

31 October 2018

Bishop Michael Stead  
Bishop of South Sydney  
PO Box Q190  
QVB Post Office NSW 1230

Dear Bishop Stead

I write to request a formal apology from the Anglican Church and your Coalition for Marriage campaign partners for the harmful and damaging conduct during the marriage equality postal survey.

Rather than defend and argue for your view of so-called "traditional" definition of marriage, you chose instead to target the most vulnerable members of the LGBTIQ community with full page advertisements and television commercials attacking families with same-sex parents and trans and gender diverse young people.

LGBTIQ mental support services recorded a spike in requests for support and high levels of distress during and after the campaign. I quote the findings of the 2018 Senate Inquiry report documenting this:

"5.8 The government was warned by mental health experts and same-sex marriage advocates that a public vote on same sex marriage could have deleterious effects on the LGBTIQ community. It is now clear that those warnings were well founded.

5.9 This committee has received evidence from a large number of submitters about offensive and misleading behaviour and material that has been deeply distressing to the LGBTIQ community and highly divisive within the community more broadly. It is the committee's view that this behaviour and material is a direct result of the postal survey process and would not have occurred had the parliament simply debated and voted on legislation to legalise same-sex marriage.

5.11 The committee believes that much of this material was offensive not by accident but by design. It doubts that the authors intended to contribute constructively to the public debate, and instead aimed to cause offence and hurt to others. It is disappointing that the government gave them an excuse to do so by pursuing a public vote on the question of same sex marriage.

5.12 The committee recognises the hurt and distress experienced by much of the LGBTIQ community during the course of the postal survey."

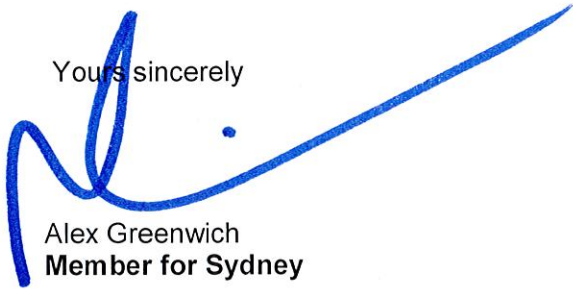
It's deeply troubling that instead of seeking to repair the church's relationship with the LGBTIQ community, whom you knowingly harmed during the postal survey, your church is now seeking the power to legalise bullying against LGBTI students and teachers in non-government schools.



We are all have a stake in an inclusive, fair and equal society, yet your conduct during the national conversation on marriage equality sought to disrupt and undermine that. I ask that you now repair that damage by apologising to the LGBTIQ community and LGBTIQ families. Ahead of the one year anniversary of the postal survey, the church and your Coalition for Marriage partners could acknowledge this harm in an apology and financial support for support services that help those hurt during the campaign.

I would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you to discuss this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'A' followed by a long horizontal stroke that extends to the right.

Alex Greenwich  
**Member for Sydney**