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School staff welcome proposed *NT Anti-Discrimination Act* change

The union representing over 17,000 teachers and staff across Northern Territory and Queensland non-government schools welcomes the NT government's proposal to remove religious discrimination exemptions from the *Anti-Discrimination Act* (the *Act*).

Independent Education Union – Queensland and Northern Territory (IEU-QNT) Branch Secretary Terry Burke said proposed change to the *Act* came after strong advocacy from our union and a public consultation process that began in 2017.

“Since the beginning of the NT government's consultation process in 2017, our union has continued to advocate that religious discrimination exemptions are unnecessary and cause harm to vulnerable staff and students,” Mr Burke said.

“The removal of these exemptions is long overdue and will ensure anti-discrimination law better reflects community values and expectations.

“In our union's submission on the proposed *Anti-Discrimination Amendment Bill 2022*, we reinforced several key principles including the fact all staff and students in schools deserve safe workplaces/learning environments.

“Staff and students in schools should not be discriminated against on the basis of their personal lives.

“Practices in faith-based schools, and indeed in any endeavour conducted for the public by faith-based organisations, should reflect community standards and expectations - especially when such organisations are in receipt of public funds.

“We believe faith-based schools have the capacity and resilience to continue to operate in the absence of discrimination exemptions - the vast majority of them already do so.”

“Our union sees the introduction of the proposed *Bill* as a significant step towards fostering inclusion and we welcome its recent introduction in the Northern Territory parliament.

“The NT government is to be commended for listening to the voice of education staff in the proposed removal of discrimination exemptions for religious schools and we urge parliamentarians to pass the amendment Bill and ensure these important reforms are enacted,” Mr Burke said.

ENDS

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