

Submission to Productivity Commission on Philanthropy

I have read elements of the Draft Report and am encouraged to see the focus on increasing philanthropy in Australia. We are a wealthy nation, and it is incumbent on us to share our resources with those less fortunate.

My concern however is that the report appears to take issue with only two sectors currently enjoying DGR status, namely SRE in public schools and private school building funds. It might be argued that both instances are ideologically based – why should religion be taught in public schools and that private schools are already benefitting sufficiently from government funding.

The 2021 Census showed that over 50% of Australians claimed a religious affiliation, with Christianity being the major share of that. Many studies have shown the value of children being educated in a faith (whether that be Christianity or another faith) and that requires resources and people to be trained up. Many people donate money to this end as well as time. I have donated money to such causes for many years and the availability of a tax deduction has been a significant factor in what I have been able to donate. There is little doubt that should this proposal proceed, SRE in public schools will be severely hampered. There is no question that my own donations to both SRE and school building funds will reduce very materially.

I find it difficult to understand why the Commission would propose that SRE be one of two areas that would suffer under these proposals given such enormous public support for religion, while other activities of much more niche nature retain DGR status.

In summary, I urge the Commission to retain the DGR status for SRE, but also for private school building funds.

Yours faithfully

Garth Rossler