

# **FECCA urges politicians to proceed with care on the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights' recommendations on 18C**

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) today urged politicians to proceed with care following the release of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights' Inquiry's report on Freedom of Speech in Australia.

FECCA notes that this multi-party committee outlined a number of proposals but has not made any specific recommendation on changes to 18C.

Mr Joe Caputo, Chairperson of FECCA said: 'This reflects the support for 18C expressed by Australia's ethnic communities and the broader community through the many submissions made to the Committee.'

Mr Caputo said: 'The Racial Discrimination Act, as it stands, provides protection for vulnerable communities against racial attacks while defending the right to freedom of speech.'

'Changing 18C and weakening the RDA would grant a license to those working to undo Australia's harmonious, tolerant and cohesive multicultural society and send a message that it is acceptable for one person to verbally attack another based on their race.'

'The protections offered by 18C are an important symbol of acceptance for Australia's diverse communities and a strong sign that racism will not be tolerated.'

FECCA is reviewing the recommendations on the handling of complaints by the Australian Human Rights Committee (AHRC) and supports efforts to empower the AHRC to deal with complaints in a fair and efficient manner and to block unreasonable and vexatious claims.

FECCA welcomes the report's recommendation to support, strengthen and develop education programs to address racism in Australian society.

FECCA is the national peak body representing Australians from culturally and linguistically diverse 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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