

THE PERTH DECLARATION

FOR THE DEFENCE OF CHRISTIANITY IN AUSTRALIA

On 14-15 June 2019, at Sheridan College in Perth, Western Australia, we the undersigned either presented or introduced presenters at the conference 'Religious Freedom at the Crossroads: The Rise of Anti-Christian Sentiment in the West'.

We gathered over a common concern about various forms of attacks on religious freedoms generally, and Christianity in particular. We noted the deteriorating circumstances of Christians both internationally and in Australia. Internationally, Christians face increasing violence and persecution. In Australia, there is growing anti-Christian sentiment, which is evident in certain parts of the public and private sectors.

Increasingly, Australian Christians avoid speaking publicly about matters involving their faith because they fear any or all of the following:

- Internet outrage campaigns.
- Social media censorship.
- Complaints to public authorities under anti-discrimination laws.
- Being subject to disciplinary proceedings and/or dismissal by their employers.

We believe that Australians must now ensure that their fundamental freedoms are maintained. Critical among these freedoms are those of thought, belief, religion, conscience, expression, and association. These freedoms are vital to a truly free and democratic society.

We support the freedom of Christians to peacefully organise and to speak according to their faith.

We support the freedom of Christians to peacefully challenge any and all ideas or actions, be those ideas or actions religious or secular.

We support the freedom of others to peacefully challenge the ideas or actions of Christians, and we welcome those challenges.

We support the idea that peaceful challenges to ideas or actions include intense and searching criticism.

We reject the idea – one increasingly fashionable but always wrong – that such peaceful challenges to ideas or actions constitute 'hate speech' or violence.

In light of the foregoing, we support the following measures:

- Laws that protect the fundamental freedoms of thought, belief, religion, conscience, expression, and association.

- Reform of anti-discrimination laws to better protect these fundamental freedoms.
- Legal challenges against laws and other government action that unduly interfere with these fundamental freedoms.
- Legal challenges against actions taken by those in the private sector who unduly interfere with these fundamental freedoms.

We call upon State, Territory and Commonwealth governments to undertake law reform. We also call upon every concerned Australian to support such reforms, as well as support legal challenges to defend fundamental freedoms. Pursuing these measures will defend the fundamental freedoms not only of every Australian Christian but of every Australian.

Perth/WA, 6th August 2019

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