

Dear Sir or Madam,

I wish to express my concern about the proposed Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill 2012. Freedom of speech is an inherent part of Australian society and this Bill would effectively gag free speech. It is the right of every person to express their own values and beliefs and to disagree with those of other people. As a committed Christian, I am regularly offended by the opinions of others, especially those making fun of conservative values such as mine, but I have no desire to see those who express those views punished by the legal system. Violent harassment and bullying need to be dealt with but the expression of a personal opinion about the religion or sexual orientation of another person must be allowed. There are already laws to cover violence. We shouldn't be criminalising the expression of opinions but clearly aggressive or violent behaviour. It is not always possible to know whether our opinions might offend someone else. This Bill would stifle the free exchange of ideas and beliefs, while not actually changing people's core beliefs.

The rights of one group of people should not totally override the rights of other people. Political correctness is controlling every area of our society now and must be halted. We need government to generally stay out of our lives and only intrude when absolutely necessary.

This Bill should be totally rejected.

Yours truly,

Amanda Williamson