

**SUBMISSION TO THE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM INQUIRY BY
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET**



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Trans Health Australia welcomes this great opportunity to provide this submission to the Federal Government's enquiry into religious freedom.

1 Introduction and Summary

Australia has had a long, albeit flawed, history of defending religious freedom [1], with it being a fundamental part of the Australian Constitution. In common with many countries the consensus is that religious freedom is best guaranteed by a strong non sectarian secular state, that the right to worship, observance, having places of worship and religious theology by any religious group are free from discrimination and oppression by other religious or political groups as long they do not advocate or undertake discrimination against or oppression of other societal groups or any illegal activities. This also includes the right to not follow any particular religion or theology without suffering any discrimination. This is consistent with Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

This implies a social compact between religions and society at large, that in return for their existence and freedom being guaranteed they may not attack, oppress or discriminate against those others who do not follow their particular theology, or undertake any illegal activities.

This freedom is already excessive, being misused against the majority of Australians who are further under threat in Australia from several major religious organisations, a small number of radical right wing extremists who have infiltrated religious denominations and various politically religious front groups, as well as foreign funded and supported religious related organisations.

This is despite a 2016 survey showing that 78% of Australians want a clear separation between religion and government [2].

Currently discrimination by religious organisations in healthcare, education, employment agencies, provision of many social services and other commercial organisations, is currently allowed due to exemptions in Federal and State anti-discrimination laws

These people and organisations advocate for the dominance of their particular theologies and ideologies and that they be forced onto their own followers who disagree with such, the majority of people who are not members and all those who do not follow or agree with their particular religious' beliefs.

Thus they are breaking the social compact by imposing their theologies on other groups and overall society.

They are also advocating for this to be expanded, to allow them to impose their beliefs on people who follow other religions, non religious people, whole sections of society that span all beliefs, and even their own followers who disagree or have different interpretation of their theology, albeit without following such beliefs themselves [3].



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Collectively they are commonly labelled in Australia as the ‘religious right’ within the broad grouping of Christian communities and organisations, or ‘Islamic extremism’ within the Muslim community. Section 2 identifies and describes such organisations.

This threatens the social harmony, stability and even the national security of Australia.

There is also strong evidence that the multiple Federal, State and local authority tax and rate exemptions, as well as payments to deliver social services are being misused. [4]

That over and above delivering such services religious dogma is being imposed by discriminating against individuals or whole groups on the basis of gender, perceived sexual status, marital status, sexuality, religious beliefs and even ethnic background. That such exemptions and payments are also discriminatory against commercial businesses who cannot compete on a level playing field, who may be able to deliver such services more efficiently and competitively, but are crowded out of the marketplace.



1.1 Our recommendations are as follows:

- 1. Tax (etc) exemptions should only be applied to activities directly related to actual religious observance, or proven charitable works by both religious and non-religious organisations. All current exemptions should be reviewed by the ACCC and the Productivity Commission.**
- 2. That any exemptions from anti-discrimination laws be only for direct religious observance and activities, not any other activities such as provision of education, health care, charitable works, or the provision of social services, or the provision of any other goods and services.**
- 3. Such exemptions to be carefully defined and monitored and regularly reviewed so that they are not used as a cover for illegal activity (such as child sexual abuse, child marriage, FGM or domestic violence).**
- 4. Any goods or services provided by any non governmental organisation whether religious based or not, that is funded in whole or in part by any government (Federal, State or local authority), or that compete in the common marketplace against any commercial organisations, be subject to all anti-discrimination provisions in law or regulation and pay all taxes (etc) as required for any other business entity. This includes health care, education and any other provision of goods and services.**
- 5. As well as eliminating religious based discrimination this will enable commercial organisations to compete on a level playing field in tendering for and providing such services, improve competitiveness and efficiency, boost the Australian economy and generate greater employment.**
- 6. That de-radicalisation rules and teaching based on the core Australian value of equality and equal rights for all, be incorporated into all schools, religious or not, to prevent threats to social harmony, social stability and national security.**



2 Religious Freedom and its Misuse

2.1 Religion and the Difficulties of Mediating Religious Freedom in Society

As stated in the summary, religious freedom in developed countries is based on the freedom to follow and worship, not about being able to impose a particular set of views on other religious or non-religious people.

Within the Abrahamic religions (Christianity, Judaism and Islam) there is considerable fragmentation, with disputes on theology, liturgy, definitions of sinful behaviour and stated allowed social behaviour.

- Judaism is split into multiple sections, from extremely conservative wings to far more liberal.
- Islam is split into 2 main groupings, Sunni and Shiite, and further sub-divisions within those.
- Christianity is split into 3 main wings Roman Catholicism, the Orthodox churches and Protestantism. Further splits occur with those categories, there is the Russian Orthodox church, Ukrainian, Greek and so on. Even within the Catholic church there are different wings and endless disagreements over theology
- Protestant Christianity has a bewildering array of different divisions and sub divisions. The Church of England (usually known as Anglican, or in the US Episcopalian) has multiple sub divisions within it. All with major differences in theology, even within a single country. Within the Evangelical tradition there are literally hundreds of different churches all with theological variants.

