



# ABBOTSLEIGH

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**From the Headmistress**

*An Anglican K-12 School for Girls*

6 November 2018

Dear Members of the Abbotsleigh Community

Discriminatory exemptions have been the centre of fierce debate and distress over the past week. These are exemptions that, according to the Archbishop in The Australian this morning, Anglican schools, did not want, and have not used.

Reflecting deeply on feedback and the issues raised, the incongruity between saying Abbotsleigh does not discriminate (which we do not) and supporting highly discriminatory legislation, albeit temporarily, has become clear. The present situation where protection for religious freedom is tied to exemptions in the Sex Discrimination Act of 1984 is anathema and objectionable. I support the removal of these exemptions.

Unfortunately, because the maintenance of discriminatory exemptions was tied to the advocacy of religious freedom and the assurances that Anglican Schools do not discriminate were less than adequate in the Open Letter, the message of religious freedom was understandably buried.

As a result, my support of the Open Letter has caused much distress and anger among many members of the Abbotsleigh community. I am deeply sorry for the hurt that this has caused.

I want to reiterate that Abbotsleigh has not and will not change its ethos or values. We are an Anglican School which is inclusive and non-discriminatory. We do not and will not expel students due to sexual orientation, nor is sexual orientation the determinant of the employment and tenure of staff. We highly value every member of our community and our good, deep and strong values are based on God's love for all.

I believe that Australia should have legislation that guarantees freedom of religion for all. This is a basic tenet of liberalism and democracy, and I hope that this legislation is enacted after robust parliamentary debate.

I am very sorry that some members of our community have felt discriminated against. This is something that should not happen, and I apologise for the incredible hurt you have felt and are feeling. Please be assured that the staff and I are working very hard to ensure our current and future students and staff do not experience discrimination of any kind.

I appreciate that so many of you have taken the time to write personal emails and letters to me. The controversy of this past week has caused much division and conflict within our community, and I am aware that a number of long standing friendships have been sorely tested. This saddens me deeply.

I hope that the hurt that has been experienced can begin to heal, and I urge all members of our community to respond to each other's views with courage, compassion and respect.

Yours sincerely

*Megan Krimmer*

Megan Krimmer  
Headmistress



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