

From: Alison Courtice
Sent: Sunday, 25 November 2018 5:50 PM
To: Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee
Subject: Human Rights Bill 2018 submission

Dear Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the Human Rights Bill 2018.

I believe human rights are the basis for a fair and equitable society and passing human rights into law is necessary to achieve this to the fullest extent.

I wish to make the following observations on the Bill:-

Section 20 Freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief

The word 'belief' is not defined in the Bill and I believe it should be clearly defined as including 'non religious beliefs'. This is a simple amendment to the definitions schedule yet a powerful one in my opinion to avoid any uncertainty that non religious beliefs have equal protection to religious beliefs. If the word 'religion' is considered necessary to include then why wouldn't it also be necessary to include non religious beliefs, otherwise just call them beliefs without mention of 'religious'? I understand that those words are not included in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and this has led to uncertainty and differing opinions of signatories to the Convention. A simple clarification in the Human Rights Act will ensure there is no uncertainty in our state.

To give effect to the human rights to be granted by passing of the Bill, there should be included the ability of people to make a complaint to a tribunal or a court which can make an enforceable decision and award damages for breach of the person's human rights. If we think human rights are important enough to legislate them, we must be able to enforce those rights in a way consistent with other laws.

Subject to the above observations, I support the Human Rights Bill.

Yours faithfully
Alison Courtice