The issue then is how a society ensures that social conflict, discrimination and oppression does not happen by religious disagreements, as has happened in the past and is happening now in various countries.

In making our submission we acknowledge both the innovative and historic role church institutions have taken in welfare and education institutions and the sad reality that this proud history of a socially progressive and charitable church is being undermined, as are the efforts of modern day church workers in that tradition, by a minority in the faith community. We also acknowledge and respect the deeply personal meaning of religious and spiritual beliefs and observance.

The commercial privileges the church holds and the fixation of certain church groups on sex, sexuality, gender and personal salvation regardless of charity and social inclusion undermines the work of both the progressive church and secular society by trying to end the social compact that supports and respects religious observance but not imposition on others.



This can escalate to such a level as to threaten national security. Few do not remember the decades long terrorism from Northern Ireland based on a long history of oppression by the majority Protestants on the minority Catholics that spilled over to other countries. Religious based terrorist groups such as the IRA and UDF engaged in murder, assassination and bombings, with the Queen's cousin and members of the British Cabinet being amongst the victims.

Great concern has arisen in recent years over the radicalisation of Islamic youth, by extremist teachings in religious schools, long seen as one source of Islamic based terrorism. The claims by some small extremist Islamic groups to want introduce Sharia Law have rightly been condemned. However, the claims by various extremist

Christian groups to have an analogous system in Australia has not received the same attention but poses a similar threat to Australia.

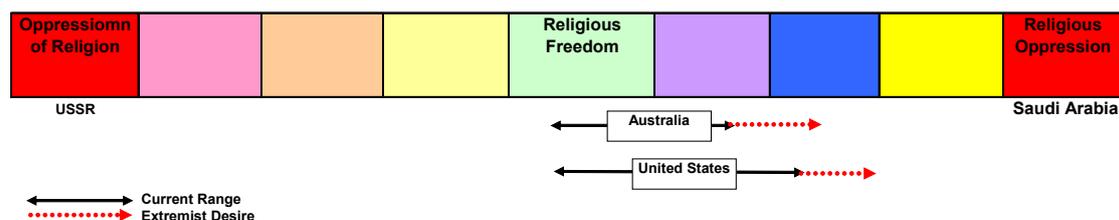
Provided the 'social compact' is maintained then this can be minimised. But if this is broken and a particular religious grouping is allowed to dominate over all of society, then conflict is evitable as [Religious Oppression](#) will inevitably occur.

2.2 Religious Freedom in Australia

Religious freedom in Australia is guaranteed by the Constitution and no independent survey or inquiry (such as the 2016 Traditional Rights and Freedoms—Encroachments by Commonwealth Laws inquiry) has found any threat to it.

However, there are areas where the right to religious freedom has been exceeded, leading to discrimination and even religious oppression. Increasing involvement of religious based organisations in major areas such as education, health care, aged care, employment agencies, provision of social services and other commercial activities [5] as created an area where large numbers of Australians are being discriminated against on the basis of their religion, ethnic background, gender, marriage status, presumed sexual/contraceptive/etc activity, sexual orientation and even political opinions. For example, the Catholic church has stated that it will fire its employees in schools and hospitals who use their legal right to marriage equality [5].

If we look at religious freedom on a scale, from being oppressed to being an oppressor, then Australia currently lies slightly to the oppression side, due to blanket exemptions by religious based organisations undertaking activities that have nothing whatsoever to do with actual religious worship or practice.



This is despite a 2016 survey showed that 78% of Australians want a clear separation between religion and Government. [2]



The fact that many of these (such as for religious schools and healthcare) receive both State and Federal funding means that the moral, ethical and religious views, as well as the legal rights, of many Australians are being oppressed despite that they are subsidising those very organisations that do it.

Several extremist groups, such as the Islamic Sharia Law proponents and those aligned with parts of conservative Christianity (commonly known as the [Religious Right](#)) argue that their particular theology should become dominant, expanding such oppression into the general area of commercial goods and services and even government provided services and payments.

2.3 Illustration of the Dangers of Religious Oppression

As stated there is considerable theological difference between the major religious groupings within Australia and even significant differences within a single group. For example, two significant difference between the two largest Christian churches in Australia are:

Contraception is a major dividing line between the Anglican and Catholic churches. The Catholic Church does not allow any contraception. The Anglican one does. Therefore, should someone who is Catholic, or a Catholic organisation, and just 22.6% [6] of the population be allowed to discriminate against someone who is Anglican (13.3%), or the 30% that express no religion on that basis? Is the Catholic Church's religious freedom greater than the Anglican (or non religious peoples') one?

