



Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of
Domestic and Family Violence

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Our ref: 572305/7: 6523818

16 DEC 2022

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie 

I refer to e-Petition 3814-22 tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 1 December 2022 titled *Genuine Occupational Requirements – Staff in Religious Schools*.

Petition 3814-22 draws the attention of the House to section 25 of the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (the Act) and the recommendations of the Queensland Human Rights Commission (the QHRC) in its review and subsequent report on the Act, the *Building Belonging* report.

This report is the result of extensive stakeholder consultation. The QHRC established a Reference Group to ensure the views of all stakeholders were properly understood, including religious organisations.

The Government believes it is important to strike the right balance between protecting people from discrimination, and the need to not unreasonably limit the religious or cultural rights of others. Striking this balance has been a priority for the QHRC.

It is important to note that the *Building Belonging* report recommends keeping exemptions for religious schools. This includes ensuring that there is an exception in the legislation to allow a religious school to discriminate in relation to staff on the grounds of religious belief or religious activity if it is a genuine occupational requirement, so long as it is reasonable and proportionate in the circumstances. The report also recommends retaining the exemption to allow the enrolment of students based on their sex or religion.

I have met with representatives from the religious education sector to discuss these reforms, and ensure we get any changes right.

Stakeholders and members of the wider public will continue to have opportunities to participate in the future, such as providing their views on any proposed draft legislation.

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The Queensland Government is currently carefully considering the findings and recommendations of the *Building Belonging* report, and I have met with representatives from the religious education sector to discuss these reforms, and ensure we get any changes right. Stakeholders and members of the wider public will continue to have opportunities to participate in the future, such as providing their views on any proposed draft legislation.

I thank the petitioners for bringing their concerns to the attention of the House.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shannon Fentiman', written in a cursive style.

Shannon Fentiman MP

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice

Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence

Member for Waterford