

Chelle Destefano

Dear Senate,

YES! I support the improvements and strengthened protections against discrimination in the exposure draft of the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill 2012.

Why should everyone be treated differently when we all are the same human beings, we have the right to be treated equally and fairly and with respect as you would want to be treated fairly too if you were us?? No matter what the status of anyone (intersex, irrelevant criminal record, status as a victim of domestic or family violence, and social status i.e. homelessness, unemployment status or receipt of social security payments), they should have the same rights!! I feel embarrassed by our country not having human rights like other countries do. I as a Deaf person have experienced so much discrimination in the community and I am SICK OF IT!!!! I don't get fair rights like in getting a job in anything I WANT!!! Plus I was discriminated in being forced onto Supported Wage for a normal working job in Coles and Foodland between 2006 and 2010. This made me very angry as I am able to move around and I did ALL the hard work yet I got crap pay of \$10 a hour!!! I could not pay my mortgage or afford to run my car on that sort of wage ESPECIALLY when it also reduced my pension regardless of the fact that it was such BAD PAY!!!! That is one thing I will NEVER forgive the industries or government for! I struggled for those years and still do even in my part time normal-paid job! I also believe Deaf people are limited in their choices of jobs because too many jobs are customer-related or require phone work and we CANT do these jobs, yet we are forced to accept our pensions being reduced for doing what little work we have. It is NOT fair the blind get full pension AND yet they have a job!!!! THEY can do phone work, WE CANT! I want to see Deaf people get full pensions while working like the blind do! That will make it equal. We have expenses we can't afford because the work we do is limited and pensions reduced makes it harder to afford anything.

Another thing, please remove permanent and blanket exceptions relating to religious organisations. While extending protections against discrimination on the basis of a person's religious beliefs should be supported, permanent and blanket exceptions which allow religious organisations to operate outside of accepted community standards should be removed and I believe this should be looked into. Why should we have to put up with being treated less importantly than those religious people when THEY cause so much trouble for us by being discriminating and unfair to us and they exclude a lot of people from things, like the gays, disabled and anyone who has some disadvantage that they can't help.

Please I ask you to strengthen the powers and functions of the Australian Human Rights Commission to enable it to effectively tackle discrimination, and resourcing the Commission accordingly.

Please look very seriously into this.

Regards,
Chelle