An even greater area of contention is that the Catholic Church and some other ones do not allow any abortion, even to save the life of the mother (from say a dead foetus in the womb) while the Australian Anglican church has no official position on abortion. Note that few Australians are against abortion with only 4% of Australians do not support abortion for any reason, with only 7% of Catholic themselves doing the same [7].

Some [9] wish to disallow the validity and very existence of other religions, such as Judaism, Islam, Aboriginal spiritual beliefs and so on, and that only their particular religion and beliefs be allowed. Some wish to impose their religious beliefs on science and scientific teaching, such as evolution, age and origin of the Earth, climate change [10].

Wise societies avoid these disputes happening by insisting that secular law and scientific findings cannot be overruled by minority extremist religious beliefs.



2.4 The Religious Right and Religious Oppression

The 'Religious Right' refers to a grouping of various Christian groups who have a particular set of views that are extremely socially reactionary and discriminatory. These have grown in political prominence in the United States since the 1970s.

Comprising of various Evangelical, Protestant and the US Catholic churches, along with various political lobbying groups [11] they have pushed for the political, social and legal dominance of their ideologies (such as Dominionism [12]), most of which are at odds with the majority of other religious grouping's beliefs and the majority of the US population.

There is a bewildering array of beliefs within the Religious Right, such as health insurance should be banned [15], evolution not be taught[16], women are the property of their fathers and husbands [8], slavery should be allowed [18], child marriage should be allowed [8], marital rape should be allowed[8], domestic violence should be allowed [17], child sex abuse is a worse sin than abortion [19], claiming religious freedom to not report child sex abusers [20], Islam and other religions should be banned [9], other Christian groupings should be banned [21] and so on.

The few areas that they agree on has been stated in the US Nashville Statement [22] and similar, which are predominately sexuality and gender based, whilst ignoring major disagreements in other areas such as divorce. A partial version of this was stated in Senator Patterson's proposed Bill for Marriage equality. [23] These are the main themes they consistently lobby for:

- Sex should only occur within marriage between a cis male and cis female.
- Abortion should be illegal in all cases.
- Gender identity is defined at birth and can never be changed.
- That society should follow the doctrine of 'Complementarianism' [24] (otherwise known as 'male headship', sometimes stated as 'men and women are complimentary', or a belief in 'traditional marriage') basically that males are superior to women who should be relegated to a subservient position within religion, the home and general society [25]

These beliefs are accepted by few Australians, even those ones who nominally belong to these religious groupings. For example, Catholics use contraception and have abortions at similar rates to the general population [27]. Studies on US Evangelical groups show similar (or higher) rates of teenage STIs and pregnancies as the general population [28] and such adults themselves use contraception and have abortions.

However, these groups continually lobby to have their minority extremist beliefs imposed on the rest of society, often in opposition to many of their own member's religious and moral beliefs.



This is Religious Oppression of the majority by the minority that would create social division, decrease social stability and at its worst become a threat to national security.

Secondary effects would be the impact on Australia's image in the world, tourism and to the freedom of businesses in the marketplace.

Secular businesses would be disadvantaged (even more than they are already), by allowing more organisations to claim some sort of religious association to evade taxes, rates and not having to meet disability, sex, age, race and religion based discrimination laws.

Recommendation: Exemptions from anti-discrimination laws by religious organisation, who operate in the marketplace, general society and that do not relate directly to actual religious worship and observance, should be eliminated.



3 Impacts on the Freedom of the Market and Commercial Enterprises.

3.1 *Distortion of the Market*

Secular commercial organisations are already disadvantaged in many parts of the market in the provision of goods and services. Such areas cover major parts of the economy such as education, healthcare and the provision of various social services.

If an organisation that is undertaking purely commercial operations in the marketplace can claim tax and legal exemptions, based only on a claimed religious association, then they have a clear commercial advantage over those who do not.

Why should a particular religious belief (out of many and disputed by many other co-religionists, as well as those from other religions), be allowed to impact the freedom of the market?

Currently religious organisations employ over 180,000[29] employees, have a major presence in several markets but enjoy over \$30 billion on tax, rate, etc. exemptions [4].

Some State Governments such as NSW, have privatised parts of certain social services. In virtually all cases religious organisations have successfully tendered for them because their tax (etc) exemptions give them a clear commercial advantage.

Due to the weak definitions and monitoring it is open to both fraudulent behaviour and as a cover for illegal activities.

Recommendations: This is anti-competitive behaviour that should be examined by the ACCC and the Productivity Commission.

All organisations who receive government payments and/or tax (etc) exemptions and/or who compete against other commercial entities in the marketplace, should have those exemptions removed and have to meet all anti-discrimination laws.



3.2 A Minefield for Companies

Australian businesses reflect the multi ethnic, multi religious nature of Australia, with employees from all backgrounds, genders and sexualities, as guided by anti discrimination laws.

