

# **PARLIAMENTARY JOINT COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS**

## **CHAIR'S TABLING STATEMENT**

**Thursday 16 February 2017**

I rise to speak to the tabling of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights' Report 1 of 2017.

The committee's report examines the compatibility of recent bills and legislative instruments with Australia's human rights obligations. Twenty-eight new bills are assessed as not raising human rights concerns, the committee is seeking further information in relation to six bills and legislative instruments, and the committee has also concluded its consideration of a number of matters.

Before discussing the report further, I would like to take this opportunity to speak a little about the progress of the committee's inquiry into Freedom of Speech in Australia.

The committee received approximately 11,500 items, including approximately 9,500 form letters; 375 items accepted by the committee as submissions and published to date; and approximately 1,400 items accepted by the committee as correspondence.

The committee has completed seven public hearings to date, in Canberra, Hobart, Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Perth and Brisbane. It is scheduled to conduct a further hearing in Canberra tomorrow, and its final hearing in Darwin next Monday, 20 February 2017. The committee is due to report on 28 February 2017.

I will now turn to a brief discussion of the three matters that the committee finalised in this report:

- Although the Law Enforcement Legislation Amendment (State Bodies and Other Measures) Bill 2016 is now law, the committee finalised its examination of compatibility with Australia's international human rights obligations, pursuant to the committee's statutory mandate;
- The committee also finalised its consideration of the Privacy Amendment (Notifiable Data Breaches) Bill 2016, concluding that this bill promotes the right to privacy, but noting it applies only to unauthorised access to, or disclosure of, personal information or data loss;
- Lastly, the committee finalised its consideration of the Sex Discrimination Amendment (Exemptions) Regulation 2016, noting the Attorney-General's response that more time was needed for the Western Australian Government to consult with the community on options for reform to two Western Australian Acts that are subject to a particular exemption from the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*.

I encourage my fellow members and others to examine the committee's report to better inform their understanding of the committee's work.

With these comments, I commend the committee's Report 1 of 2017 to the chamber.