

**Submission to the Federal Government Senate Inquiry into the Sexual Discrimination Act  
19 November 2018, from Philip Grutzner, Principal Carey Baptist Grammar School**

**1. Introduction - Philip Grutzner**

Good afternoon. I thank you for the opportunity to meet with you today.

The reason I am here today is to oppose any current Federal legislation which allows religious schools to discriminate against staff or students on the basis of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

I was raised as an Anglican. I went to a local government primary school. My parents sacrificed everything they had to send me to a church based independent secondary school.

For the past 9 years I have been the Principal of Carey, a Christian Baptist school in Kew Melbourne.

Prior to Carey I was Headmaster of St Peter's College, an Anglican Christian school in Adelaide and before that Principal of Braemar College, a low fee Christian Ecumenical school in Woodend Victoria.

Carey is a coeducational ELC to Year 12 independent school. We have an enrolment of 2,500 comprising girls, boys and those who don't identify with traditional gender norms or sexual orientation.

In my 22 years as a Principal of three Christian schools, those schools have never discriminated against any staff member or student on the basis of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

**2. Statement re Carey Baptist Grammar School**

At Carey we pride ourselves on being an inclusive community.

We respect, celebrate and nurture individual, cultural and societal diversity.

We embrace the unique qualities and skills of each individual and welcome students and staff from all backgrounds.

These individual differences may be related to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical ability or religious or political beliefs.

At Carey we don't just say we are inclusive. We live it.

Our staff are aware of the disturbing mental health statistics for those who are trans gender or gender diverse.

2017 Australian Research which examined the mental health of trans youth has shown almost 80% (aged 14 to 25 years) had self harmed, compared to just 11% of adolescents overall.

An alarming 48 % had attempted suicide, compared with 2.4% of adolescents overall.

Transgender young people are also 10 times more likely to suffer from serious depression and anxiety than other young Australians.

These aren't just numbers. They represent real people who deserve our support, as do their friends and family.

As a Christian and 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 at all schools as we believe it is the right thing to do.

At Carey we actively support students who have undergone or are about to go through gender transition as well as support several transgender future students as they prepare to come to Carey.

For over a decade we have welcomed same sex couples at the Year 12 School formal.

Carey emphasises equal opportunity employment practices and would not discriminate against any current or prospective employee. We have policies in place to support our position. We are proud of the diversity of our staff and inclusive culture at Carey. We state this on the Employment page of our website.

For the past five years we have been a member of the Safe Schools Coalition.

Since the legal recognition last year of same sex marriage, we have publicly celebrated the marriage of two same sex staff couples, just as much as any other marriage in our school community.

Two years ago we introduced gender neutral uniform options.

Units within our school curriculum educate our students about sexual diversity and inclusiveness.

For the past two years we have had a staff and student Pride Group. This is open to all, irrespective of their gender, identity or sexual preferences. It also welcomes allies. This group provides support, educates our community about the challenges facing LGBTQI+ people and reviews school activities and policies to make sure they are truly inclusive. Earlier this year they marched under the Carey banner at the Gay Pride March in St Kilda

We have gender neutral toilets.

We continue to work with the Royal Children's Hospital and each family to provide a plan of support for each Carey student who is going through a gender transition, or those who do not identify with binary gender norms.

We have developed guidelines to support us in enabling all students to feel safe, accepted, valued and included at every step of their educational journey at Carey.

More recently we have reviewed our application and enrolment guidelines. We are changing our documentation which collects personal information so that it is inclusive of gender diverse individuals

Despite a very small pocket of resistance from a handful of people (many of whom will share the same views expressed at this inquiry from some ultra-conservative religious groups) we promote our diversity and inclusivity. Provide copies of Carey's recent School Magazine and Educate Plus magazine article.

We are on a journey at Carey. We are not perfect. But we are always willing to lead, learn and change. But one thing that will never change.

Carey will never change in its opposition to the current legislation which allows religious schools to discriminate against staff or students on the basis of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

Philip Grutzner  
Principal Carey Baptist Grammar School.  
19 November 2018