Proposals to allow individuals to object to other employees, such as the Patterson Bill which specifically allowed vilification of others based on a set of beliefs [23], creates a nightmare scenario for them. Examples include:

- A male who subscribes to certain a sub-section of Islam objecting to a female fellow worker on the basis of their clothing.
- A Catholic person objecting to a female co-worker on their presumed sexual, contraceptive or marital status.
- A Christian male who subscribes to the doctrine of ‘male headship’ objecting to a female manager, refusing to obey them.
- A similar male who refuses to promote a woman on this basis.
- A person who subscribes to certain sub-section of Judaism refusing to work with a woman on the basis of their presumed menstrual status.
- A Christian who subscribes to the Religious Right position that Islam is not a religion then objecting to working with Islamic co-workers.

The Patterson Bill also proposed the Religious Right based wish that an employer would have no right to do anything to an employee who acts in such ways against co-workers, as such actions be protected in law.

Given that Australian businesses have repeatedly stated their affirmation for diversity in their businesses [30], this goes against their wish to have a diverse but harmonious workplace and where they can take action against employees attacking other co-workers with extremist and discriminatory ideas.



4 Religious Oppression in General Society.

Should a Sunni be allowed to discriminate in general society against or attack/vilify/berate a Shiite, or an Anglican against a Catholic? A Muslim against Jew? Should a Muslim be able to discriminate against or attack/vilify/berate someone for drinking alcohol?

Should those in certain extremist sub-sections of Christianity be allowed to discriminate against disabled people or those with some mental illnesses [26]?
Should incitement to violence against particular segments of society be allowed?

Then there is the issue of people misusing religion as a justification and cover for bigotry or extremist political ideologies, such as a justification for racism.

Recommendation: hate speech, hate crime and vilification laws should be tightened in Australia to cover everyone on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual/marital status, ethnic background or sexuality.

4.1 *Misuse of Religion in the Political Arena in Australia*

The recent postal survey into Marriage Equality showed a range of agents using claimed religious beliefs for their opposition to it. Some of these bordered on, or even crossed the line into, hate speech and vilification.

The Anglican Diocese of Sydney gave \$1,000,000 to the ‘No’ campaign, while only giving \$50,000 to a program to deal with serious issues of domestic violence within its community. They never explained how their religious beliefs show such a clear discrepancy in priorities.

Federal MP George Christensen made a protected speech in Parliament [31] proposing a conspiracy theory somehow linking the Safe School program, Minus 18 (a support group for LGBTI youth), Seahorse Victoria (a support group for adult transgender women) and sex clubs and shops.

Multiple claims by various religious bodies and political lobbying groups (such as the ACL) of how ‘disordered’, or ‘mentally’ ill LGBTI people were. Or conspiracy theories about some sort of cabal forcing ‘gender ideology’ or the ‘gay lifestyle’ on children and teenagers were made. All these and many others were made under the cover of ‘expressing religious freedom’. How psychologically ‘remote diagnosing’ certain people and groups as ‘mentally ill’ is in any way a religious belief was never explained.



Other recent public statements that clearly cross the border between legitimate religious freedom and religious oppression in general society and the workplace, and that few Australian would agree to, have been:

- The Catholic church stated that it would not obey any laws requiring them to report a child sex abusing priest to civil authorities, defying the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sex Abuse [20].
- The Catholic church stated that it would fire doctors, nurses, teachers (etc) employed in its commercial organisations, operating in the general marketplace, if they were LGBTI and were married. [5]
- A young heterosexual couple were banned from having their marriage in their church, because they supported civil marriage equality [31], which is punishing their thoughts, not just their actions.
- A gay male teacher being fired because of their relationship at a religious school [32].
- A child being expelled from their religious (but still government subsidised) school because of the sexuality of their parent. [33]. What their parent's orientation has to do with the child was never explained, since there is no theological basis for punishing children for the sins of their parent.

Elsewhere, such as in the United States, this has been taken much further with the US Federal Govt and some State ones proposing to allow discrimination in healthcare against women and LGBTI people. That an individual employee of a healthcare service provider as well as whole organisations be allowed to refuse life saving medical treatment on the basis of gender [33] or perceived sexuality, reproductive or marital status.

However, few of the basis for this type of discrimination is actually classified as sins within any of the mainstream Christian churches. For example, the Catholic church may consider undertaking gay sex a sin, but nowhere in its theology does it state that medically treating someone who is gay is also a sin.

All these are examples of the misuse of religion, where a claimed 'religious belief' is used as a 'cover' for what is really a political belief, when they are not actually part of their religious theology.

Misuse of religious beliefs is a sadly a common tactic for various types of bigotry, vilification and discrimination against others on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual status or sexuality

Recommendation: Anti discrimination and anti vilification laws should be tightened to ensure religious beliefs are not used as a cover for what are clearly extremist political beliefs.



