



I AM LABOR AND I OPPOSE SAFE SCHOOLS



GREG DONNELLY

My opposition to the Safe Schools program has been, and continues to be, absolute. It is not because it is an anti-bullying program. It is because it was never an anti-bullying program in the first place.

Don't take my word, listen to the words of its co-founder Roz Ward: "Safe Schools Coalition is about supporting gender and sexual diversity. Not about celebrating diversity. Not about stopping bullying. About gender and sexual diversity. About same-sex attractive. About being transgender. About being lesbian, gay, bisexual — say the words — transgender, intersex. Not just be nice to everyone. Everyone's great."

These comments were made by Ward at a Safe Schools Coalition National Symposium in Melbourne in June 2014. She has not denied making the comments or sought to backtrack.

Indeed she has and continues to affirm them both publicly and privately. Now one

may be a little critical of Ward's sentence construction but she leaves no one in doubt about what the Safe Schools program is really all about.

Moreover, the ideologies behind the program are about as extreme as you can get.

Both sexuality and gender are placed on separate continuums that are subject to personal whim and fancy. Quite literally you can, through exercising your will, choose your sexuality and gender.

Some may argue, the ultimate exercise of mind over matter. Moreover, one's state at any point in time, to use the fashionable language, is "fluid". On both continuums, one can move along and change at will. If you think that I am exaggerating things, get yourself a Gender Studies 101 reading list or Google the work of Judith Butler et al.

I have never objected to a young university undergraduate choosing to enrol in gender studies units and studying these ideas to their heart's content. However, what I and many others object to is the indoctrination of our children in public schools with these ideologies and passing the whole exercise off as an anti-bullying program.

The children in our schools are a captive audience. For the ideologues behind the program it is as good as you can possibly get. A perfect foil; who could object to talking about anti-bullying and an audience forced to sit there and listen? In NSW we have a

particular problem regarding the Safe Schools program — the Education Minister Adrian Piccoli who has, and continues to, champion the program and refuses to acknowledge what it is really all about, let alone take the action he should.

Mr Piccoli has been using his office as Education Minister to run a protection program for Safe Schools from its inception up until the present time. So we have seen:

- IN February 2013, Burwood Girls High School sponsored a diversity day.

Without any notification to or consent from parents, drag queen Joyce Maynge addressed the school assembly. A number of young girls reported being upset and frightened by the appearance;

- DURING 2014 he dismissed concerns from parents about the content and links on the Safe Schools Coalition Australia website. The review commissioned by the Commonwealth government of the program (the Loudon Review) released in March 2015 determined that many resources and links on the Safe Schools

website were unsuitable for children and were removed;

- AROUND mid-2015 when news broke that the Safe Schools Coalition Australia website was promoting a book called The Gender Fairy to be used in primary schools, the minister was silent. A key narrative of the story is that it is up to children to decide where they are on the gender spectrum. As the Gender Fairy says: "Only you know whether you are a boy or a girl. No one can tell you.;"

- HE endorsed content changes to the Crossroads program. The program is a 25-hour course for all NSW public school children in years 11 and 12. The notes for teachers include the statement: "It is important for students to move beyond binary thinking or thinking in terms of opposites. They need to understand that gender is not fixed,;"

- HE endorsed the Education Department's Teacher Toolbox for delivering content relating to diversity of sex, sexuality and gender. The school resource urges teachers to "degender" their classrooms. Students are to be encouraged to think about sexuality in "non-binary" terms;

- IN July, the minister directed that the public schools listed on the Safe Schools Coalition Australia website be removed, thus denying parents ready access to establishing which schools were participating in the program;

- IN August at the Edu-



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Page 2 of 2

cation Budget Estimates hearing he tried to pretend he could not do anything about the Safe School program because it is a Commonwealth initiative;

- IN September the Minister absented himself from a debate in the Legislative Assembly regarding a 17,000-signature petition expressing a range of concerns about the Safe Schools program; and

- INSTEAD of answering questions regarding the program that were specifically directed to him by the Committee on Children and Young People that was undertaking an inquiry into the sexualisation of children and young people, he referred them to the Secretary of the Department of Education, Mr Mark Scott.

These are just a few examples of how complicit Minister Piccoli has been in imposing on our children in public schools these hardline sexuality and gender ideologies.

One thing is for certain. Parents are very unhappy about his ideological material being imposed on their children. It was never asked for, is not wanted and should be removed from classrooms forthwith. Mr Piccoli has refused to do it — in fact he has done the exact opposite. He should therefore be replaced by someone who will.

Greg Donnelly is a Labor MP in the NSW upper house and sits on the Standing Committee on Social Issues and Committee for Children and Young People

