



29 March 2017

Malcolm Turnbull MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister,

On behalf of Australian Quakers, I wish to make the following comments on Government moves to amend the Racial Discrimination Act:

- We see Section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 as protecting the most vulnerable and marginalized members of our Australian community.
- We consider that the process by which the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) responds to complaints under Section 18C is working well, in that most cases are resolved through conciliation, and few reach the courts.
- In our view, the existing law is effective and strikes an appropriate balance between protecting minorities and preserving freedom of expression in our multicultural community.

We appreciate the thorough way in which The Joint Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights examined Sections 18C and 18D and affirm its conclusion that no amendment is needed. It was clearly influenced by the substantial evidence from many quarters about the importance of the current legislation in protecting minorities and diversity. At the same time, it has identified ways in which the processes could be improved, and most of its recommendations in that regard are consistent with what the Human Rights Commission itself has been seeking.

We urge all MPs and Senators to maintain the strength of the current legislation intact, and to modify the processes along the lines outlined in the Committee's report.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J.R. Jordan".

Jo Jordan
Presiding Clerk
The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia

cc: Senator the Hon George Brandis, Attorney General
Hon Mark Dreyfus, Shadow Attorney General

Australia Yearly Meeting

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