5 References

[1] <https://www.sydneycriminallawyers.com.au/blog/religious-exemption-laws-an-interview-with-professor-marion-maddox/>

Professor Maddox describes Australia's Religious Right and notes that in the past they did want religious freedom laws because they were worried that would mean religious freedom for everybody, and not just for them.

Religious Exemption Laws: An Interview With Professor Marion Maddox

Firstly, Professor Maddox, when we talk about the religious right, who are we referring to? And how strong are they in Australian politics?

We're mainly talking about conservative Christians. It's a difficult group to delineate, because you can't do it by denomination. There are some Anglicans. But, they're aren't very many. Some are Baptist, but not all Baptists. There are some Pentecostals. There are some Uniting Church people. But, the Uniting Church tends to lean to the left. And there are some Catholics. But, not all Catholics.

It's not a terribly big group. First of all, religious people in general are not a very big group in Australia. And they're shrinking.

We have this habit in Australia of saying, "the churches," as if people who go to church all broadly agree with one another. But, you only have to go into a church to realise that nothing could be further from the truth.

As we saw in the marriage equality debate, there was a small, but vocal group of church-aligned lobbyists campaigning heavily for 'No.' But, actually the majority of Christians in Australia supported the 'Yes' case. And some of them were quite active in the marriage equality campaign.

But, the religious right was a driving force behind preventing same-sex marriage laws in this country. Australia was the only English-speaking democracy not to have passed marriage equality laws.

Why was the religious right so successful in delaying the passing of such legislation in Australia, whereas, other nations like Canada, New Zealand and the UK passed their laws years ago?

For the reason that they were very effective in creating that impression of more power than they actually had. They were, for a couple of decades, extremely effective purveyors of vanguard politics, where you have a lot of small groups that give the impression of a groundswell.

If you look back five to ten years ago, there were a whole lot of different groups running those campaigns. There was the Fatherhood Foundation, and various other lobby groups with marriage in the title.

But, if you look at the actual people running them, you see all the same names over and over again. And it gave the impression of a lot more activity than what was going on.

What do you think about the situation now where the religious right is pushing for greater religious freedom protections and depicting itself as the victim of discrimination?

The thing you have to remember about the religious freedoms argument is that these are the very same people who for twenty to forty years were campaigning hard against any legislative recognition of religious freedoms.

I documented this in a recent article in the Conversation. Every time there was a move to get any sort of religious freedom law, or religious freedom encoded in a bill of rights, or anything like that, these were the very same group out there saying, "Heaven forbid, we can't have that."



The reason was because they were worried that would mean religious freedom for everybody, and not just for them. And if you have religious freedom protected for Muslims, or everybody else, then they were worried that might limit their freedom to denounce other people's religious beliefs.

The background to that is the Catch the Fire Ministries versus Islamic Council of Victoria case. There was a controversy about two Pentecostal pastors making statements critical of Islam.

When you look at the news items from that time, whenever protection of religious freedom was mooted that case was always brought up. People would say, "If we have protection of religious freedom, they're will be more cases like Catch the Fire."

The idea was, if there was protection of religious freedom, that would mean everybody's religious freedom. And so, they wouldn't be allowed to criticise other people's religions.

Given the government has established the Ruddock inquiry, and the fact that conservative Coalition politicians were set on making amendments to the marriage equality legislation, do you think the government is aiming to enact religious exemption laws in the coming year?

We've already got so many religious exemption laws. It's hard to imagine what further laws they could be thinking of enacting. But, that's where things look like they're going.

[\[2\] https://www.plainreason.org/media-coverage/78-want-religion-separated-from-government/](https://www.plainreason.org/media-coverage/78-want-religion-separated-from-government/)

"78% Want Religion out of Government."

"The IPSOS poll, taken during mid-January 2016, shows 78 per cent of Australians want religion separated from the business of government — and 72 per cent agree the constitution should be more precise on this crucial point."

"On the first question of whether personal religious beliefs should be separated from the business of government a clear 78 per cent thought it was very important (58%) or somewhat important (20%). Only 10 per cent believed it was not very important and 4 per cent thought it was not important at all. A further 8 per cent didn't know."

[3] There have been innumerable recent examples of this, from President Trump though to Barnaby Joyce, who while advocating for others to have to follow their beliefs, do not follow them themselves

[\[4\] http://www.smh.com.au/comment/easter-is-a-good-time-to-revisit-taxexempt-status-of-religious-organisations-20160323-gnpzjj.html](http://www.smh.com.au/comment/easter-is-a-good-time-to-revisit-taxexempt-status-of-religious-organisations-20160323-gnpzjj.html)

Under Australian law, religious organisations are exempt from taxation. This exempts something of the order of \$30 billion a year from taxation. The Catholic Church accounts for half of that. It is bigger than all the others combined, pulling in about \$16 billion annually.

