20 December 2012

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill 2012

I write as an ordained minister of the Anglican Church of Australia to express concern about the proposed Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill 2012.

I value the protection afforded me as a citizen of Australia under our Constitution to exercise my faith and to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ without fear in this land. The freedom of expression afforded me under the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia is reinforced by Article 19 of the United Nations Charter of Human Rights:

> Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

I hold deep concern that the enacting of the proposed Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill 2012 will limit a freedom of all people in Australia, and particularly of Christian people, to express their deeply-held beliefs and to apply what they believe in their daily lives as well as during services of corporate worship.

I have grave concerns about any proposed legislation that has the potential to undermine freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of association and a concept of natural justice.

I have grave concerns that the proposed Bill attempts to curtail conduct that offends or insults, when a state of being offended or a state of being insulted is subjective and, it seems to me, beyond legal definition.

I have grave concerns about any legislation that seeks to reverse onus of proof.

I have real doubts about the effectiveness of trying to legislate attitude change. Education and encouragement are preferable to attempting to enforce compliance with laws that can never fully address all nuances of behaviour or speech that might in some circumstances appear to be discriminatory.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Rose