

We need to write to former MP, Philip Ruddock

What is likely to be a long struggle to re-establish freedom of speech and freedom of religion now begins.

Despite the urging of a former Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, the Turnbull Government allowed a bill with no protection for freedom of speech and little protection for freedom of religion to become law.

This was the end result of the marriage plebiscite as it played out in the Parliament last month.

People who wish to speak publicly about marriage being exclusively between one man and one woman now risk being fined for bigotry.

Even before the law changed, a prominent leader of the same-sex marriage movement, Rodney Croome, called for legal action to be taken against Catholic Archbishop Julian Porteous.

Diversity officers tapped people working in big companies and an 18-year-old girl was sacked.

Their crimes? They believed marriage was only between man and woman. But in this new environment they are bigots who should be punished.

In its haste to legislate same-sex marriage before Christmas, the government kicked the can of free speech and freedom of religion down the road to a review by former MP Philip Ruddock.

With most MPs and Senators rejecting the reasonable accommodations for diversity of belief about marriage put forward in a bill sponsored by Senator James Paterson, precious freedoms have now been lost.

As John Howard warned, freedom now risks being “stuck in the sand.”

The Ruddock Review’s challenge is to put Humpty back together again. It is so important that we make our voices heard.

Whether or not freedom is restored will come down to a decision of the Turnbull Government once it receives recommendations from the Ruddock review.

It is vital that we speak up now.

You do not have to write a long submission, but you should implore the review to allow freedom of expression about marriage to be restored in Australia.

Submissions need to be sent by no later than this coming Wednesday, the 14th of February. Submissions can be made at <https://pmc.gov.au/domestic-policy/religious-freedom-review/submission>.

In putting together a submission, here are some points you may wish to consider:

- Freedom of religion is more than freedom of worship, it is freedom to live out one’s faith in public.
- People should be free to speak publicly about their religious view of marriage without fear of being taken to a government tribunal, as was Archbishop Julian Porteous in Tasmania.

- Parents should have the right to be notified of and then withdraw their children from classes teaching radical LGBTIQ sex and gender theory.
- Preachers should be allowed to place their sermons regarding man-woman marriage on-line without fear of being taken to an anti-discrimination tribunal or commission.
- People should not be forced into making statements about marriage or gender with which they disagree.
- State and federal anti-discrimination law should be amended to ensure that no-one can be prosecuted for expressing the view that marriage is between one man and one woman.
- People should not fear being sacked from their jobs (as happened to a young Canberra woman) because they express their views on marriage.
- There should be no legal detriment to anyone who expresses the view that marriage is between one man and one woman.
- People should not be coerced under threat of losing their job into resigning from the boards of religious organisations that dissent from the state's new definition of marriage.