[\[5\] http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/married-sunday-fired-monday-churches-threaten-to-dismiss-staff-who-wed-samesex-partners-20170817-gxy4ds.html](http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/married-sunday-fired-monday-churches-threaten-to-dismiss-staff-who-wed-samesex-partners-20170817-gxy4ds.html)

Married Sunday, fired Monday: Churches threaten to dismiss staff who wed same-sex partners

Australia's Catholic church is threatening to fire teachers, nurses and other employees who marry their same-sex partner if gay marriage is legalised, in a dramatic move led by the country's most senior Catholic.

Archbishop of Melbourne Denis Hart, speaking exclusively to Fairfax Media, pointedly warned the church's 180,000 employees they were expected to uphold its teachings "totally", and defiance would be treated "very seriously".



Under Australia's anti-discrimination laws, churches already enjoy wide-ranging exemptions allowing them to hire and fire on the basis of sexual orientation, marital status and other characteristics.

However, Catholic Health Australia, the country's largest non-government, non-profit health group, distanced itself from those threats.

Chief executive Suzanne Greenwood told Fairfax Media she would not expect doctors and nurses to adhere so strictly to the church's teachings, though conceded it may be different for teachers.

"We're not converting people to Catholicism," she said. "It's not really relevant to the jobs people are performing within the care environment at a hospital or an aged care facility.

[6]
<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mediareleasesbyReleaseDate/7E65A144540551D7CA258148000E2B85?OpenDocument>

2016 Census data reveals "no religion" is rising fast

[7] <http://www.smh.com.au/national/right-to-choose-abortion-wins-strong-support-20091004-ghxd.html>

Right to choose abortion wins strong support "only 4 per cent opposes abortion outright"

[8] See <https://biblicalgenderroles.com/2017/11/14/was-roy-moore-violating-biblical-commands-in-dating-teenage-girls/>

While this is an extreme point of view, that women are merely property, firstly of their fathers then of their husbands it has to be noted that the theme that women have no right to refuse sex within marriage is commonplace, for example it is a part of the conservative wing of Catholic ideology that marriage is by definition giving of lifelong consent.

[9] See Bernard Gaynor's Submission to this inquiry for one example
<http://bernardgaynor.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/180125-Submission-Freedom-for-some-Australias-war-on-Christianity.pdf>

"Islam is a corrosive and divisive force within Australia that promotes a violent ideology. As Islam is not the 'true' religion, it is not a religion at all and the government has no obligation to allow Islamic practices that undermine the common good. It would be perfectly legitimate for the state and Commonwealth governments to pass laws limiting the approval of mosques, Islamic finance and madrassas. If the government fails to do so, we can expect to see further and increased violence in Australia as a result of Islamic ideology."

'Recommendations

- 14. All state and Commonwealth funding for Islamic programs and schools should be scrapped.*
- 15. Islamic immigration should be halted.*
- 16. Laws should be enacted allowing councils to reject applications for mosques.*
- 17. Laws should be enacted requiring the Islamic community to pay for the costs of increased security measures in Australia required to counter Islamic terrorism."*

"Welcome to Country' ceremonies are part of a false Aboriginal religion that is animist and pagan."

[10] There are innumerable examples of this, see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belief#Religion> for creationism alone



[11] Over and above actual churches there are multiple organisations, some extremely large that act to promote an extremist version of Christianity such as the Family Research Council[FRC] and the Alliance Defending Freedom[ADF].

The ADF has become a powerhouse in fighting legal actions and pushing religious based discrimination laws.

See <https://www.thenation.com/article/the-christian-legal-army-behind-masterpiece-cakeshop/>

A special investigation into the rise of Alliance Defending Freedom. By Sarah Posner

Nearby, Phillips stood quietly with his attorney, Kristen Waggoner of Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), which has mushroomed over the past few years into a Christian-right powerhouse. Founded 24 years ago because, as its long time president Alan Sears once put it, “the homosexual agenda threatens religious freedom,” ADF now rivals some of the nation’s top private law firms in Supreme Court activity. It has trained thousands of lawyers, many of whom have gone on to government service at the federal, state, and local levels. The organization has helped shape “religious freedom” legislation; provides grants to other Christian-right organizations; and presses school districts to adopt its model policies on issues like transgender facility access. ADF now exerts far more influence than other legal organizations that litigate religious-freedom cases, such as the American Center for Law and Justice, the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, and Liberty Counsel. As the courts have ruled in favor of marriage equality over the past decade, ADF has positioned itself at the very center of the efforts to curtail LGBTQ rights under the guise of religious freedom.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions consulted with ADF when drafting Department of Justice guidance on religious-freedom issues. At the state level, at least 18 ADF-affiliated lawyers now work in 10 attorney-general offices; all of them were appointed or elected in the past five years. And in just one year, Trump has nominated at least four federal judges who have ties to ADF

A Christian “Legal Army”

The Masterpiece Cake shop case, with its Colorado plaintiff, brings ADF full circle. The organization was founded in 1993 by a group of Christian-right heavyweights, including Sears, James Dobson, and evangelist D. James Kennedy, in the midst of a conservative panic over a gay-rights movement that was just beginning to score some legal victories

Over the past 24 years, ADF has experienced remarkable growth, today receiving contributions of more than \$50 million a year—up from \$14 million in 2002—and boasting 58 staff attorneys based in its headquarters in Arizona and in offices in Washington, DC, and elsewhere. It also has an international presence, including opposing LGBTQ equality in courts in the European Union and advising anti-LGBTQ parliamentarians in Romania.

