

**SUBMISSION IN RESPONSE TO THE AUSTRALIAN LAW REFORM COMMISSION'S
INQUIRY INTO RELIGIOUS EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION LAWS**

23 February 2023

Dear ALRC,

For over a decade Aleph Melbourne has been engaging with schools in Melbourne's Jewish community, along with leaders in the Jewish community at state and national level.

Increasingly Melbourne's leading Jewish schools are genuinely concerned about the well-being of LGBTIQ+ students and are putting policies and practices in place to protect, nurture and strengthen the identities and individuality of these students. The schools proactively adopting these practices fully understand that students who can live as their authentic selves achieve better outcomes at school and in life generally.


With this in mind, it is our strong belief that religious schools must not in any way be allowed to cause psychological or other harm to students who are same-sex attracted, trans or gender diverse, or who have intersex variations, particularly due to the school teaching and/or enforcing religious values diametrically opposed to being LGBTIQ+.


For example, teaching a student who experiences same-sex attraction that homosexuality is immoral and sinful is likely to cause deep psychological harm to the student and cause them to suppress their innate sexuality. Our desire is for schools to teach same-sex attraction is normal.

Similarly, requiring transgender or non-binary students to wear a uniform or take a name conforming to the gender they were assigned to at birth, or making them use a toilet or change room that does not match their identity will cause deep psychological harm to the student. This should never be allowed to happen. Our desire is for schools to nurture these students.

The psychological welfare of LGBTIQ+ students must always take priority. At no time must harmful and repressive religious values take precedence over a student's welfare.

Sincerely,


Michael Barnett OAM
Co-Convenor

 | www.aleph.org.au

Aleph Melbourne is a social, support and advocacy group for same-sex attracted, trans and gender diverse, and intersex people (and allies) who have a Jewish heritage, living in Melbourne, Australia.