MEDIA RELEASE / STATEMENT

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# Anti-Discrimination Commissioner urges caution

Tasmania’s Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Sarah Bolt, has cautioned those who seek to amend the State’s Anti-Discrimination Act.

The Member for Apsley in the Legislative Council, the Honourable Tania Rattray, has proposed amending section 17(1) of the Act by removing the words ‘offends’ and ‘insults’.

“The proposal would mean minorities and vulnerable people in Tasmania would lose existing protections under the Act,” Commissioner Sarah Bolt said.

“The proposal would mean that the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner would be unable to deal with cases of offense and abuse directed toward minorities”.

“There is no evidence the current Act does not achieve an appropriate balance between allowing debate and discussion and preventing hatred and abuse.”

The Act already provides that something said in good faith for any purpose in the public interest will not be unlawful.

“The aim of the Act is to promote inclusive, tolerant and non-discriminatory behaviour. The proposed amendment would undermine the intent of the Act.”

“The proposed amendment would also mean that Tasmania would be out of step with the recent decision of the Australian Parliament to retain offensive conduct provisions in section 18C of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*,” the Commissioner said.

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