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## MEDIA CLIPPING

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### EDUCATION

## Christian principals rally against LGBTIQ discrimination

Ashley Argoon, Herald Sun  
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THE principals of two elite Melbourne Christian schools have called for the scrapping of legislation in the Sex Discrimination Act that allows faith-based schools to discriminate against staff and students.

The powerful statements to a Senate Inquiry into discrimination against LGBTIQ students and teachers were made by the principals of Carey Baptist Grammar and Overnewton Anglican Community College.

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Both principals spoke out against elements of the Sex Discrimination Act that enable schools to discriminate against staff or students because of sexual orientation, gender identity, marital or relationship status or pregnancy.

“The thought of any school excluding a student from their community because they come to an understanding of their own sexuality or transgender is abhorrent to me,” Mr Laussen said.



Mr Grutzner said his school had supported three students in their transition to another gender. So too had Overnewton, Mr Laussen said.

Both schools had celebrated same sex marriages of staff since legislation was introduced last year.

“As a Christian and a leader of a Christian school, I look to the example of Jesus who welcomed all people from all backgrounds, therefore we should do the same at Carey and other schools as we believe it is the right thing to do,” Mr Grutzner said.

He said the school promoted diversity “despite a very small pocket of resistance from a handful of people in our school, many of whom I suspect will share the views expressed at this inquiry from some outspoken ultraconservative Christian groups”.

Asked if single-sex schools should be able to remove students who transition to another gender, both principals said no.

“I think once you enrol a student, you’re making a commitment to that student and that student’s family forever, and we should be embracing them, welcoming them and travelling on that journey with them if they’re going to change things,” Mr Grutzner said.

“And added to that,” Mr Laussen offered, “it’s probably one of their most fragile points they’ve experienced in their life, to then exclude them from the community that’s their very support base would be terribly damaging.”

#### **OPINION: SCHOOLS SHOULD SUPPORT GAY KIDS**

#### **COMMENT: PROTECT THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF GAY TEACHERS**

Their evidence came after the inquiry heard from other religious education bodies who called to retain the current exemption legislation under Section 38.

The groups raised concern that LGBTIQ teachers’ potential advocacy, rather than their “attributes”, could be out of step with the teachings at religious schools.

Catholic Secondary Principals Australia executive officer Frank FitzGerald — who said he represented 500 Catholic school principals — said his organisation respected the beliefs and values of others in the community, and it was “only fair” others showed that same respect to Catholic schools.

Mr FitzGerald said that teachers sought employment and students accepted enrolment to Catholic schools “under agreement whereby they accept the policies, values and ethos of the school and will not act in any way that is opposed to these principles”.

The inquiry, over eight hours today, heard from private citizens, LGBTIQ groups, human rights groups, equality advocates, school leaders and bodies, and religious groups including Islamic, Christian and Catholic denominations.

The inquiry will report on Monday, November 26.

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