

Brief comments received (200 to 399)

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200	I support religious education in schools it sets a moral standard that children would not get on the TV of anywhere else
201	Dear Karen, This is a very short sighted govt objective, I am qualified from my own experience to comment on such. I attended a public central school for my whole 13 years, got very good marks in both school and higher scholl certificates, band 1. My parents could not afford private education, so upon exit from school, I got a construction apprenticeship, and have been in my own business now for 30 years, in which time I have paid out approx. 1million in income tax. Had I have done a private school education, I would have fulfilled my life dream of being a barrister, or Q.C, I would probably in this same time contributed 20 million to the ATO. Please don't be so short sighted, and cut off the hand that feeds government, persons who are privately schooled today, will be the backbone of taxpayers in a decade
202	SRE was an essential and key part of my growth and development to be committed to giving back to Australian society and living in a way that seeks to care for others. It helped me develop a faith which saw the love of Jesus shape how I seek to love and dignify others. Without SRE this would not have been the case. SRE depends on giving and to add barriers to this giving would severely hamper the beneficial influence that SRE has on young people and our wider society.
203	The deductible gift recipient (DGR) system in Australia allows certain charitable organisations to offer tax deductible donations to their donors. This tax deductability of donations has been (rightly) used by various faiths in Australia. Hindus are in the process of establishing their first School and removing this tax deductibility status will stop Hindus from availing of the benefit that have been availed by other faiths in the past. I strongly request to continue current provision. That will help establish a school project which will encourage people from all religions to follow the path of mutual respect, service to humanity & freedom of expression.
204	Dear PC, I write imploring you to not remove DGR from SRE teaching and religious education. The Christian faith generates a large volunteer force in Australia. Arguably, SRE teaching is the largest volunteer group in Australia. Further, I would argue that Christians donate a large amount of other time and money to Australian charities. My experience in remote rural towns is that Christians constitute a large proportion of volunteer groups like school P&C's, RFS, Meals on Wheels, Mobile Community Pantry, visiting the elderly, Lions, etc For example, we had a new volunteer arrive at our RFS Brigade recently and this Thursday told me he, though not identifying as a Christian, attended SRE at the local public school and so knew that serving was good for the community. These are charities that benefit all people of all religions or no religious affiliation. In the governments effort to double giving by 2030, supporting SRE in public schools and religious education is crucial. My own faith community runs kids clubs, youth groups, mobile community pantry, craft groups, seniors services, mens and womens groups in our local community each week. These are attended by Christians and non-religious people. I would estimate that a combined 85 hours of voluntary labour goes into these groups each week. The basic tenet of Christianity is 'it is better to serve than be served,' like Jesus Christ modelled (Mark 10:45). It would be bewildering for the Government in its efforts to multiply giving to hinder SRE in public schools and religious education when Jesus is the greatest of example of loving and serving others known to humanity. Let's promote SRE in schools, religious education, religious

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	charities, and religious school building works. As a Christian I would give approximately \$10,000 per annum to DRG charities. It is the DRG status that allows me to give generously. I would volunteer approximately 5 hours per week to our local community (Kootingal Moonbi RFS), on top of being the local church minister who serves the local community in other ways. Thank you for reading this comment.
205	I am very disappointed that the federal Productivity draft report recommends the removal of tax deduction for donations made to religious charities in support of SRE. I support over sixty charities every year, among them Youthworks and SRE. People of faith tend to be more generous in their support of charities and I consider Youthworks and SRE one of the most, if not the most, important charities that I support. I have seen for myself the benefits which SRE provides for children in Primary Schools. It delivers important psychological benefits which purely secular education cannot match. In Particular it has great benefits for multicultural interaction and social acceptance. Faith is for everyone, and all children should have the opportunity of hearing about it and accepting it, if they feel called to do so. Not only do SRE programs support SRE teachers, but in some instances they support chaplains. I have taught for many years in schools and I have seen for myself the difference which having an SRE teacher or school chaplain makes to students of all ages. Faith based classes give students spiritual support, confidence and a moral compass. I am very disappointed that the draft report exhibits such an anti-religious viewpoint.
206	I wish to support the ongoing DGR status of financial contributions to Special Religious Education. As a person of faith, specifically a follower of Jesus, I seek to serve others and thereby demonstrate God's love. This I do through volunteering and also through giving to charities, both Christian and secular. I am able to give more when the donation I make is tax-deductible and I will tend to give to funds and projects that are tax-deductible for this reason. My volunteering roles have included being a girl guide leader, Kairos prison ministry and teaching Special Religious Education (SRE). All of these roles seek to build a strong moral foundation in the lives of the participants. SRE and SEE is an opt in program that meets the needs of many families from a range of different religious, secular and cultural backgrounds. It helps promote the psychological well-being of the children in developing their knowledge and spiritual growth, making them aware of a higher being to whom they can be thankful and from whom they can receive help and making them aware of the importance of loving their neighbour as themselves and how to do that in practice. SRE also builds community and sense of belonging and guidance on how to care for ourselves, others and our society as a whole. The SRE program allows children to ask questions and grow in their understanding so that they can make their own decisions regarding their own faith and actions. SRE teachers undergo intensive training before they can commence and are required to do a refresher each year. SRE teachers follow a carefully designed program and required to adhere to the program and are not permitted to include other materials, e.g. songs or video clips, that have not been approved by the approving body. I believe the Australian Government should acknowledge the value of faith communities to the fabric and health of Australian society. This recognition should be demonstrated by maintaining DGR status for SRE and school building funds.
207	My motivations for philanthropic giving are driven by my religious beliefs ie all I have has been given by God and therefore I should share His gifts with others. This has meant my giving is broadly based covering a lot of different areas such as outreach; medical research; humanitarian; volunteering and museums for example. Although I do not give as much now as when I was employed full-time, I still give regularly to organisations that have an impact on people and life. What a shame this Commission seems to be targeting the very area that shows people what giving is and looks like in this day and age of selfishness. SRE is a very important part of a child's grounding and as such, I believe any donation to the providers of such material should remain tax deductible.
208	My faith is a major factor in philanthropic giving. For the government to remove options that align with my faith as deductible gift recipients saddens me. The recommended removal of SRE and private school building funds from DGR discriminates against the philanthropic benefits of both on the grounds of faith.

