** age, gender identity, impairment, race, religion, sex, sex characteristics or sexual orientation as the other person or members of the group.

# QLD “Respect at Work” Bill

3. Subsection (1) does not make unlawful—

- (c) a public act, done reasonably and in good faith, for academic, artistic, scientific or research purposes or for other purposes in the public interest, including public discussion or debate about, and expositions of, any act or matter.

# SA Greens Bill

“South Australian religious schools and organisations would be prevented from discriminating against LGBTI people, under a Greens Bill to be introduced into State Parliament after the winter break.”

...The Greens’ Equal Opportunity (Religious Bodies) Amendment Bill would remove these exemptions. The bill would however retain the right of religious organisations to appoint Ministers on the basis of their adherence to their religion.”

# WA Conversion Therapy

“We continue to look at how we can legislate to make sure gay conversion therapies are outlawed, but it is very difficult to define in a statutory sense because you have to define what a therapeutic activity is”

- Premier Roger Cook

“Consultation has identified that a civil response scheme may also be needed to complement the ban, and further work is being undertaken to explore this”

- Spokesperson

Where do we go  
from here?

# Where do we go from here?

Legal analysis and submissions

Faith leader coordination and support

Candidate Forums

Contact Your MP

# Where do we go from here?

## Candidate Forums

Qld	October '24	93 Electorates
WA	March '25	59 Electorates
Federal	May '25?	150 Electorates



# Introducing Mark Polonsky






# Where do we go from here?

## Contact Your MP

NSW	Conversion Practices
NSW	“Equality” Bill
QLD	Anti-Discrimination re-write
QLD	“Respect at Work” bill
Federal	Religious Discrimination Bill
SA	Anti-Discrimination – TBC
WA	Conversion Therapy – TBC

Politicians only know what matters  
when we tell them



## Current Issues

---

QLD

Queensland  
"Respect at Work"  
Bill



NSW

Alex Greenwich's  
"Equality" Bill



Federal

Protect our  
Faith-based  
schools



# Ask your MP to fix this bill NOW

---

Enter your suburb or postcode to find your MP's contact details and writing tips.

Enter your suburb or postcode \*



Sign up to keep up to date with the campaign

First name

Last name

Email

Get MP Details

Your personal details are optional, please fill these in for alerts about the legislation and new resources for the campaign. Your details will be kept confidential according to our [privacy policy](#), and only used for campaign alerts.



QLD

## Write to your MP



Party [Labor](#) | Electorate [Nudgee](#)

### The Hon Leanne Linard MP

Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for  
Science and Innovation

✉ [nudgee@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:nudgee@parliament.qld.gov.au)

☎ 07 3638 7100

📍 PO Box 140, PO Box 140, Nundah Queensland 4012

## Sending your letter

---

**By email:** [nudgee@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:nudgee@parliament.qld.gov.au)

Copy the Premier and Attorney General:

[premier@ministerial.qld.gov.au](mailto:premier@ministerial.qld.gov.au)

[attorney@ministerial.qld.gov.au](mailto:attorney@ministerial.qld.gov.au)

## Writing Guide

---

**An effective email is polite, friendly and short.**

Emails are first read by the MP's staff, who are extremely busy and are usually dealing with a very full inbox. If they can quickly scan the email and understand your point, they are able to convey your concerns to the MP – especially if dozens of other people have also written expressing the same issues.

**Introduce** Address them as “Dear Minister”, or “Dear Leanne”

Introduce yourself and say where you live, something about your family, community, or church/mosque/temple etc.

# Where do we go from here?

Legal analysis and submissions

Faith leader coordination and support

Candidate Forums

Contact Your MP

[fff.org.au/donate](https://fff.org.au/donate)