



CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE  
OF MELBOURNE

# media release

**6 December 2021**

**Re: Passing of the Equal Opportunity (Religious Exceptions) Amendment Bill**

In our pluralist society, diversity of belief has long been celebrated and protected.

Regrettably, this pluralism has been diminished with the passing of the Equal Opportunity (Religious Exceptions) Amendment Bill on Friday.

The Government has imposed an unbalanced law on people of faith which adds to a steady decline of religious freedom in Victoria.

Despite the Attorney General confirming that not a single problem of discrimination could be identified in Catholic schools, the Catholic education sector will bear the brunt of new administration burdens and be subject to an 'inherent religious requirement' test.

The legislation is a serious overreach by the Victorian Government into the rightful freedoms of faith-based organisations. It unfairly targets and undermines the ability of faith organisations to confidently manage employment matters according to their mission.

A multitude of faith leaders raised their concerns, but there was little attempt by the Government to engage with these concerns.

A rushed law, with inadequate consultation, and with no amendments in parliament, is not something to be celebrated.

Strangely, Victorian Labor is now at odds with the federal Labor Party on an issue which ought not be divisive; that people of faith should be protected from religious discrimination.

The Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne is committed to working with others to shape and promote a fair and just society in which pluralism is valued and respected.

We ask that the same consideration is given by others, particularly the Victorian Government.

***Statements attributable to the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, Archbishop Peter A Comensoli.***

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