



MEDIA RELEASE

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Australia is a haven; don't make people of religion shiver

Australia is blessing and refuge for those who have faced persecution elsewhere, including for their religious beliefs. The Australian Association of Christian Schools (AACS) expresses its deep concern amidst revelations that the Labor party intends to enact laws that in effect, potentially set Christian education schools up for breaches of the law through mere disagreement with Labor LGBTIQ orthodoxy.

AACS Executive Officer, Alithea Westerman said, "Christian education in Australia has been free from State-imposed religious restrictions for its entire history, yet threatening the teaching and expression of mainstream Christian beliefs in their schools with sanctions should they cause "offence" or vaguely defined "harassment" is more akin to countries that demand obedience to the power and dogma of their ruling class."

AACS asserts that whatever complexities arise in the lives of young people in Christian school communities, that they are enveloped with love, compassion and wisdom. Christian schools are tired of commentators, who know nothing of what life is like at a Christian education school, passing erroneous judgement on the walk they have with students facing some of the hardest personal questions any child or teenager can face. Thank goodness they are in a Christian school.

Theologically-informed views on marriage, sexuality and gender are discussed and valued at our schools with the sincere belief that they are the best



framework for our actions and important for our walk with Christ. Christians do not believe that they are defined by one aspect of their personhood and nor do they believe in a hierarchy of sins, despite differences in consequences. We regularly confess that we are all capable and guilty of doing wrong, but believe that our hearts are restless until we find rest in our Creator God.

No one cares more about children questioning their sexuality and gender than their parents, family and school community. To suggest otherwise, as has been done by the media and certain political voices, is offensive to the caring and prayerful way Christian schools navigate this journey with students.

Pursuit of a good relationship with God is the reason Christian education schools teach and hold on to the beliefs they do. To be fearful of causing “offence” or “harassment” merely by promoting conscientiously held beliefs that have grounded the institutions of our civilisation, or face sanction, is no way to maintain pluralism in Australia.

AACS Executive Officer, Alithea Westerman, said “Should Labor form government and wish to promote its own doctrine to the extent that the expression of traditional Christian beliefs be subservient, or face sanction, the Australian Association of Christian Schools will protest in solidarity with all who love and prefer freedom of speech, conscience and belief.”

“Australia is a haven, don’t punish its diversity or demonise its differences.”

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