

**AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF
GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS
PRESS RELEASE 880
CULTURE OF ENTITLEMENT, SEX, AND
PRIVATE SCHOOLS**

In a time when women have eventually found their voice and banded together against exploitation, a lot of murky truths about private schools have surfaced.

Not only have Australian parents been confronted with the systemic sexual abuse of the Catholic sector. In recent weeks the media has been awash with revelations about the actual raping of young women in Coalition Ministerial Offices. It seems that the sense of entitlement fostered in the wealthy private schools of the nation have produced predators in the hallowed halls of power, including the High Court (the Heydon matter) and Parliament itself.

The courage of young women like the Australian of the Year, Grace Tame, and Brittany Higgins emboldened a [22 –year-old former Kambala Sydney student, Chanel Contos to start an online petition](#) calling on people to come forward with allegations of sexual assault and demand better consent education in schools. In the same week that the national conversation was centred on the [sexual assault allegations of Brittany Higgins in Canberra](#), more than 200 young women contacted Ms Contos with personal testimonies about sexual assault they said they experienced at the hands of a male peer at nearby Sydney private boys’ school.

“We were sharing stories and basically realised we had unlimited rape stories to share from our friends from these different schools,” Chanel Contos said.

A list of testimonies published so far under the petition has anonymised both alleged victims and perpetrators, but claims that students who attended Scots College, Cranbrook, Sydney Grammar School, Saint Ignatius Riverview, St Joseph’s College, Waverley College and Shore had been perpetrators of sexual assault.

The women who wrote the testimonies identified themselves as former students of schools including Kambala, Kincoppal-Rose Bay, St Catherine’s School, Ascham, Pymble Ladies College, Wenona, Queenswood, SCEGGS Darlinghurst and Monte Sant’Angelo Mercy College. The testimonies detail alleged assaults that took place during school years or shortly afterwards, while the young women were still mixing in crowds determined by their school social circles.

One former eastern suburbs boys’ school student recalled “*countless instances of boys differing in age at a number of private schools, with stories of both sexually harassing and assaulting women*”.

“Looking back, the way it’s bragged about amongst peers is also extremely frightening,” he said, noting that reflecting on his time at school had made him feel guilty. *“You hear constant stories and I was super afraid to speak against it.”*

Other students said some of their peers had kept lists of women they had slept with while drunk, or shared nude images of female peers on all-boys group chats. “While I never assaulted anyone [I felt] the environment changed me negatively into someone I was not,” another former student said.

According to [Natassia Chrysanthos](#) in the Sydney Morning Herald of 21 February 2021, the 3000 students who have signed Ms Contos’ petition are calling for schools to do more, and earlier. Former Kambala students recalled visiting Cranbrook in 2015, after a male student had been involved in a sexual assault, to teach about 100 male students about respect for women.

“The scariest thing for me was we went around in these circles and said: how many of you understand what the word consent means?” one of the former Kambala students said.

“Of the 100 boys, I would say maybe five of them put their hand up. I don’t really think that young women should have been in charge of having to talk to young men.”

Another former Kambala student described the situation as “*absurd*”. *“We weren’t equipped at all; we barely knew what we were talking about,”* she said. Her mother said: “We had heard some horrific stories about the behaviour of the boys and I was appalled by the inaction of the schools and equally appalled that they were using our daughters to do their job.”

[The Principals of Sydney wealthy private schools, not unsurprisingly, are moving swiftly into damage control.](#) They bemoan the fact that ‘It’s a difficult culture to break!’ and fall back on marketing the schools for the courses and speakers they are inviting into their schools.

But the problem is much more deep seated than marketing tricks and visiting speakers talking about ‘respect’.

DOGS suggest that the only way to approach ‘damage control’ is to go to the root of the ‘privileged culture’ bred by segregation of boys and girls, each group in high fee, highly government subsidised private schools where the culture embedded in the lavish buildings and playing fields is one of ‘entitlement’.

Any school for self- styled 'entitled' children of plutocrats that has produced sexual predators should be de-registered and no longer receive a cent of public money.

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