



ATTORNEY-GENERAL

CANBERRA

MC14/11719

Dr Dennis Jensen MP  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Petitions  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

11 FEB 2015

Dear Dr Jensen

Thank you for your letter about section 18C of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*.  
I apologise for the delay in responding.

The Government is deeply committed to its freedom agenda, which includes advancing measures to protect freedom of speech, freedom of religion and other traditional rights and liberties.

Following consultation on the Government's proposed changes to the Act, the Government decided that the twin goals of protecting the community and social harmony, in the context of the current national security threat, should take priority over all other considerations. Therefore, the Prime Minister announced on 5 August 2014, that the Government will not be proceeding with the proposed amendments to section 18C of the Act.

The fundamental priority of every government is to keep our nation safe. The Government is working closely with the community to combat radicalisation and extremism through the promotion of acceptance, tolerance and social inclusion.

The Government believes in an Australia where everyone is free to speak their mind, where rights are accompanied by responsibilities, where there is absolutely no place for racism, and where all our citizens live in a harmonious and mutually respectful society. Our policies will always be designed to secure those objectives.

Thank you again for writing on this matter.

Yours faithfully

(George Brandis)