

Ronald Bruce York

17th January 2024

Productivity Commission

Australian Government

Canberra ACT 2600

Subject: Opposition to the Removal of Tax Deduction for Donations to Special Religious Education in Public Schools

Dear Productivity Commission,

I am writing to express my deep concern and opposition to the proposed removal of the tax deduction for donations to Special Religious Education (SRE) in public schools. As a concerned citizen who values the diverse educational opportunities available to our community, I believe that Religious Education is an essential and intrinsic part of a well-rounded education.

In New South Wales, Religious Education is not only a valuable educational component but also a statutory obligation. The inclusion of Religious Education in our public schools ensures that students are exposed to a broad spectrum of knowledge, fostering an understanding of various belief systems and contributing to the development of cultural competency.

Religious Education plays a crucial role in instilling moral and ethical values, which are essential for the holistic development of individuals. These values, often rooted in religious teachings, form the bedrock of a strong and cohesive community. By providing students with the opportunity to explore and understand different religious perspectives, we contribute to the promotion of tolerance, respect, and understanding among diverse groups within our society.

It is important to recognise that the establishment of educational systems, including the requirement for education, was first championed by the Christian Church in the 19th Century. The dedication to education by religious institutions has been instrumental in the advancement of knowledge and skills, leading to the progress and prosperity of our society. Removing the tax deduction for donations to SRE in public schools would not only undermine the historical significance of religious contributions to education but also jeopardise the continued provision of valuable educational programs.

I urge the Federal Government to reconsider this proposed change, taking into account the rich history and ongoing positive impact of Religious Education in our public schools. The tax deduction for donations to SRE serves as an incentive for individuals and organisations to support the continuation of these programs, ensuring that our

students receive a comprehensive and well-rounded education. The Principle in the Draft Report is that the Fund must be of Public Benevolent Value and the above argument clearly support this Principle for SRE in Schools owing to the significant impact of Religious teaching for the general public and for children in their formative years.

Thank you for considering my perspective on this matter. I trust that you will take into account the broader implications of removing the tax deduction for donations to SRE and make decisions that align with the values of our diverse and inclusive society.

Sincerely,

Ronald Bruce York B.Com, CPA,FCIS FGIA JP DM