

Submission to Productivity Commission on Philanthropy
Maintain the DGR status of organisations that provide
religious education in government schools
Closing 9 February 2024

Dear Commission

I've taken the time to read your Overview Report, so I trust you will take the time to read and consider my submission.

I financially support the teaching of scripture and allied activities in NSW public schools via Scripture Union, a well established and trusted organisation. The work is chronically under-funded compared to need, relying entirely on donations, but has wide community impact across the state, especially where delivery of such services occurs in small and remote communities.

Your report observes 'religious organisations play an important role in many people's lives and communities across Australia.' With such an important role surely it makes sense to maintain DGR status for such organizations, which are part of our community. The aim is to build community, not choke it.

Christianity has informed, guided and inspired our society for good in the areas of: education, help to the poor, health care and social justice to name a few. Why are you attempting to discourage the foundational beliefs on which such good things owe their existence ?

Thus there is a resounding case to continue the DGR status of religious education in public schools. To paraphrase your Principle 1 for accommodation within the DGR system. *There is a rationale for taxpayer support because the activity generates (irrefutable) net community wide benefits and is otherwise (chronically under-funded) undersupplied by the market.*

If the aim is to increase the level of philanthropy in support of the Government's goal to double philanthropy by 2030, then maintaining (in fact growing) DGR status for religious education in public schools makes a lot of sense as part of the overall approach. It also helps public schools provide an opportunity for religious education that many private schools (which receive government funding) offer as an inherent part of their curricula.

Accordingly your findings are inconsistent (at best) with your own report and consequently I request you revise them so as to maintain the DGR status for organisations that provide religious education in public schools and help government achieve its goal of doubling philanthropy by 2030.

Yours faithfully

David Wainwright

5/2/2024.