



Nurture for today • Learning for tomorrow • Character for eternity

3<sup>rd</sup> December 2018

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

I'm sorry to be contacting you at this busy time of the year but **we urgently need your help.**

You would have seen the coverage in the media over the last few weeks about proposals to amend the Sex Discrimination Act to protect students being expelled because of their sexuality. Firstly, I want to make clear, our school has not expelled a student solely on the basis of their "same sex attraction". We have never sought the right to do so, we have only sought the ability to be a genuinely Adventist school.

The problem with the proposed changes to date that have sought to provide these protections is that they have far broader consequences. The advice we have received is that they would compromise our ability to –

- teach from a Biblical perspective, including about issues or morality, sexuality and sexual conduct – but not limited to them;
- enforce behavioural standards within our community consistent with our faith, values and beliefs.

Earlier this week the Opposition introduced into the Senate legislation that again seeks to provide these protections but still has these same problems. The Government has since announced proposed amendments to that Opposition Bill which would address the most critical of our concerns. The Government's amendments –

- ensure that, when determining if an action was 'reasonable' if indirect discrimination is alleged, the faith context of the school is considered provided that:
  - the school has published a policy dealing with the issue, and
  - the best interests of the child are considered.
- ensure that it is clear that faith-based schools can continue to teach *'in good faith in accordance with the doctrines, tenets, beliefs or teachings of a particular religion or creed'*

The Senate will be debating the Opposition Bill and the Government's amendments on **Monday, 3 December** – with all debate to be **finalised by 12:50pm.**

We are asking all parents and carers to contact the Senators in our state and encourage them to support the Government's amendments as soon as possible – but certainly **before 12 noon on Monday.**

At the same time, or **no later than 12 noon on Tuesday 4 December**, we are asking that you convey the same message to your **Federal MP in the House of Representatives.**

Same letters and contact details are all attached.

Once again, we are sorry to be asking this of you at this busy time of the year, but **your support is vital** if we are to remain an authentically Christian school.

Blessings,

Anna Calandra  
Principal  
Macarthur Adventist College

The Hon. Anne Stanley

Federal Member for Werriwa

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E-mail: Anne.Stanley.MP@aph.gov.au

Dear Cr Stanley,

I understand that on Monday 3 December the Senate will be considering the Sex Discrimination Amendment (Removing Discrimination Against Students) Bill 2018 along with Government amendments that ensure that the Adventist school context is considered by the Court when assessing actions and that clear protections are provided for the school's ability to continue to teach its faith.

As a parent of a student in an Adventist school it is vitally important to me that our school can continue to operate as a genuinely Adventist school.

If this Bill is passed by the Senate and is being considered by the House I urge you to support the Government's amendments to this Bill which provide vital protections for religious freedom. Please protect our freedoms.

Yours faithfully,