Thank you for this opportunity to provide feedback for the draft exposure of the Religious Freedom Bills (2019).

Broadly speaking I support the creation of a federal anti-discrimination framework designed to preserve our right religious practice, worship and expression. However, this should not be at the expense of others' freedoms or access to services.

I have the following strong concerns about this draft legislation:

- I do not support the provision in this draft legislation which seeks to elevate it above existing state anti-discrimination legislation. No other federal anti-discrimination does this and therefore, this has the potential to prioritise religious anti-discrimination over all others.
- I do not support the provision of ‘employer conduct rules’ because:
  - The $50m turnover is an arbitrary figure
  - It creates two classes of employee based on who someone works for and the workplace protections they enjoy around the same issue (religious belief)
  - It places an unreasonable onus on a large employer to argue against an allegation of “unlawful discrimination” due to the broad definition of what constitutes a religious belief
  - No other federal anti-discrimination legislation has this provision
- I do not support this draft legislation because it will allow an individual, within a workplace or other organisation, to bring into question one’s lifestyle, or health choices, should that person deem that to be contrary to their religious practice. This provision is unique to this legislation and does not exist in any other federal anti-discrimination legislation.
- I do not support this draft legislation because it affords people providing a “health service” with a conscientious objection, based on their religious belief, to withhold otherwise legally available services. This will especially affect people in rural and remote communities where a choice of health practitioner is limited. For example, this could affect:
  - Trans identifying kids seeking hormone therapy
  - Women accessing pregnancy termination
  - Women accessing hormonal contraception
  - Blood transfusions for people in need where a doctor may oppose on religious grounds
  - GPs who oppose vaccination based on niche religious beliefs

The terms “religion”, “religious belief” and “religious activity” are not defined in the bill. The failure to define “religion”, raises questions about the scope of the protections that would be afforded by the bill. For example, is each stream or sect of a religion a “religion” for the purposes of the bill?
Who says what constitutes a “religious” belief in the eyes of a given religion and how might individual belief be accounted for in that definition?