

# Media Release

**Martin Foley MP**

Minister for Housing, Disability & Ageing

Minister for Mental Health

Minister for Creative Industries

Minister for Equality



Tuesday, 6 December, 2016

## **LIBERALS BLOCK EQUAL OPPORTUNITY LAWS**

The Andrews Labor Government is bitterly disappointed by the Liberal National Coalition's decision to oppose a key equality Bill which would have improved the lives of thousands of Victorians.

Earlier this year, the Government introduced the *Equal Opportunity Amendment (Religious Exceptions) Bill 2016* to protect Victorian workers from discrimination when seeking employment at religious bodies or schools.

The Bill would have ensured a fair and more contemporary balance between the right to religious freedom and the right to be free from discrimination.

Members of the Opposition enjoyed the safety of parliamentary privilege to make offensive comments, before voting against the Bill:

- Bernie Finn said the "Safe Schools program is a premeditated deliberate attack on our children"
- Robert Clark said "I believe homosexual practices form a destructive way of life, destructive to the individual and destructive to other individuals who are brought into the way of life" - made in his contribution to the Equal Opportunity Bill, 25 May 1995

Other Opposition MPs who claim to be LGBTI equality allies, including Opposition Leader Matthew Guy, remained silent, leaving the offensive remarks unchallenged.

### **Quotes attributable to Minister for Equality Martin Foley**

*"The Liberals can't keep talking out of both sides of their mouths – they're either for equality or they're not."*

*"Opposition members should hang their heads in shame. Their arguments were completely devoid of empathy and a willingness to consider that all Victorians should experience equal rights."*

*"The Andrews Labor Government will continue to push for equality for all Victorians."*