

I am writing to express my concern over the removal of the DGR status for SRE and school building funds.

I attend an Anglican church in an area that is rapidly growing. My children have attended government primary schools, and private secondary schools. My husband and I have businesses that cater for the care of wildlife and bush regeneration, and people in the community who need specialised accommodation. These experiences demonstrate my commitment to contributing to society, and in particular, young people.

I understand the value of financial donations, and support various organisations. Some of these organisations rely heavily on a DGR status. If this was to be removed, then these organisations would struggle to help those in the community that they are able to currently reach.

I also understand the need for the maintenance and improvement of buildings particularly in private schools. I am fortunate to be able to send my children to private secondary schools, and happy to contribute to providing better and safer buildings for them and others in the community. This would also be gravely impacted if the DGR status was removed.

I am a trained secondary teacher, however during the week, I give most of my time to working with primary and younger aged children. I am a volunteer SRE teacher, having taught 8 classes a week for the last couple of years, in our local primary schools. I also coordinate the running of SRE in these schools. As such, I have seen the valuable contribution that SRE can make to children and families. It has been a pleasure to see children start in kindergarten SRE and teach them through to year 6. Their growth during this time is more than just academic and emotional, it is also spiritual, which is especially important given secondary school is so different to primary. Through SRE, we are able to reinforce and strengthen positive outlooks and friendships, provide avenues for children to explore concepts, and connect young people with other like-minded groups.

If DGR status was removed, these valuable additions to children's lives would also be removed.

As a Christian, my giving habits and time are driven by my faith. Regardless of the hours that I volunteer each week, my financial contributions would be far less effective if DRG status was removed. This would be a tragedy.

I would also like the government to appreciate the impact that faith communities have on society – increased donations, increased time volunteering (SRE teachers are the largest year-round volunteer group in Australia), to just name a few.