

Assistant Secretary,  
International Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Branch, Attorney General's  
Department.

Deart Sir/Madam,

Freedom of choice and freedom of peaceful expression of opinion must be the  
over-arching structure of our laws.

Please do not add Sexual Identity and Gender Identity to Federal 'anti-  
discrimination law'.

The subject is already dealt with under 'Equal Opportunity'  
Commissions and Tribunals.

Religion plays a key role in the lives of many people. Courts inevitably take  
a secular view when religious belief is on one side of representation to the  
Court. The law must purposefully extend its protection in a balanced way to  
this aspect of life that is fundamentally important ot many people. Such  
protection must of course be balanced appropriately with other rights.  
It is an observable fact that religious adherents often engage in voluntary  
social activity for the good of others - and consequently provide an important  
supplement to Government- provided social services.

Some examples of inappropriate application of this type of law:-

Surely a Christian marriage registrar, on the grounds of religious belief,  
should be free to make a conscscientious decision and be free of the obligaiton  
to register same-sex partnerships (when others are available to do so).

Surely a Christian foster care agency should be free of obligation to place  
children in care of a same-sex partnership.

Surely a Christian camping organisation should be free from obligation to  
accept booking from a same-sex advocacy group.

These real-life examples highlight problems arising from the addition of  
Sexual Identity and Gender Identity to A-D laws, which would have effect far  
beyond any pre-conceived outcome, particularly restricting free an open  
communication and practice of our traditional Christian values.

Yours sincerely,

David Shearer