

I'm concerned about the new proposed draft Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill 2012. While I think it's important that we protect individuals from discrimination and abuse, I think a fundamental right is that of free speech and being able to belong to an organisation that may or may not actively disagree with another organisation or individual's belief system.

I think that you need to be very carefully balancing freedom with protection.

- I'm concerned that the bill uses words like offend or insult to define discrimination. I want to retain the ability to say something that I believe in even if it does cause someone somewhere "offense".
- I'm concerned that if someone is accused of an offense, it is up to them to prove their innocence. This could create major headaches for individuals or organisations targeted by nuisance or rogue allegations.
- I'm concerned that you will review and (may) progressively change the freedom's enjoyed by those considered 'exceptions' to the bill such as religious bodies.

I support the protection of human rights but I also support to protection of freedom. At no point should changes to human rights legislation in anyway restrict religious freedoms, freedom of speech, or create an environment where these things are challenged.