

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT

SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 766

OUTRAGE AT DISCRIMINATION AGAINST CHILDREN ON THE GROUNDS OF SEXUALITY

BUT

PRIVATE SCHOOLS DISCRIMINATE ON MANY GROUNDS

THAT IS THE ESSENCE OF THEIR ‘CHOICE’ OF PRIVATE STATUS

At 2.18 am on 10 October 2018 an outraged Independent Senator Derryn Hinch twittered as follows:

I will move a notice of motion in the Senate Monday calling for any private school that discriminates against a teacher or student on sexuality grounds be stripped of all government funds and charity status.

The ABC News noted his tweet at 6 am on the morning of 11 October but the response to his twitter at <https://twitter.com/HumanHeadline/status/1049952236892086272> indicates a interesting reaction to the realisation that private schools are demanding legitimisation of their privilege to discriminate. Under the cloak of ‘religious liberty’ they demand an ‘enshrinement in legislation’ of what they are already doing namely:

discriminating against children

Within hours Liberal minister Alex Hawke said that such discrimination was absolutely acceptable: “in Australia you have choice of schooling”. Scott Morrison stressed that the review’s key finding wasn’t a change and that what was reported were just proposals. As the *SMH* reported, Mr Morrison was asked: “So you’re comfortable with a school expelling a student because they are gay or lesbian?” The Prime Minister replied: “It is existing law.”

Both Bill Shorten and Tanya Plibersek rejected expanding any such discrimination.

Eventually, after supporting religious schools already existing ‘right to discriminate’ against children on the basis of their sexuality Prime Minister Morrison reacted to public outrage— at the current situation – and promised the legislate against it. The Labor Party followed.

But the issue of religious school discrimination against pupils – and teachers – and parents - opens the door to the wider debate about enrolment and employment discrimination. The horses are already running, albeit in different directions.

The Age of 10 October 2018 noted that Labor and the Coalition joined forces to defeat a Greens bill two years ago that would have revoked the right of religious schools in Victoria to target students for being gay. (The Greens sought in 2016 to strip Victoria’s Equal

Opportunity Act of three exemptions that allow faith-based schools to discriminate against students based on their sex, sexual orientation, lawful sexual activity or gender identity. But the private member's bill was voted down by the major parties, with Sex Party MP Fiona Patten the only MP willing to vote with the Greens in the upper house.

The Andrews government opposed the bill while pursuing its own reforms to the state's equal opportunity laws, which would have wound back the right of religious schools to turn teachers away due to their sexuality or gender.

But Labor's push also failed, by the narrowest of margins, with Liberal upper house president Bruce Atkinson using his casting vote to ensure the bill's defeat.)

The community needs to maintain the rage which has led to the proposed abolition of discrimination on the grounds of sexuality and transfer it to all levels of discrimination.

Private schools can refuse to enrol any child on almost any grounds whatever. To begin with, although they take billions in public money, they charge fees. In Finland it is illegal to charge fees.

With the exception of high fee paying schools for the self styled governing class, taxpayers are substantially paying for Catholic and other dependent private schools. It is time to take them over and open them up to all children! And let the rest be genuinely independent.

Private schools which are publicly funded CAN and DO discriminate against children. They discriminate against children, not only on the basis of sexuality, but also on the basis of class, creed, disability, and race.

Ditto for teachers.

Private religious schools are above the law. They can discriminate on almost any grounds whatever. Politicians need to take the next step:

This is why DOGS have always opposed STATE AID TO PRIVATE SCHOOLS.

LISTEN TO THE DOGS PROGRAM

855 ON THE AM DIAL: 12.00 NOON SATURDAYS

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