



TRARALGON BAPTIST CHURCH

**64 KAY STREET,
P.O. BOX 1768,
TRARALGON, 3844.
Ph: 5174 2148
10/04/08**

**Exceptions Review.
Department of Justice,
Level 24, 121 Exhibition Street,
Melbourne Victoria, 3000**

TO WHO IT MAY CONCERN

I am writing to voice my concerns on behalf of myself and the church I pastor, Traralgon and district Baptist Church, about the three religious exemptions – Sections 75, 76 and 77. Maintaining the religious exemptions in the Equal Opportunity Act 1995 is absolutely necessary to ensure the right of Victorians to exercise genuine religious freedom.

- Religious freedom is meaningless if Christians are forced to act against their deeply held beliefs. This country was founded on these beliefs and has prospered because of the integrity and wisdom of our founding fathers. I and my people have all chosen to be Christian. We give to this state and this country the highest moral and ethical standards of living we can give. To want to make us live contrary to that is unthinkable.
- Churches must be free to hire ministers and other staff and workers who share these same beliefs and who conform to the practices and principles of the common faith. What benefit is it to have a faith and then not live according to it's teachings.
- People whose beliefs are at odds with the Christian Church or school should in no way have the right to demand employment or position.
- Freedom of religion – the freedom to chose what faith is held and practiced – is a fundamental right that should not be limited by discrimination law!

I am asking specifically that all three religious exemptions – sections 75, 76 and 77 – in the Equal Opportunity Act 1995 be kept without change.

Yours sincerely,

Reverend Les Lawrence.