



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

STATEMENT FROM ARCHBISHOP PETER COMENSOLI, BISHOP DELEGATE FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Today's Senate decision to allow more time to debate complex amendments to the Sex Discrimination Act provides all stakeholders a chance to carefully consider the ramifications of changes to laws around religious freedom and the operation of religious schools.

With many processes under way or under wraps, including the review into religious freedom led by Philip Ruddock, it is prudent to not rush legislation through Parliament that was aimed to provide a quick solution to a complex problem.

The bishops remain willing to engage with parliamentarians to ensure any changes to laws around important protections for religious schools carefully balance the needs of students, staff and school communities.

Catholic schools do not expel students simply on the grounds of sexual orientation or sexual identity. There appears to be some misunderstanding – or misrepresentation – of the position of Catholic and other faith-based schools. This additional time allows for a more measured conversation.

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