Religious Discrimination Bill – Exposure Draft

Your Submission

Anglicare Victoria supports protections from all forms of discrimination. Anglicare Victoria strongly believes that no one should be allowed to discriminate against or vilify people on the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity, race, culture, religion, age or disability.

The introduction of laws that strengthen protection for people facing discrimination because of their religious beliefs or because they don’t hold religious beliefs is welcomed. As an Anglican faith based organisation that employs and supports people with a wide range of faiths and religious beliefs, as well as those who do not hold religious beliefs, Anglicare Victoria wholeheartedly supports this move.

However should these laws provide a loop hole that enables people to use their beliefs to harm others by cutting through existing anti-discrimination protections, then it is imperative that these consequences are mitigated to ensure equal protection against discrimination for all under the new legislation.

Anglicare Victoria has recently achieved accreditation under the Rainbow Tick Standards. Seeking accreditation for our services and workplace under these standards sends an important message that we want to be an inclusive organisation that values diversity and does not tolerate discrimination.

This message is supported by the public actions Anglicare Victoria has taken over the years against discrimination. These include communicating support in 2016 to the State minister for changes in adoption laws to enable same sex couples the same rights under adoption laws in Victoria and outlining an organisation wide position of support for marriage equality in the 2017 referendum, whilst still acknowledging that staff will be supported no matter what personal views they held on the issue.

In addition to these public positions, in August 2018 Anglicare Victoria made a pledge with other faith based organisations in Victoria to provide inclusive and non-discriminatory services to LGBTIQ community members, despite legislative provisions that enable faith based organisations to do so in some circumstances.

Anglicare Victoria want our clients, employees and the communities we work with to know that we acknowledge diversity and make it work, in a respectful way, thereby creating value from difference. Anglicare Victoria supports the broad idea behind the Bill: to prohibit discrimination on the basis of religious belief or non-belief, but we do not support one model of special protection for religious faith and a lesser model of protection for all other people.