

6 February 2024

For the attention of: **The Hon. Prue Car, MP**

Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Federal Productivity Commission Draft Report, recommending removing tax deductions for donations made to charities providing Special Religious Education (SRE).

It is my concern that this change would seriously impact:

- Australian youth and ongoing youthworks in general
- churches that utilise the 'RIGS' (Religious Instruction in Government Schools) tax deductible fund for a portion of their offertories
- existing tax deductibility for gifts to school building funds
- ultimately, the character of the nation.

As an expat who has lived in Australia since 1989 -- my admiration for how seamlessly various organisations within the country work in harmony to maintain the future strength of Australia -- has only grown over the years.

The character of a nation is, of course, a complicated, delicate, costly and many-faceted endeavour. One significant contribution comes from the shared values nurtured by SRE in schools.

SRE is a quiet and behind-the-scenes undertaking, led and managed by a dedicated group of volunteer instructors. These leaders represent Australia's largest and most successful, year-round teaching 'army' who take students through nearly 10,000 practical lessons each week!

Their combined efforts work to help guarantee free speech, respect for diversity and acknowledge the value of religious freedom for all Australians.

### **Conclusion**

The benefits from SRE efforts depend on the support of your office to ensure continuing freedom and support for Religious Instruction in Government Schools (RIGS) through tax deductible donations. Without these tax benefits, providing these classes would not be possible and the benefits for Australia would fade away. Please consider supporting these efforts.

I thank you in advance for your consideration of my submission. Darlene Richard