

**Alex Greenwich**  
**Member for Sydney**  
**Ground Floor 21 Oxford Street**  
**DARLINGHURST NSW 2021**



**Jenny Leong**  
**Member for Newtown**  
**383 King Street**  
**NEWTOWN NSW 2042**

31 March 2021

Dear Minister

### **Religious Freedoms and Equality Bill Inquiry Report**

We write to urge you to disregard the final report by the Joint Select Committee on the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Freedoms and Equality) Bill 2020 on the grounds that it reflects the unbalanced opinions of the makeup of the committee while ignoring stakeholder evidence and concerns.

The Parliamentary Friends of Religious Freedoms dominated committee membership with members pushing support for the bill from the outset, regardless of the evidence presented. As members of the committee, we found the entire process biased with outcomes appearing to be predetermined. A large number of stakeholders including from the trans and gender diverse communities were excluded from appearing at hearings and witnesses that did appear and raised any concern were treated with disrespect and routinely talked over. Behaviour was so bad at times a senior medical professional was called a "bigot". Despite the best efforts of the committee chair, witnesses reported to us that they felt bullied and harassed throughout the process.

The votes and proceedings of the committee will show that the Parliamentary Friends of Religious Freedoms formed a voting bloc and removed any reference to evidence from witnesses who raised concerns about the impact of the bill. Concern from trans and gender diverse people and LGBTQIA+ families was removed: two groups we argue would be adversely impacted by the proposed bill.

While the draft report given to members provided a balance of views, the voting bloc successfully removed any suggestion of concern about the bill in the final report. While we circulated proposed amendments to all members by the agreed deadline, members of the Parliamentary Friends of Religious Freedoms lodged detailed amendments with far reaching impacts during the deliberative, rushing debate and consideration in what appeared to be an attempt to avoid scrutiny. The government should consider the minutes attached to the report which show the committee chair and Shadow Attorney General joined us to unsuccessfully oppose exclusion of evidence and concern with the bill.

Proper committee procedures were not followed and the final report does not reflect the evidence. We joined the Shadow Attorney General to oppose the final report and ask that the government do the same.

Should the government consider protecting religion and religious beliefs through anti-discrimination laws, we encourage you to engage in an independent and community wide consultation process that ensures the voices of those impacted are included.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Greenwich'.

Alex Greenwich  
**Member for Sydney**  
Cc: Premier

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenny Leong'.

Jenny Leong  
**Member for Newtown**