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209	<p>I am happy to read that 'The Productivity Commission has been asked to analyse motivations for philanthropic giving in Australia and identify opportunities to grow it further.' Ironically, I came to this site because I read that the draft report issued by this same commission recommends that the tax-deductibility of donations to support SRE be revoked! How can removing that form of support 'grow philanthropic giving'? If anything, SRE should be targeted for extra support since people of faith are about 25% more likely to donate money and time than their secular counterparts.</p>
210	<p>I write particularly to oppose the removal of tax deductibility for donations relating to the teaching of special religious teaching (scripture) in schools and for school building funds. I strongly believe that apart from teaching about God, scripture also promotes good living and law-abiding citizenship. At a time when our media is full of reports of child and youth crime I feel that the teaching of Scripture should be strongly encouraged and certainly not put under financial stress by removal of the tax-deductible status of gifts.</p>
211	<p>I look to give to causes that will help children develop in healthy and mature ways to become the future parents, workers and leaders in our country. Giving Tax deductibility in the Special Religious Education field has allowed me to give more effectively into this area and as a part of children who benefited from their SRE lessons and as a teacher in the SRE field i see consistently the value of faith communities in this space. It has also allowed me to give towards the provision of resources for these classes including manuals and student workbooks not provided for by the education department. Tax deductability drives the value of each of these dollars further. Schools are not only about "knowledge and skills" they provide a place for students to develop their worldview. Research shows that faith is a major influence in healthy and mature worldviews that effect the way we treat ourselves and then one another. It is good for us to think deeply about these very big issues and prtecting the provision of this through Tax deductability will help us continue to provide a safe and relevant place to do this.</p>
212	<p>1. Funding by voluntary donations, of the delivery of SRE in high schools by salaried, professionally qualified teachers. This is tough work in some schools, but the teachers we support have accepted the challenge and seen some very encouraging results, especially in kids with significant personal issues. Typically these kids have NOT been from a "church background". SRE has also given opportunities for development of student leadership and teamwork, under the teachers' guidance, initiatives and organised activities. This has benefitted the whole school community at times, by positive "peer pressure" through example and valuable inter-relationships. The giving for SRE by our small local church has been generous for many years. I am concerned that this would probably have to decrease if the tax deductibility were discontinued. 2. Funding "Christian" Schools by voluntary donations. Several of our children and grandchildren have benefitted greatly from attendance at these schools, both in rural and city areas. The rural school was begun while we were involved, and was only made possible by the massive donating of land, supply and operation of construction equipment, manual labour, and other involvements by a significant number of people in the regional community. After it had been going for a couple of years, there were quite a few requests from parents for enrolments of their children who were having problems in other schools (eg bullying, no friends, academic non-progress, personality struggles, etc). These requests were mostly not from "church " families and have included some from indigenous backgrounds. The results of their enrolments were often very encouraging. This was particularly due to the "pastoral care" emphasis and staffing in the school. Now, a generation later, several have become valuable citizens. So any scheme to restrict the voluntary funding of such schools would seem to me as counter-productive for the community as a whole, especially in country centres where such resources are not often available. We also value the excellent contributions to the progress of our other children and grandchildren who have and are attending Public Schools. Its a matter of "horses for courses", just like the parallel provision of public and private hospitals. Why reduce these great alternatives by restrictive taxation policies?</p>
213	<p>Dear Karen RE: 'Future Foundations for giving ' draft report I'm concerned about the recommendations for DGR status being scrapped for non-gov primary,secondary,childcare,aged care and religious groups . This concern to us as grandparents that have grandkids attend independent school that benefits from DGR.</p>

