

Thank you for taking the time to read this comment on the proposed changes to the deductible gift recipient system by the Productivity Commission.

I would strongly encourage the Commission to consider the inclusion of religious related activities and charities that would reasonably fit with the government's objectives.

Key activities that should remain included in the DGR system are activities which would be Religious Instruction in Government Schools (RIGS), such as scripture classes, and private religious school building funds.

The draft report proposes to include activities that would focus on "generating community-wide benefits" (pg 186) and also exclude activities that would show a risk that donors would be benefiting financially or materially from their giving to the charity organisations/activities (pg 182).

The draft report has failed to recognise the benefits of RIGS and private school building funds, to the Commissions objectives and reforms to the DGR system. Both generate community wide benefits and do not explicitly provide benefits to the donors.

Religious/faith education, such as scripture classes, provide free community wide benefits to all students who freely choose to join. The draft report fails to recognise the diversity of beliefs within Australia and is perhaps even discriminatory to propose that religious and faith education does not provide community wide benefits.

It must be noted here that over 60% of Australians profess a religion – the draft report is truly out of step with our country!

Faith communities must be recognised in schools, the draft report has failed to see them. Children and teenagers who profess catholic, muslim, jewish, protestant or even indigenous faiths and many others, receive teaching and encouragement to their own faith/belief, which is held at the centre of their own life. The values and teachings passed on through the classes shapes Australian culture, and generates citizens shaped by their faith, who act in love, generosity and duty for their communities.

The teaching of religion, such as Christianity, encourage wellbeing, social cohesion and purpose of individuals, even if only the values are passed on!

It must be noted that the majority of Scripture classes (RIGS) are run by volunteers, and some who receive stipends from community members to support their religion's teachings,

As a Christian myself, my faith informs every part of my life, and Scripture classes (RIGS) played a key role growing up in highschool and primary school. Teaching me the ethics of loving all people of all kinds, to serve my community, to work diligently, to act honestly. All which inform my work now as an engineer. Tell me what subjects in school can teach that?

Lastly, religious schools are one of the fastest growing education sectors in this nation, which shows the value placed on it by faith communities (and non-religious citizens) on this service. Why should citizens who freely give to build infrastructure for education for the people of this nation be penalised, when the government so struggles to look after its own public schools?