Dear Sir/Madam,

thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the inquiry “Exposure Draft of Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill 2012”

At the height of the second world war Franklin Roosevelt gave his famous “four freedoms” speech. Roosevelt highlighted four fundamental human rights;

-Freedom of speech and expression
-Freedom of worship
-Freedom from want
-Freedom from fear

I find it deeply concerning that we have now arrived at a situation in our own country where in the name of “human rights” we have a bill which plans to restrict and compromise some of our most basic and universal of human rights.

The Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill undermines free speech, freedom of religion, freedom of association and natural justice in a number of ways.

- This bill attacks freedom of speech and expression with its clause "conduct that offends, insults or intimidates" (or is perceived to do so by a vexatious complainant). The definition is unfairly vague and seeks to make free and open speech a potential crime – not because of it's content or intent – but simply because the wrong person disagrees with what is being said. This is wrong.
- This bill attacks freedom of worship and it is impossible to escape the obvious conclusion that parts of it are little more than a secular attempt to needlessly interfere and manipulate how religious groups and schools choose to operate and whom they may – for entirely valid reasons - choose to employ.
- This bill will allow decent and fair minded Australians to be persecuted and punished by politically correct tribunals and vexatious complainants. Especially disturbingly is the requirement that the defendant now has the burden of proof to prove his innocence. This is manifestly unjust.
- All this will help nurture a climate of community fear and self censorship and will contribute to an already growing distrust of government.

I can't support this bill and I can't vote for people who would think to support such poorly thought out legislation.

Because of what it contains I strongly oppose this bill and I strongly oppose the thinking behind it. It will only hurt innocent people and undermine Australian democracy and personal freedoms.

Yours Sincerely
ANDREW STAGG