



Morrison's Religious Discrimination Bill Enables Workplace Discrimination

On 25 November 2021, Prime Minister Scott Morrison introduced the Religious Discrimination Bill 2021. This is the third attempt by the Federal Government to amend religious discrimination legislation

Do not be misled by the name of this Parliamentary Bill nor the rhetoric that accompanies its proposed legislation. **This proposed legislation is purported to be protecting people from discrimination, instead it provides employers with new rights to discriminate.**

The Religious Discrimination Bill 2021, if accepted will :

- Privilege the rights of religious organisations over individual employees' beliefs, even where their beliefs or activities have no relevance to their job.
- Act as a mechanism to discriminate against IEU members who raise complaints, seek assistance, or take other action in their workplace to stand up for their own rights or the rights of others
- Allow religious bodies – schools, hospitals, aged care facilities and accommodation providers – to hire, fire or promote any worker based on their religion, regardless on their attributes for the job.
- Protect people who make discriminatory religious statements of belief, even if they are offensive, inappropriate, and harmful.

Overrides Current State/Territory protections

The IEU have long campaigned for anti-discrimination protections within legislations and have won many protections for IEU members within current State legislations.

The Religious Discrimination Bill will override State and Territory anti-discrimination legislation and any protections provided.

The removal of state/territory discrimination protections will make LGBTQ+ staff and students, in faith-based schools vulnerable.

In the last 40 years of discrimination laws in Australia, there is hardly a single example of a federal law overriding discrimination protections granted under state and territory laws.

The Federal Government continues to polarise and disenfranchise the rights of IEU members who work in faith-based schools.

Members should not need to fear discrimination on the basis of religion, sexual orientation, sex, gender, disability or other personal attributes. Practices in faith-based schools, and indeed in any endeavour conducted for the public by faith based organisation should reflect community standards and expectations.

IEU members and students in schools deserve safe workplaces and learning environments. And they deserve legislation that protects not harms them

IEU – representing 75000 teachers, principals and ancillary staff in faith based, community and independent schools, pre-schools and early childhood centres and post secondary centres across Australia.

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