

FECCA says religious freedom laws must not trump anti-discrimination protections

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) today warned against new legislation that may open doors for discrimination.

FECCA Chairperson Ms Mary Patetsos said "We reject all forms of discrimination, including discrimination based on religious beliefs. FECCA demonstrated leadership with its vote in favour of marriage equality based on that principle."

"Religious discrimination laws should not trump other protections of anti-discrimination such as racial discrimination or sex discrimination laws."

FECCA supports the Law Council of Australia's call for a comprehensive National Human Rights Act which will deal with all forms of discrimination.

"We believe these protections are better applied under a National Human Rights Act." said Ms. Patetsos.

FECCA along with other civil society groups lobbied against the watering down of Section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act, to ensure protections for all Australians.

"If the Government was serious about protecting all Australians against discrimination, it would not have made multiple attempts to change Section 18C of the Racial Discrimination Act" said Ms Patetsos.

"CALD and multicultural communities expect protection from racism and that our political and civil leaders to desist racialisation of faith and religion".

Ms Patetsos stated "We do not think it is ok for people or organisations to discriminate against people citing their religious beliefs."

FECCA is the peak, national body representing Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. FECCA's role is to advocate and promote issues on behalf of its constituency to government, business and the broader community.

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