To become an “allied attorney,” one must agree with ADF’s 11-point statement of faith, which includes a commitment to believing in the divinity of Jesus Christ, that God designed marriage for one man and one woman, and that homosexual behaviour is “sinful and offensive to God.”

Waggoner, who practiced law in Seattle for 17 years before joining ADF in 2013, While in private practice, Waggoner litigated a protracted case in which she represented a pharmacist who had refused, on religious grounds, to fill prescriptions for emergency contraceptives

Until very recently, ADF routinely trafficked in slurs against the LGBTQ community, consistently depicting LGBTQ people as promiscuous, uncommitted, and unfit to parent in dozens of its briefs opposing marriage equality.

In a 2006 case in Maryland, ADF maintained that “sexual fidelity is rare among homosexual men” and that “the average homosexual relationship is short.” In a 2009 case in West Virginia, arguing against a lesbian couple’s adoption of a baby they had fostered, ADF noted that the couple had insisted that the court be “forced to treat their home as just as good as any other.” But, ADF wrote, “this cannot be.”

ADF has pivoted away from arguments that LGBTQ people aren’t worthy of marriage equality to arguments that marriage equality violates the rights of Christians.



On December 5, with the full force of the United States government behind it, ADF will be asking the Supreme Court to carve out yawning exemptions from civil-rights laws for conservative Christians. Yet in another case seven years ago, in which several families charged that their public school's use of a church for graduation ceremonies violated the Constitution's establishment clause, ADF filed an amicus brief that made a very different argument. At the time, the organization casually dismissed the possible religious objections of Jewish and Muslim students, whose faiths may have prohibitions against entering a church. The state, ADF argued, "cannot possibly organize its affairs to comport with the subjective views of all potentially religious groups."

[12] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dominion_theology

[13] *The Sydney Archdiocese is well reported to being the conservative wing of the Anglican church in Australia, donating \$1 million to the 'No' side of the marriage equality campaign.*

[14] *The Australian Christian Lobby (ACL) is modelled on similar religious right organisation in the US such as the FRC and ADF. It represents the extremist most conservative parts of Christianity.*

See <https://blog.politicsmeanspolitics.com/the-australian-christian-lobby-1550c90ab937>

"This is because the ACL is a front for an arch conservative form of evangelical Christianity that is bent predominantly on articulating an outdated unscientific view of humanity regarding sexuality and gender. With this focus, it almost totally ignores the plight of the homeless, the sick, the mentally ill, the poor, the refugees, the marginalised; you know, the people whom Jesus focused on and cared for"

Moreover, the ACL, despite its name, is not the favourite Christian organisation of most Christians. It certainly does not speak for Christian Australia. In fact, no single group does, not even the Australian Council of Churches, let alone this tiny group, whose adherents are mostly fundamentalist evangelicals or Pentecostals. They call themselves 'Bible-believing Christians'. Many churches give it a wide berth. A recent Galaxy survey found that 61% of Christians are unhappy with conservative religious groups, like the Australian Christian Lobby, representing the views of all Christians.

[15] *See the US FRC as an example.*

[16] *Belief in creationism is commonplace in the religious right*

[17] See http://www.slate.com/blogs/xx_factor/2017/02/08/russia_decriminalized_domestic_violence_with_support_from_the_russian_orthodox.html as an example.

Russia Decriminalized Domestic Violence with Support from the Russian Orthodox Church
The Guardian reports that advocates for the new amendment have argued for "traditional families" with parent-child relationships "built on authority and power."

The Russian Orthodox Church has also pushed for looser restrictions on domestic abusers, claiming that the state should not interfere in family matters and that calls to make domestic violence a crime are informed by Western influences that want to impose liberal values on Russia.

[18] For a short history see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_views_on_slavery

[19] *Dr Pell told his audience of World Youth Day delegates that "abortion is a worse moral scandal than priests sexually abusing young people", during a public religious instruction session last week.*

<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/07/28/1027818485171.html>



[20] See <http://nativescommunity.info/2018/01/31/catholic-archbishop-id-rather-go-to-prison-than-report-child-abuse-to-police/>

"One of the highest-ranking officials in the Catholic Church has stated that he would "rather go to prison" than report paedophilia to police."

[21] See for example <http://www.newsweek.com/jehovahs-witnesses-ban-russia-religion-590350>

Days after imposing a complete ban on Jehovah's Witnesses operating in the country, Russia has been labelled a "country of particular concern" by the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF).

