

3

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2020-21

Attorney General's Department

LCC-AE21-30 Religious Discrimination Bill

Senator Deborah O'Neill asked the following question on 23 March 2021:

Senator O'NEILL: The last series of questions in this committee on this topic were asked by Senator Carr, and I'm keen to see if there's been any progress since that date. Since the last budget estimates, has there been any progress on the draft bill?

....

Senator O'NEILL: We're talking about since October last year. Can you outline the consultation that's been undertaken with regard to the draft legislation—the second draft piece?

Senator Stoker: I would take on notice the details of meetings and things like that. I know I've had a number of meetings with people interested, and a number of teleconferences and the like with people who wish to be heard on this matter. There is a lot of community interest in ensuring that the bill is both delivered and that it is effective in meeting its objectives. There are just too many for me to be able to recount dates and times at this point in time.

Senator O'NEILL: So is it fair to say that, since October, you have reactivated engagement with people who are interested in this religious discrimination matter?

Senator Stoker: It's certainly true of myself, since I came into the role in December. And I am happy to take it on notice in relation to the Attorney and Acting Attorney.

The response to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

The Government has conducted two rounds of extensive public consultation on the Religious Discrimination Bill and associated legislative package. Submissions to these processes were welcomed from all Australians and the Attorney-General's Department received approximately 13,000 submissions through these processes.

The Government's position on timing for introduction of the Religious Discrimination Bill remains unchanged and will bring the legislation forward at an appropriate time.