

Craig Mills

21 November 2018

Dear Senators,

I make a late submission , past the due date, in relation to

***'The Inquiry into the effectiveness of the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act 1984 in eliminating discrimination and promoting gender equality'***

as a result of a news item published this week, in the Herald Sun Newspaper, (as referenced below in the school website article) in which Mr Philip Grutzner made an *invited* submission to the inquiry.

It would not have been possible to respond to a submission such as this, (without foreknowledge), before it was made, and hence my immediate response to the submission as made, albeit after your due date for submissions.

Mr Grutzner's comment on the Carey website :-

(The Carey website <https://www.carey.com.au/about/carey-presents-sexual-discrimination-act-senate-inquiry>)

*"Dear Carey Community,*

*Yesterday, I was invited to appear at the Federal Government Senate Inquiry into the Sexual Discrimination Act.*

*I took up the opportunity to appear because I believe that Carey and all schools should provide an environment and culture that is safe, inclusive and welcoming. I oppose any current Federal legislation which allows religious schools to discriminate against staff or students on the basis of their gender identity or sexual orientation.*

*At Carey we respect, celebrate and nurture individual, cultural and societal diversity. We embrace the unique qualities and skills of each individual and welcome students and staff from all backgrounds. As a Christian and leader of a Christian school, I look to the example of Jesus who welcomed all people from all backgrounds. Therefore, we should do the same at Carey and at all schools as we believe it is the right thing to do.*

*You can [download my full submission](#), as well as a [media article](#) from today's edition of the Herald Sun.*

*Regards,*

*Philip Grutzner"*

I have included the submission (Appendix A), 2 letters written to the school board, i. in 2017 (Appendix B), & ii (Appendix D) below, and the school's responses Appendices C & E.

I believe almost all the school community are very supportive of the moves towards equality in the uniform and other space at Carey. This is well conceived and has been very well managed.

I am aware of a boy wishing to wear a dress in the mid 90's at Carey being refused, at great personal cost, and am aware of a similar reverse gender situation in the early teens, that also was unable to be resolved to the satisfaction of the student and family, and I welcome the stated new more considered and equitable approach to uniform policy at the school, particularly for transitioning students.

The stated position in the paper and submission is excellent.

I am aware of a conversation in which it was indicated (by the school) that there would be a case by case consideration (2018) for boys wishing to wear 'girl's' uniform currently – not equal to the converse situation.

The current situation is that boys are required to wear one style of uniform and have hair and appearance requirements that are different to girls.

Girls can choose dresses or shorts/trousers without reference to the authority.

This asymmetric and unequal rule set is being labelled, I believe for public relations reasons, as 'equal' when it is clearly not.

My overall point is that while institutions are claiming 'equality' and are virtue signalling, the on-the-ground application of this 'equality' is different to the stated position.

The Senate should take note that what is claimed may often be not the true situation and should take this into consideration when developing policy responses, if the intent of any legislation is equality as opposed to some equality and some 'window dressing'.

Yours Sincerely,

Craig Mills

Appendix A

Mr Philip Grutzner, Headmaster Carey Baptist Grammar School, Submission to Inquiry



*Submission to the Federal Government Senate Inquiry into the Sexual Discrimination Act 19 November 2018, from Philip Grutzner, Principal Carey Baptist Grammar School*

*1. Introduction - Philip Grutzner*

*Good afternoon. I thank you for the opportunity to meet with you today.*

*The reason I am here today is to oppose any current Federal legislation which allows religious schools to discriminate against staff or students on the basis of their gender identity or sexual orientation.*

*I was raised as an Anglican. I went to a local government primary school. My parents sacrificed everything they had to send me to a church based independent secondary school.*

*For the past 9 years I have been the Principal of Carey, a Christian Baptist school in Kew Melbourne.*

*Prior to Carey I was Headmaster of St Peter's College, an Anglican Christian school in Adelaide and before that Principal of Braemar College, a low fee Christian Ecumenical school in Woodend Victoria.*

*Carey is a coeducational ELC to Year 12 independent school. We have an enrolment of 2,500 comprising girls, boys and those who don't identify with traditional gender norms or sexual orientation.*

*In my 22 years as a Principal of three Christian schools, those schools have never discriminated against any staff member or student on the basis of their gender identity or sexual orientation.*

*2. Statement re Carey Baptist Grammar School*

*At Carey we pride ourselves on being an inclusive community.  
We respect, celebrate and nurture individual, cultural and societal diversity.*

*We embrace the unique qualities and skills of each individual and welcome students and staff from all backgrounds.*

*These individual differences may be related to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical ability or religious or political beliefs.*

*At Carey we don't just say we are inclusive. We live it.*

*Our staff are aware of the disturbing mental health statistics for those who are trans gender or gender diverse.*

*2017 Australian Research which examined the mental health of trans youth has shown almost 80% (aged 14 to 25 years) had self harmed, compared to just 11% of adolescents overall.*

*An alarming 48 % had attempted suicide, compared with 2.4% of adolescents overall.*

*Transgender young people are also 10 times more likely to suffer from serious depression and anxiety than other young Australians.*