[22] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nashville_Statement

It includes a preamble and 14 articles. [7] The opening paragraph reads, "Evangelical Christians at the dawn of the twenty-first century find themselves living in a period of historic transition. As Western culture has become increasingly post-Christian, it has embarked upon a massive revision of what it means to be a human being." [9] It presents a complementarian view of gender and a traditionalist view of sexuality.

[23] See <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/4203446-Marriage-Amendment-Definition-and-Protection-of.html#document/p1>

[24] See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Complementarianism>

Complementarianism is a theological view held by some in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, [1] that men and women have different but complementary roles and responsibilities in marriage, family life, religious leadership, and elsewhere.

Complementarians assign primary headship roles to men and support roles to women—based on their interpretation of certain biblical passages. One of the precepts of Complementarianism is that while women may assist in the decision-making process, the ultimate authority for the decision is the purview of the male in marriage, courtship, and in the polity of churches subscribing to this view.

The Complementarian view of marriage asserts gender-based roles in marriage. [11] A husband is considered to have the God-given responsibility to provide for, protect, and lead his family. A wife is to collaborate with her husband, respect him, and serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation. Complementarians assert that the Bible instructs husbands to lead their families as Head of Household, and to love their wives as Christ loves the Church.

[25] See <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/friendlyatheist/2018/02/04/professor-claims-moody-bible-institute-fired-her-for-advocating-gender-equality/>

"Professor Claims Moody Bible Institute Fired Her For Advocating Gender Equality

"A professor at Chicago's Moody Bible Institute was fired for her egalitarian views on marriage, according to a blog post on her personal website."

"But it was controversial in her Christian world because the viewpoint starkly differed from complementarianism, the patriarchal belief that men are called to be the "head" of their families and that women must submit to them in all circumstances. Complementarian theology says that leadership positions are determined by gender, rather than by ability."

[26] The ACL and other such as Family Voice have argued that religious organisations should be free of all anti discrimination laws. See for example: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-06-13/familyvoice-wants-to-discriminated-against-disabled-sex-change/8612052>

Christian lobby FamilyVoice calls for exemption to discriminate against mentally ill



[27] See: <https://www.gutmacher.org/article/2012/02/gutmacher-statistic-catholic-womens-contraceptive-use>

Gutmacher's analysis of data from the federal government's National Survey of Family Growth found that the vast majority of American women of reproductive age (15–44)—including 99% of all sexually experienced women and 98% of those who identify themselves as Catholic—have used a method of contraception other than natural family planning at some point. Women may be classified as sexually experienced regardless of whether they are currently sexually active, using contraceptives, pregnant, trying to get pregnant or postpartum

By their early 20s, some 79% of never-married women—and 89% of never-married Catholic women—have had sex. (Presumably, all married women have done so.) In short, most American women (including Catholics) have had sex by their early 20s, and virtually all of them have used contraceptives other than natural family planning.

[28] See <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-abstinence-usa/experts-say-sex-abstinence-program-doesnt-work-idUSN2345957620080424>

Programs teaching U.S. schoolchildren to abstain from sex have not cut teen pregnancies or sexually transmitted diseases or delayed the age at which sex begins, health groups told Congress on Wednesday.

[29] *Exact numbers are hard to determine but the Catholic church employs 180,000 people in education, healthcare, aged care and other areas.*

[30] See: <http://www.australianmarriageequality.org/open-letter-of-support/>

[31] <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-03-16/george-christensen-links-safe-schools-program-to-paedophilia/7252476>

And <https://www.sunshinecoastdaily.com.au/videos/george-christensen-attacks-safe-schools-program/35941/>

[31] <http://www.news.com.au/lifestyle/relationships/marriage/church-minister-refuses-to-marry-couple-due-to-their-support-for-samesex-marriage/news-story/fe4347a1f345394bd53ac49744126731>

A PRIEST has refused to marry a couple because the bride-to-be posted her support for same-sex marriage on Facebook.

The couple were all set for a November wedding at a Presbyterian church in Victoria when the minister, Steven North, pulled out of the service.

[32] <https://thewest.com.au/news/wa/gay-teacher-fired-by-south-coast-baptist-college-in-waikiki-sparking-debate-about-discrimination-rights-of-religious-schools-ng-b88665819z>

[33] <http://www.watoday.com.au/wa-news/gay-mans-daughter-not-welcome-at-mandurah-christian-school-20151028-gklh0d.html>

Gay man's daughter not welcome at Mandurah Christian school

[34] <https://www.advocate.com/politics/2018/1/16/religious-freedom-day-trump-declares-open-season-lgbt-people>

The Obama administration overturned Bush-era rules that allowed health care professionals to cite their religious beliefs to deny care. The rules were used as justification for denying fertility treatment to lesbian couples and an ambulance driver's refusal to take a transgender woman to the hospital. The woman died before being seen by a doctor.