



Australian Federation
of Islamic Councils

The Australian **Federation of** **Islamic Councils** **Inc**

Submission with respect to

*Education Legislation Amendment
(Parental Rights) Bill 2020*



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The members at the Australian Federation of Islamic Councils Inc (AFIC) would like to thank The Hon Mark Latham MLC for proposing an Amendment to The Parents Rights Bill 2020.

The AFIC acknowledges that the focus of the amendment is to protect children and families by addressing the dangers of gender fluidity teaching, course development and teacher training in the New South Wales education system; and to reassert the rights and role of parents in the moral, ethical, political and social development of their children such that no school should be teaching material in those fields against the wishes of parents.

Introduction

About AFIC:

The Australian Federation of Islamic Councils is the peak national body for Australia's active Muslim councils, societies and associations. AFIC's membership is tiered with local societies forming state councils and the state councils that are elected by the member societies represent those societies with the national body that is AFIC.

AFIC has been serving humanity from within Australia for 57 years, having established as well as having contributed to the establishment of schools, community centres and Imam remunerations.

Schools:

Schools are a place for academic learning. Young children in primary schools look up to their teachers with innocence and absorb what they tell them like a sponge, primary school children accept much of what their teachers say as fact. Respect for and trust in teachers continues into high school. Schools are places where children believe that the teacher genuinely cares for their advancement and best interest. It is a place where parents expect their children to learn literacy, Numeracy, science, history, geography, social sciences, sport, art and can elect to learn a variety of other



subjects. Australian society has for a long time refused to permit the conflation of science and morals and ethics in the curriculum of public schools.

Beyond the basic social conventions, Australian society has refused to empower teachers to impose their personal morals and ethics on children and with excellent reason.

Australian society has consistently and rightly given parents primacy in laying the institutions that define right social constructs for children. It is the parents' obligation, role and responsibility to protect their child from what might distort their ethics and moral code.

Our tradition:

In our tradition, the mother and father are the first teachers and are the two people in the life of the child who are the most concerned about the interests, well-being, development and success of their children. We see children as an entrustment from God, the parents are chosen by God to fulfil the role of raising the child safely and lovingly and preparing this child to the best of their ability to function well and succeed and to help contribute and negotiate the beliefs that formed him or her into social norms as the child grows into maturity.

Parenting is one of the most solemn duties in Islam. The prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings upon him is quoted to have said:

كَفَى بِالْمَرْءِ إِثْمًا أَنْ يُضَيِّعَ مَنْ يَعُولُ

A reasonable translation would be: "It would be an overwhelming sin for a person to lose his dependents." Meaning that a parent who does not strive their utmost to rear their children properly and does not ensure that their education is right and proper will be committing a very grave sin. It is a huge fall from grace to lose a child from the path of faith-adherence into sinful, antisocial, criminal or immoral behaviour.

We understand that contemporary living challenges us with numerous temptations. These challenges are even more difficult for our children to negotiate through if they



are not equipped or if those challenges are normalised. It is the duty and therefore the right of parents to have primacy over the teachings of morality and ethics to their children.

AFIC is determined to better the community and has no doubt that both parents and schools need to work together for the best interest of the child. AFIC believes that teachers will always have a crucial role in educating our children. However, society must always acknowledge that there is a difference between teachers in the academic fields and teachers in the field of faith such as Imams and priests. Parents, teachers and Imams each has a different role. As complementary as these roles might be, there are certain matters that are the purview of parents or Imams that cannot be encroached upon by secular academic institutions. For a society to succeed, it must respect and protect the solemn duty of parents and its primacy on matters of morality just like parents will respect the teacher's primacy over the teaching of scientific fact. For example, if a parent compels a child to treat the flat earth theory as factual science, the child will clearly fail science. In like manner, when secular academic institutions interfere in the cultural and religious values of the child, these institutions would fail both the child and the parent and will thereby create distrust in their institutions and a move away from them.

Parents have a natural human right to decide how their children are to be educated. It is a right that is coded into their DNA, they do not choose to be protective, loving, nurturing and supportive of their children, they just are, because these traits are innate, they are an internal drive that is as much a part of their being as the hunger for food. In fact, good parents will forgo much of their own comfort for the sake of their children. Parents only begin to fail in these duties when society or the legislature disempower them and threaten them with the heavy burden of the law if they attempt to fulfil their natural duty.

The very social fabric of every nation will not survive if we do not protect the rights and liberties of parents. We believe that the proposed **Education Legislation Amendment (Parental Rights) Bill 2020** (the Bill) will enshrine Article 18 of the international Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in New South Wales law. The Bill aims to respect the liberty of parents and/ legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children is in conformity with their own convictions.

AFIC will continue to support the rights and freedoms of parents to educate their children on religion and moral education.



AFIC is concerned that if we fail to include the proposed amendments, more parents will take their children out of the public system and opt for private schools or home education. We are also concerned that more teachers will leave the profession so that they are not placed in a position where they have to teach ideas that defy their own religious, moral or ethical convictions.

The UN Declaration on the Elimination of all forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on religion or belief:

This declaration was proclaimed by the UN general assembly on 25 November 1981 (resolution 36/55).

Article 1

1. *Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought conscience and religion. This right shall include the freedom to have a religion or whatever belief of his choice and freedom either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship observance practice and teaching.*
2. *No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have a religion of his choice.*

Article 5

1. *The parents or the legal guardians of the child have the right to organize the life within the family in accordance to their religion or belief and bearing in mind the moral education in which they believe the child should be brought up*

Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 (General Assembly resolution 217 A) as a common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations.



Article 26

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

SUBMISSIONS

AFIC supports the proposed amendments because we see those amendments as essential to reorient the roles of teachers, parents and faith-leaders back to their natural domain. traits, responsibilities and obligations.

AFIC believes that these amendments would help Australia meet its obligations under Article 5 (1) of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of all forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on religion or belief, proclaimed on 25 November 1981 and Article 26 (3) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed on 10 December 1948.

AFIC members are mortified with the present social engineering of the new generation towards gender fluidity. Impressionable children should not be indoctrinated to challenge their biological sex. Gender fluidity creates more confusion amongst youths as to what or who they are.

We have seen the dangers to youths when they are denied a definitive understanding of their beliefs and morals. These are matters that are normally nurtured by parents to whom children naturally incline for protection, familiarity and support, these are matters over which parents must have unchallenged primacy. Any third party that interferes with the nurturing of these ideas will by necessity engender confusion, self-doubt and feelings of misery. Such matters should not be foisted on children by authority figures in secular academic schools. It makes no sense for individuals who are below the age of consent to be taught to query their own biological gender. Parents have a natural right to instil in their children, moral and ethical standards, political and social values, and matters of personal wellbeing and identity including gender and sexuality.

AFIC submits that these amendments must be made so that children can be given the protection they need and schools return to being places of academic learning rather than places of moral and cultural indoctrination.



AFIC supports the inclusion of the two definitions below into the Bill:

“Matters of parental primacy” means in relation to the education of children, moral and ethical standards, political and social values, and matters of personal wellbeing and identity including gender and sexuality.

“Gender Fluidity” means a belief there is a difference between biological sex (including people who are, by their chromosomes, male or female but are born with disorders of sexual differentiation) and human gender and that human gender is socially constructed rather than being equivalent to a person’s biological sex.

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