



1 September 2022

Shallow Review Seeks To Embed QHRC Ideology

The rights of Queensland parents to choose a school that reflects their beliefs and values could be trashed by the Queensland Human Rights Commission's (QHRC) review of the *Anti-Discrimination Act* according to the Director of Public Policy for Christian Schools Australia.

'The QHRC has demonstrated their lack of understanding of many Christian and other faith-based schools', Mark Spencer, the Director of Public Policy for Christian Schools Australia said.

The Commission's Report, *Building Belonging*, includes recommendations that the existing exceptions recognising the genuine occupational requirement for staff in religious schools to share the beliefs of that school be replaced by a much narrower and more conditional exception. The Report also recommends, recommendation 39.4, that:

'The Act should include examples to demonstrate that the exception does not permit discrimination against employees who are not involved in the teaching, observance or practice of a religion, such as a science teacher in a religious educational institution.'

'To suggest that a science teacher, or indeed any staff member, at a Christian is not involved in the "teaching, observance or practice of a religion" shows a fundamental lack of understanding of the nature of faith and how it is expressed and communicated', Mr Spencer said.

'It is staggering that the body charged with protecting human rights in Queensland could be so ignorant of the essence of such an essential right as religious freedom,' he said.

The Report earlier acknowledged that *'Protections in international human rights law recognise the importance of protecting religious beliefs and freedoms which includes 'respect for the liberty of parents' to educate their children in accordance with their religious beliefs'*. However, the subsequent recommendations prioritised the needs of staff, who have many alternative employment options, over the needs of parents looking for an education reflecting their beliefs.

'Parents across Queensland looking for a faith-based education have every right to be very concerned by these recommendations', Mr Spencer said, 'and we are calling on the Attorney-General, Shannon Fentiman, to reject these extreme proposals'.

'The increasing number of parents seeking a faith-based education is reflective of the strong demand for school where values and beliefs are at the heart of education', Mr Spencer said, 'and the Palaszczuk Government needs to protect the rights of those parents'.

ENDS

For all media enquiries:

Mark Spencer, Director of Public Policy
[mspencer@csa.edu.au](mailto:m Spencer@csa.edu.au) | 0419 419 224

About Christian Schools Australia

Christian Schools Australia is the largest association of Christian schools in the country and has member schools educating around 72,000 students and employing more than 10,000 staff at more than 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.

