

Religious Freedom

Definitions.

Religion – a belief system that explains what otherwise cannot be understood by an individual about their own existence and their environment. Often the lack of capacity to understand derives from the religion itself. The belief may be based on fixed texts, or imagined by the individual and will remain despite contradictory evidence. Some religions are highly commercialised and structured and seek to exert political influence to perpetuate the organisation.

Freedom is the ability to choose one's own activities and destinies. Often defined by its absence. Freedom is always constrained by the environment in which the individual exists and hence cannot be absolute.

Religious freedom therefore entails the right to choose one's own belief system. Because religion intentionally restricts the reasoning and knowledge required to make that choice the right to choose means a complete secular education is an absolute right, otherwise the products of religious training (programming) do not have the capacity to make a choice.

Recommendation 1

Cessation of public funding for all schools that subject children below the age of 15 to a single religion.

Recommendation 2

Cessation of the marketing of all religions in schools for children below the age of 15.

Recommendation 3

Universal education in the principles of ethics for all children below the age of 15. This can be enforced by denying funding to schools that fail to offer ethics classes.

Freedom to practice one's religious beliefs is always constrained by the social norms and legal systems. Many religions operate a business empires seeking political influence to obtained tax benefits, public subsidies, preferential treatment and the like. Religious businesses per se do not respect the ethical principle of reciprocity (a.k.a. "do unto others as you would have others do unto you") in that they expect the absolute right to market their product (belief system) to everyone but not allow competing businesses to do the same. Like most forms of marketing fact and reasoning are subverted.

Recommendation 4

Religious organisations be treated in the same way as other business and not be exempt from normal corporate taxation.

Recommendation 5

Religious organisations, and the charities they operate, be removed from lists of charities. The prime reason for this is to stop the rorting of the taxation system by using the donor – beneficiary scam.

Religious freedom does not entail the forcing of people to take holidays when they may not wish to do so. Therefore the Christian holidays to which all of Australia is subject represents the forced imposition of Christian beliefs on other religions and atheists.

Recommendation 6

All Gazetted public holidays based on religion be removed and replaced with holidays for the Summer and Winter Solstice, and the Autumn and Spring Equinox (the religious festivals are a corruption of these anyway). Public Holiday penalty rates would apply.

Recommendation 7

Seven days leave per annum be granted to those who wish to take religious holidays. This leave is to be taken without pay.

Religious freedom entails the right not to be subject to falsehoods in marketing.

Recommendation 8.

The marketing of religion be treated in the same way as any other product by consumer protection legislation.

Consumers who access services around Australia are subject to the hidden religious beliefs and affiliations of service providers. This creates problems for health care where the religion may prevent referral for a termination of pregnancy, or even physical examination of the opposite sex. It creates problems in the legal profession where traditionally the support of a divine being has been invoked for decisions. It may create problems in child care where innocent minds may be corrupted by proselytising.

Recommendation 9

All service providers be required to publish religious affiliation where that fixed belief will affect the advice and care they provide to customers. Failure to declare the affiliation be subject to a fine commencing at 10% of the Gross income generated by the activity, and doubled for each subsequent offence.

Recommendation 10

All persons seeking political office be required to declare their religious affiliation prior to seeking endorsement.

Recommendation 11

All senior public office holders be required to declare their religious affiliation.

Recommendation 12

Religious affiliation to be treated in the same way as a personal economic vested interest when decisions are being made by administration. Where a decision is being made about a religious organisation with which the public servant/ politician is affiliated they must exempt themselves from the decision. Failure to do so should be subject to a fine of no less than 10% of their gross annual income, and the decision be overturned should anyone lodge and objection.