

Senate Petition for Protection of our Religious Freedoms Introduction – July 2019

What is the Senate Petition about?

Thousands of Australian people of faith are now actively taking part in a 'grassroots uprising' for religious freedom by signing a Senate Petition to call for a "Religious Freedom Act".

This is because many experts advise that the draft "Religious Discrimination Act" proposed by the Attorney General will not be enough to protect our freedoms.

For example: employees might face what Israel Folau has in being sacked for posting their beliefs on social media outside of work; parents in some States and Territories are already denied the right to remove their children from radical sexualised school programs; Parents are also likely to be subject to new laws on how they raise their children with respect to gender fluidity etc.

Who will submit the petition?

Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells (NSW) will table the completed and signed original Senate Petitions to the government on behalf of the petitioners from across Australia.

Why a paper petition instead of electronic?

Members of Parliament regard paper-based petitions a lot more seriously because they reflect genuine effort.

How can I participate?

If you are signing the petition, please provide the following information as a minimum:

- full name
- suburb and postcode
- signature.

Optional, if you want to receive updates from the Senator, please include:

- your email address
- your phone number.

Please do not scan or photocopy the signed Senate Petition, as the signed originals must be sent directly to Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells office (address below). Your details will only be shared with the Senator's office and will not be used for any other purpose.

If you are distributing and/or collecting petitions:

Ensure all 10 rows in a sheet are completed by petitioners before starting a new form. As soon as you have completed the signed sheets please send them to:

Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells
PO Box 886, Wollongong NSW 2520.

To print off more petition forms visit:

www.airborne.org/content/CFW_Petition_Religious_Freedom_Act.pdf

For more information please Contact Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells office:

Phone (02) 4226 1700, or email: senator.fierravanti-wells@aph.gov.au

Why? – The Threat to Religious Freedom

In the recent Federal election, ordinary voters spoke and told Scott Morrison that religious freedom is an important issue. The sacking of Israel Folau for sharing his faith on social media has roused the public, both Christian and non-Christian. Churches need to know that Israel's case is not an isolated incident. Religious freedom is under threat.

Christians throughout Australia are increasingly facing discrimination because of their religious beliefs and being dragged through tribunals and courts, disciplined by governing bodies, investigated by government departments, losing their jobs and being branded as intolerant and bigoted. Examples of cases throughout Australia in which the Human Rights Law Alliance has assisted include the following (no real names used):

- **Andrew** is a Christian student at a large Australian university. Andrew was suspended from university for expressing a Biblical view of sexuality when asked by a classmate. This decision was only reversed through time consuming and stressful legal action.
- **Jared** is a GP. An anonymous complaint was made to the medical board by someone who was not a patient. Jared's crime was that he had posted orthodox Christian beliefs and scientific facts about sexuality and gender issues. Jared is currently fighting an investigation by the medical board and may lose his ability to practise medicine.
- **Chris and Mary** are Christian parents who made an application to foster children between the ages of 0 -5 with a fostering agency. They were rejected as "unsafe" as foster parents because of their orthodox Christian views on sexuality and gender.
- **Dan** is a teacher. Dan posted links to articles about homosexual marriage leading up to the marriage postal vote. Dan was reported to the Department of Education who subjected Dan to a long investigation which was only terminated when he obtained legal help.
- **Barry** is a tertiary lecturer. Barry was disciplined for responding to blasphemy by asking students "Oh, do you know Jesus? Because I do". Barry has been officially warned by his employer not to share his religious beliefs and has been threatened with discipline and termination. He is getting legal assistance to ensure his job is protected.
- **Clara** is a mental health counsellor. She lost her teaching qualification when a progressive political activist reported her Christian views on sexuality and gender that had been shared on social media videos. Despite the fact that Clara has never had a complaint from anyone, she has been stripped of her livelihood.

It is clear that religious freedom is under threat. Our Prime Minister is proposing to take the path of least resistance by passing a Religious Discrimination Act. Discrimination Acts don't work and are the weapon used by activists to harass and attack Christians and their freedoms. A bad Discrimination Act will be worse than no act at all. Christians have been too quiet for too long. They need to stand up and tell the Prime Minister that Australia doesn't need another discrimination act. Australia needs a Religious Freedom Act for all Australians.

Federal Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells and the Australian Christian Lobby are circulating petitions asking for the Senate to pass a Religious Freedom Act that contains not only a protection against discrimination but also a positive expression of the fundamental rights of Christians to practise and manifest their faith and to ensure the Christian education of their children. We think a Religious Freedom Act is essential. Please let our Prime Minister and your local member know that you think so too.