

9th February, 2024

To the Productivity Commission

Tax Deductibility of Gifts to Religious Instruction in Public Schools

I strongly oppose removing Religious Instruction in Government Schools as a Deductible Gift Recipient (RIGS). In valuing the part played by philanthropy in our society, and the government's desire to increase philanthropic giving, the Productivity Commission must recognise that more than a fifth of donors are from faith based communities to areas that benefit our society in general through organisations and activities such as schools, hospitals, aged care, counselling and addresses poverty or financial stress through housing, financial and employment advice and food and clothing relief. Faith communities in schools are volunteers who not only contribute to student well-being, but also teach faith lessons that promote outward looking to the welfare of others, and generosity in time and money as part of a life of faith. This influences the next generation for good and so benefits our society. Personally, my faith drives generous giving to all types of charities, both domestic and foreign aid, secular and religious. Deductible Gift Recipients (DGR) status allows me to be more generous.

Faith lessons also teach the value and equality of all people at a time when students might be particularly vulnerable to radicalisation. The lessons promote living peaceably in a multicultural society and social acceptance and fair treatment of all Australians. Faith lessons in Special Religious Education contribute positively to our society and DGR status should not be removed so this can continue.

I appreciate your consideration of my objection.

Susan Mary Sheldon