



The Hon James Merlino MP

Deputy Premier  
Minister for Education

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Dr Jennifer Strauss AM  
Graduate Women Victoria  
2/12 Tollington Avenue  
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Dear Dr Strauss

Thank you for your letter outlining your support for the Andrews Labor Government's commitment to the Safe Schools Coalition program.

We know that safe, supportive and respectful learning environments lead to many positive impacts for students, including improved academic outcomes, increased confidence and improved attendance. National and international research shows that a supportive and inclusive school environment is essential for all students to be healthy and happy and achieve their full potential.

I am delighted that 264 Victorian government, independent and Catholic schools have already signed up to the Safe Schools Coalition. In the 2015-16 State Budget, the Victorian Government increased its funding to Safe Schools by \$1.04m to ensure every Victorian government secondary school is a member of the Safe Schools Coalition by the end of 2018.

In Victoria, we are committed to, and pride ourselves on, having safe and inclusive schools that cater for the diverse needs of our community. Everyone can play a role in creating a safe school environment for all students free of all forms of discrimination and bullying, and the Victorian Government will continue to lead by example promoting important initiatives such as the Safe Schools Coalition program.

Again, I'd like to thank you for your support in our campaign to stamp out intolerance and all forms of homophobic and transphobic bullying, so that all students have a right to a safe and inclusive environment when they go to school.

Yours sincerely

17.5.16

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