

To whom it may concern,

My name is [REDACTED] and I am a secondary teacher specialising in Studies of Religion and Drama. I worked at an Anglican school in [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] until my contract was terminated on the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 2023. [REDACTED] I had signed a new contract as a Christian studies teacher – teaching 7 classes a week, across years 7, 8, 10, and 12.

I am a Christian, have studied theology, and my faith is incredibly important to me. It informs my teaching, in that, I believe that every student is someone. Our future is dependent on the next generation being believed in as individuals, being equipped to be the people of infinite potential which they are – being seen as the intricately and wonderfully made hearts and minds who are loved by their Creator.

I was blessed to have a good relationship with students and was shown their trust in me through many conversations. Students chose to discuss their feeling “disapproved of” and “unwelcome” due to their sexual preferences and world view. Two students admitted to “trying to get to the end of school” before they could just be themselves. This was exacerbated by the practices of teachers in the Years 10 – 12 Christian studies programs.

The year 12 program alternates between a topical lecture, delivered to the year group, one week, followed by in-class discussions the following week – in response. The topic for the term was sexuality. I had the topic ‘Gender’ to speak to. The lecture prior to mine, conducted by the chaplain, involved an exercise where statements regarding sexuality were read, and students stood if they agreed or sat if they disagreed – and were asked to account for their decision. There were a number of times that one or two LGBTQ+ affirming students were left standing - to the mockery of the rest of the seated year group. On Monday [REDACTED] [REDACTED], I gave my lecture. It was an academic look at the very diverse gender perspectives throughout the history of Christianity. I then called for an affirming return to “Love thy neighbour” over “Love thy doctrine”.

No one asked to look over my lecture. I was given no framework to follow – other than “your topic is Gender”. Monday [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I gave my talk. Tuesday [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I was asked by the chaplain to email my lecture to them. At 3pm on Wednesday [REDACTED] [REDACTED] I received an email from the principal’s assistant asking for me to attend a meeting at 3:30pm. Present in the meeting was the Principal, Head of

Secondary (who was present at my lecture), and myself. Up until this point, neither of them had spoken to me in 5 weeks. When I arrived and sat down, the head of secondary read a list of 6-7 odd, unfounded and unsubstantiated 'complaints' against me – first I had heard of any of them. I responded to each with an 'Okay' of recognition and willingness to address. The principal then said "it sounds like you accept them all". Before I had a chance to respond or process where to start. I was told that they "were worried about my judgment" and that they will be terminating my contract effective immediately. The principle then went to their desk, grabbed an envelope with my dismissal inside and gave it to me. I then left to pack my desk.

I have received messages of support from several staff. I still can't believe how quick it all happened. I am worried about what this means for a number of students. How my dismissal will be used to amplify non-affirming teachings and attitudes in other teachers and students. I am worried about the effect - seeing me fired for supporting them – will have on different individuals. I am worried about being able to get another job. [REDACTED]. This principle knows relatives of my wife, ministers, and most other Christian School Principals. Why that matters, is my main specialty is Studies of Religion – Not a subject found in public schools. In the days that have followed, I have cried and thought about leaving teaching most days - but with a young family, I don't know what else I can do. Financially, we will now be borrowing money from my parents until I can find another position.

Faithfully,

[REDACTED]