



2 December 2021

## ‘Compromise’ Arrangements Make Real Agenda on Religious Discrimination Clear

Media reports of deals with ‘moderate Liberal MPs’ to remove provisions of the Sex Discrimination Act in return for support of the Government’s Religious Discrimination Bill expose the real agenda of those opposing the Bill.

According to media reports the deal would see section 38(3) of the Sex Discrimination Act removed in its entirety, a proposal extensively considered by Parliament in 2019 and rejected at the time. This very conditional exemption protects the ability of faith-based schools to teach and operate their schools in accordance with their religious beliefs – as protected in international law.

‘The deal exposes the true intent of those raising fanciful objections against the Religious Discrimination Bill,’ said Mark Spencer, Director of Public Policy at Christian Schools Australia, ‘the Bill provides straightforward protections and should be passed without any delays.’

‘What this “deal” exposes is that these objections are merely being raised to try and leverage other outcomes from the Government and avoid proper scrutiny’

‘The Government has already committed to a review of the exemptions in the Sex Discrimination Act by the Australian Law Reform Commission, a process we support,’ he said.

‘The reviews in 2019 clearly highlighted the complexities involved in changing these exemptions, the impact on what can be taught in faith-based schools and their ability to enforce reasonable expectations on student behaviour.’

‘We support a robust and detailed consideration of these exemptions,’ Mr Spencer said, ‘but shady back room deals to wipe out the ability to teach in accordance with our faith are simply not acceptable.’

‘If the Religious Discrimination Bill will be scrutinised by a Joint Standing Committee, what do these “moderate Liberals” have to fear from similar scrutiny of changes to the Sex Discrimination Act.’

‘Fundamental human rights should not be traded away behind closed doors and away from public scrutiny.’

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### About Christian Schools Australia

Christian Schools Australia is the largest association of Christian schools in the country and has member schools educating over 70,000 students and employing more than 10,000 staff at 180 locations across Australia. CSA is part of the global ACSI network of 24,000 schools educating in excess of 5.5 million students in over 108 countries world-wide.