*These aren't just numbers. They represent real people who deserve our support, as do their friends and family.*

*As a Christian and leader of a Christian school, I look to the example of Jesus who welcomed all people from all backgrounds. Therefore we should do the same at Carey and at all schools as we believe it is the right thing to do.*

*At Carey we actively support students who have undergone or are about to go through gender transition as well as support several transgender future students as they prepare to come to Carey.*

*For over a decade we have welcomed same sex couples at the Year 12 School formal.*

*Carey emphasises equal opportunity employment practices and would not discriminate against any current or prospective employee. We have policies in place to support our position. We are proud of the diversity of our staff and inclusive culture at Carey. We state this on the Employment page of our website.*

*For the past five years we have been a member of the Safe Schools Coalition.*

*Since the legal recognition last year of same sex marriage, we have publicly celebrated the marriage of two same sex staff couples, just as much as any other marriage in our school community.*

*Two years ago we introduced gender neutral uniform options. Units within our school curriculum educate our students about sexual diversity and inclusiveness.*

*For the past two years we have had a staff and student Pride Group. This is open to all, irrespective of their gender, identity or sexual preferences. It also welcomes allies. This group provides support, educates our community about the challenges facing LGBTQI+ people and reviews school activities and policies to make sure they are truly inclusive. Earlier this year they marched under the Carey banner at the Gay Pride March in St Kilda*

*We have gender neutral toilets.*

*We continue to work with the Royal Children's Hospital and each family to provide a plan of support for each Carey student who is going through a gender transition, or those who do not identify with binary gender norms.*

*We have developed guidelines to support us in enabling all students to feel safe, accepted, valued and included at every step of their educational journey at Carey.*

*More recently we have reviewed our application and enrolment guidelines. We are changing our documentation which collects personal information so that it is inclusive of gender diverse individuals*

*Despite a very small pocket of resistance from a handful of people (many of whom will share the same views expressed at this inquiry from some ultra-conservative religious groups) we promote our diversity and inclusivity. Provide copies of Carey's recent School Magazine and Educate Plus magazine article.*

*We are on a journey at Carey. We are not perfect. But we are always willing to lead, learn and change. But one thing that will never change.*

*Carey will never change in its opposition to the current legislation which allows religious schools to discriminate against staff or students on the basis of their gender identity or sexual orientation.*

*Philip Grutzner  
Principal Carey Baptist Grammar School. 19 November 2018*

*Appendix B*  
*10/5/17*

*Ms Jane Simon  
Chair, The Board  
Carey Baptist Grammar  
Barkers Rd Kew*

*Dear Jane and Carey Board,*

*William Carey was instrumental in the abolition of Sati in India. He has a long history of protest to improve the lot of women in India, including protests against other cultural institutions that oppressed women, like polygamy, female infanticide, child marriage, euthanasia and forced female illiteracy.*

*It was Carey's relentless battle against Sati for 25 years which finally led to the famous Edict in 1829 banning widow burning.*

*The cobbler turned Baptist missionary was also the first man who led the campaign for a humane treatment for leprosy and ended the practise of burning sufferers alive.*

*Carey himself would be delighted, I am sure, with the Carey school community moving further in support of female/male equality in the area of uniform equal choice for girls.*

*While it is almost inconsequential, in relative terms, to these barbarous practices in India in the early 1800s, a gender different school appearance policy in remote 21st century Melbourne has important consequences. Appearance for some may be inconsequential, but a gender segregated policy translates into real world attitudes, values and beliefs that may stay with these students a lifetime.*

*What would William Carey have said about the schools' decision to maintain gender inequality for only boys in terms of hair length, jewellery and uniform?*

*I don't have any doubt he would see the case for complete social equality as one to fight for and to continue until it was made actually equal for all.*

*He would see that if equality is truly valued, that any discrimination based on gender undercuts, in many ways, the otherwise excellent and avant garde moves made to redress female disadvantage at the school.*

*He would also see that by publicly maintaining and promoting a stated position of equality in some areas while not in others, for unclear and perhaps less laudatory reasons, is wrong.*

*Imagine an alternative scenario in which library books for cooking and cleaning had been "girls only" and books on mechanics and carpentry "boys only". Next consider that the school saw fit to allow girls access all areas in the library and promoted this change as its gender equity credentials while maintaining exclusionary rules regarding boys access to books and when challenged responded "boys aren't interested in those books" and "we are an autonomous educational institution and we make our own rules as we see fit".*

*The alternate truth is that individual choice is appropriately made by individuals and that gender specific rules need a very strong underlying reason such as safety. The lesser reasons of contemporary mores and values is insufficient to diminish a very worthwhile policy of gender equality. This current revamped gender based rule set jeopardises and taints the schools' superlative work in all social, political, religious and philosophical areas if it is considered thoroughly, (as it would be by the deeply committed socially aware members of the school).*

*A different British subject, born in then India, George Orwell, has given us the paraphrased quote "all students are equal, but some are more equal than others", - a distillation of this asymmetric current student's appearance rule set.*

*I believe it is time for the school to exhibit **courage** by removing gender references in rules regarding appearance **and faith** that by so doing it carries the **light** of education further, lessening the dark.*

Yours Sincerely

Craig Mills

*Appendix C*

Mr Craig Mills

5 July, 2017

Dear Craig,

Thank you for your thoughtful letter dated 10 May, 2017.

