



JEWES TOGETHER IN HARMONY

**ALEPHMELBOURNE**

GAY • LESBIAN • BISEXUAL • TRANSGENDER • INTERSEX

[www.aleph.org.au](http://www.aleph.org.au)

Committee Secretary  
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

November 21 2018

To Whom It May Concern,

Aleph Melbourne has since 1995 existed to look after the interests of people in Melbourne's Jewish community who have been marginalised due to their sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status.

We take particular interest in the area of discrimination from within the Jewish community against LGBTIQ people. In recent years there have been many steps forward in our community in breaking down barriers to our acceptance, but we still see intolerance of LGBTIQ people raise its head frequently.

Most disturbingly, we recently became aware of an Orthodox Jewish school in Melbourne that terminated the employment of a Jewish teacher on the basis of their transgender status some six years ago.

This news came to our attention through an article in the New York Times on October 18 2018 "[In Some Australian Schools, Teachers Can Be Fired for Being Gay](#)". Whilst the teacher and their general circumstances were personally known to us, the fact that their employment had been terminated was news to us.

We understand the teacher had experienced a significant degree of distress due to the possibility of having their employment terminated, just for being transgender, and as a result the teacher did not feel safe presenting in their affirmed gender at the school for some time prior to their employment being terminated.

---

**Contact details**

[contact@aleph.org.au](mailto:contact@aleph.org.au)  
0417-595-541 (Michael)  
[www.aleph.org.au](http://www.aleph.org.au)

**Postal address**

Unit 2/24 Winbirra Parade  
Ashwood VIC 3147  
AUSTRALIA

**Aleph in brief**

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.

A letter sent to Tanya Plibersek MP by the Australian Council for Jewish Schools, [referenced in Hansard on October 16](#), declared:

*"None of our schools discriminate against staff employed or to be employed on the basis of their sexuality, gender or sexual preferences."*

It is likely this statement was made in good faith, but its accuracy is questionable given at least one Jewish school has discriminated against at least one teacher on the basis of their gender.

We urge you to reject all exemptions, current and future, that permit discrimination against any student, student's parents/family, or staff of a school, on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, intersex status, or relationship/marital status.

It is imperative that students and teachers/staff feel safe to be themselves at school, are not prevented from expressing their innate characteristics or personalities, and are not treated any differently from heterosexual/cisgender students and staff.

Sincerely,  
Michael Barnett  
Co-Convenor