

20.12.2012

Submission on the "Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill 2012"

I am concerned that democratic principles are whittled away in some instances, and undermined in others.

They are being whittled away when thoughts and motives are deemed to be able to be read in the concrete, and then judged as guilty till proven innocent. Australia's legal system was not set up to prejudge the accused; in fact, sometimes cases have hit the media so hard that the accused asks to be tried in a different town/city. Also, our system was not set up that the accused are refused legal advice or representation.

They are being undermined when religious freedom is tampered with – that is indeed mixing church with state!

There is no such thing in a free democracy, meaning a system built and dependent on robust, full and open debate, of some right not to be 'hurt' by argument. If points need to be made to ensure as full an understanding of an issue as possible, then those points must be made.

Expressed another way, I agree with the points:

- It is impossible to outlaw offence, as admirable as the idea might be.
- The ability to be offended is part of our freedom of speech and the necessary part of the ongoing need for the exercise of love and forgiveness.
- The preservation of our right to freedom of speech necessitates the freedom to be offended and the freedom to forgive.
- As soon as human rights become 'identified' as opposed to being 'assumed' it creates a lawyers picnic.
- The reversal of 'innocent until proven guilty' is an amputation of our human rights.
- The more we go down this road, the more laws we will need and the making of them will never end.
- The proposed Bill of Rights is a direct attack on church based charities who want to exercise their Christian conscience for the common good.
- The new proposed legislation will further erode our natural rights and freedoms and is a case of political correctness on steroids.
- and crucially, the proposed bill would impose unprecedented restriction on free speech.

Yours faithfully
(Mrs) M A Ross