

COMMITTEES RECOMMEND PASSAGE OF RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION BILL

4 February 2022

The Australian Association of Christian Schools (AACS) welcomes the release of the two parliamentary committee reports today, which recommend the passage of the Government’s religious discrimination legislation.

“If passed by the Parliament, the human right of religious freedom will be recognised in Australia for the first time,” said Vanessa Cheng, Executive Officer of AACS, “this is a significant reform and sends a clear message that it doesn’t matter if you are a Christian, Muslim or Jew, your religious identity deserves the same level of protection as other personal attributes such as race, age, sex or disability.”

“Protection against religious discrimination is long overdue – it is the missing piece of the discrimination puzzle. It will allow religious people to feel safe in the community when being open and authentic about their beliefs. Australian can feel proud to identify as religious without fear of being discriminated against.”

“We have been waiting many years for this law to be passed. We urge a bipartisan approach to signify that protection of religious freedom is in Australia’s national interest, consistent with our obligations under international law,” said Mrs Cheng.

“Our children can have confidence that when they leave school and enter the workforce that they won’t miss out on the job or promotion simply because they attended a Christian school or identify as a Christian,” said Mrs Cheng, “and the Bill makes clear that sharing your religious beliefs in a moderate and respectful way is not going to get you into trouble with other anti-discrimination or vilification laws.”

AACS are also pleased that the Bill will protect the ability of Christian schools to continue hiring staff who share in the faith of the school. This freedom is of fundamental importance to the Christian school sector and provides genuine choice for parents in deciding the type of education they want for their children.

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