I appreciate that you have been prepared to express your views and as it is addressed to me in my capacity as Chair, will circulate amongst Board members and school management at our next Board meeting, scheduled for later this month.

The issues you address are ones of principle and I know you will appreciate that the Board's role is one of governance whilst management are responsible for the day to day running of the school. We will determine next steps at our Board meeting and get back to you shortly afterwards.

Thank you for your interest and commitment to Carey, we appreciate all that your family brings to the richness of our community.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Simon  
Chair, Carey Baptist Grammar School

*Appendix D*  
23/7/18

Ms Jane Simon  
Chair, The Board  
Carey Baptist Grammar  
Barkers Rd Kew

& Mr Philip Grutzner, Principal  
& Carey Board  
& Senior School Parents Association

Dear Jane,

I was inspired to write again about the school's gender based appearance policy after attending the wonderfully beautiful whole school choral performances/evening last week.

It quite took my breath away. Congratulations to all who performed! There were many angelic voices and very powerful music made.

It is timely as it is over a year since I wrote to you and the board (copy attached) - and thanks for the note back saying it would be discussed and there would be a further response (which I have not yet received).

I am still unsure as to why the school made the choices it did.

As I understand it the school recently allowed girls only the option of wearing trousers, and no reciprocal equal right was made in relation to the boys. The gendered rules in terms of appearance also are asymmetric in relation to hair (and jewellery).

Undoubtedly there are many issues more deserving of time and effort than this but there is an important symbolism here. There is also a clarity of issue and both the symbolism and substance warrant exploration and explanation as this decision has echoes that spread into the wider world. Echoes that colour peoples view of the world potentially for decades to come.

I was surprised to see on the stage at the whole school choral evening what I thought was a young man (wearing trousers) with very long hair neatly tied down in a top of head bun during the performance. On closer view it was a young lady wearing trousers with lengthy hair tied up.

It called into question why then has the school a gender discriminatory policy in relation to hair if it is about appearance? In this instance if appearance were the issue all wearing trousers would be required to have short hair, I thought. Clearly it's not just about appearance.

What then is it about?

I considered why the school had chosen to advertise 'equality' in relation to the uniform issue without making it clear that some were more equal than others.



There are useful lessons from this current outcome.

The students can see that advertising serves the advertiser and one should always check claims carefully.

The boys (and girls too) have been denied equality for no good apparent or public reason and there is no clear explanation as to why.

The future power structures that these young people - particularly the men it would seem based on this example - encounter may justify institutional and structural disadvantage based on historical inequalities.

There likely will not be a platform provided them for an open discussion with power shared equally or democratically on the grounds of 'entitlement'.

And so, the perpetuation of inequality may be self-sustaining.

Galatians 3:28 says *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female for ye are all one in Christ Jesus"*.

*(Except in relation to uniform policy).*

Kind Regards

Craig Mills

Appendix E

16 August 2018

Dr C Mills

Dear Craig,

Thank you for your letter to the Board dated 23 July 2018.

Your letter has been circulated to the Board. At their recent meeting, the Board noted your letter, agreed to Carey's current uniform and grooming standards and have asked me to respond to your concerns as they regard this as a management issue.

Following a most consultative process with staff and students, in recent years a variety of uniform options have been introduced. These options allow students a choice of uniform with which they feel most comfortable and are in keeping with the ethos and values of Carey. A review of the appearance standards took place four years ago which also involved consultation with staff, students and management. At the time only a small number of students requested very little or no standards which would permit extremes styles of appearance and uniform.

At the time and since then, we feel the current standards relating to appearance and uniform are fair and reasonable, less extreme than some schools, in keeping with the independent ethos of Carey and other similar schools within the APS and support the opinions of a majority of our school community. We also acknowledge that young people will continue to challenge whatever boundaries are put in place at school and at home. However, providing such boundaries, when they are fair and reasonable, and we think that in this case they are, invites our young people to engage their chosen school community with purpose, structure and support.

In accepting enrolment or employment at Carey, parents, students and staff have to decide to commit to a whole package even though there may be some parts that some do not agree with. That package is well communicated via published school policies and parents and their children agree to accept the terms when they enrol at Carey. The standards relating to uniform and grooming have not changed in any substantial way since you enrolled your youngest at Carey. If part of the package is not acceptable, then the family has an option to question it, as you have rightfully done. They can also choose another school that meets their needs and aspirations, or treat their disagreement as a learning experience which is good preparation for the student's life in the wider world in which he or she will not necessarily agree to all the rules, policies and procedures that they encounter.

I don't believe you have raised your concerns with School Management at Senior School. I know the Deputy Head of Senior School - Wellbeing, Dr Matt Bach, would welcome a meeting with you should you wish to discuss this further.

*I am glad you enjoyed the recent choral concert. I too enjoyed the quality and variety of singing across the whole school. I am looking forward to Senior School Play which opens next week.*

*Yours sincerely*

*Philip Grutzrfer  
Principa*