

## The Human Side to Religious Discrimination Bill.

As a parent of a gay male and advocate for LGBTIQ + people's rights for the last 23 years, I want to know when will my son and his community be seen as equal without debate and judgement by many in the church. All of the debates for equality and changes in legislation bring anxiety and stress for LGBTIQ+, hate and division in community. The problem is human rights have to be fought for, they are never just given. The problem is the emotional cost is too much for some.

In 2008 there was the debate of economic equality and were LGBTIQ+ relationships worthy of economic equality.

In 2017 after many years of begging, insulting conversations and debate with MP's, marriage equality was eventually legalised, with a sting in its tail.

Now in 2021 this "sting", the Religious Discrimination Bill, the consolation prize for losing the marriage equality debate is about to be debated. Religious groups claim to be in fear of discrimination and losing their religious freedom. However, in reality they are seeking religious privilege directed mainly at LGBTIQ+ people.

Religious groups and right wing politicians are playing down the impact of this Bill, but in reality religious groups and individuals will have the privilege of

- (a) weakened anti discrimination laws which will provide protection against consequence of their comments and/or actions
- (b) Comments known as a "statement of belief" will allow people to make derogatory statements without fear of repercussion
- (c) Dismissal of those in the workplace who don't fit the criteria, nothing to do with the ability of the individuals.
- (d) Mental health issues will increase
- (e) Dedicated LGBTIQ+ will return to the closet to keep their chosen position in the workplace

I ask, when will my son be treated with respect in his home country? When will he be able to stop working twice as hard to be seen as half as good as his brother, work colleagues and society, generally? He is presently living in London, because he is treated equally and I am pleased because there he feels equal, but not at home in Australia.

I ask when will Labor stand up and stop bowing to the Coalition and it's shabby legislation? When will the Coalition begin working for all Australians, not the minority?

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