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	From reduced giving or unable to donate to the school. My worry is it will bring in complications if this recommendation is adopted and interfere with the kids learning and academic potential.
214	I wish DGR status to continue for Christian charities. There is an enormous amount of good work done by Christian charities. Christianity underpins our democratic society. In addition, SRE makes a valuable contribution to young lives and to the Australian people. My own faith drives my giving habits in money and time. DGR status enables these charities to optimise their work
215	SRE is invaluable in our schools and should be supported with tax deductible status. SRE enables children and young people to explore their beliefs and understand their faith. This helps them love people and serve their community. SRE also upholds the different backgrounds and ethnicities of people that teaches us how to live as a multicultural nation. My faith motivates me to give my time and money to my community. The government should honour the contribution that SRE makes to our society. The government should support private school building funds rather than remove their status for tax deductibility. This means people can contribute to their community in an easier way.
216	Regarding the Productivity Commissions reported DGR changes I submit the following: 1) The report fails to acknowledge the immense contribution that religion makes to Australian society and to philanthropic giving and volunteering. 2) It recommends that charities that exist for the advancement of religion should continue to be excluded from DGR status, while the range of eligible charities should be significantly expanded. 3) It recommends that charities that exist to provide religious education should no longer have DGR status — this would include support for SRE teachers. 4) It recommends that independent schools (including low-fee Christian schools) and religious education organisations should no longer have DGR status for building funds. 5) It would significantly increase the compliance and reporting burden on larger churches and other religious organisations. The Report implies that religion and religious education do not give community-wide benefits. This is demonstrably untrue. Religion, especially Christianity, makes very significant positive contributions to Australian society. Religious organisations form the largest sector of charities in Australia and attract a proportionately larger number of volunteers than other charities. There is good evidence that SRE delivers psychological benefits to students, promotes thick multiculturalism and social acceptance and reduces the risk of student radicalisation. I personally give \$100 per week to a DGR Christian Hospital for severely disabled children which would be under threat if this changes taken place. Please reject it.
217	Thank you to my friends locally who chose to walk to raise money for Scripture teaching in Schools noting that this is helpful for the wellbeing of students
218	I'm a full-time volunteer for an Australian charity for 42 years. For the last 14 years I've been fundraising for capital works. So I speak from experience. I'm glad more philanthropy is wanted in Australia. This draft report raises good points. It identifies where most giving comes from – so we should be smart and amplify that. Or at least, leave what is working, and add to create more philanthropic activity. This draft report points out that “giving tends to increase with income”. It states: “The increase in giving is largely driven by people who earn a high income . . . in short, fewer people are claiming a tax deduction for giving, but those who do are giving more.” It has long been shown that income is increased by education. To give is therapeutic to the giver. But I wasn't taught that at the public schools that I attended in Sydney (Beaumont Rd) and Canberra (Melrose High). Nor at the Canberra University that I graduated. I was taught that by the religion who's aims I now espouse, and encourage others to do the same. To contemplate stripping DGR status from religious schools, or schools in general, is self-defeating, if the objective is to increase philanthropy, since philanthropy is taught by those very institutions. And the proof of that is observed by the commission – more giving occurs to one's alma mater where that institution incorporated such teachings. To help is also a universal urge in people; but it must be also said that that urge has been stifled by too many offers of help turning out to be other than purported. I am very proud of the charitable work that our volunteer ministers do – none of which is given tax deductible status. Our record in Eugowra after the flash flood

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	of 2022, speaks for itself. Ask the President of the CWA of that town. Our volunteer ministers' record in the Gospers Mountain bushfire also – check with the Hawkesbury Council, or the RFS. We've sent volunteers to tsunami sites in Indonesia; earthquake sites in Christchurch, flooded areas in Lismore. And we don't begrudge what this has cost us, at all. Our parishioners only get a tax deduction for donations for buildings where we can teach people how to survive better; more productively, all built on the principle of helping others. And that is why I know that taking away tax-deductible status for capital works of registered charities is counter to the purpose of increasing giving in Australia.
219	I am a special religious educator (volunteer), an SRE curriculum creator and a professional senior primary school teacher. I am very concerned that there is a proposal to remove the DGR status from almost exclusively religious charities. Why?? You should be considering more support not less. Removing the DGR status will have a negative impact on 10,000 or more volunteers, most likely displacing many because the charities they work for are funded by generous, hard working Australians who give because they see the benefits of faith based religious education and faith based charities. These do good for communities, the homeless, the hungry, the hopeless, the struggling, sick, families, children and refugees. As a professional teacher, I see Special Religious Education across Australia as paramount. Our mandate is to educate the 'whole' child. The one aspect of a child the professional teacher does not educate is the spiritual aspect. Religious education provides this with high standards of training in place for volunteers. The children are the beneficiaries. It is a time when values such as Hope, peace, resilience, compassion, love for neighbours, respect and tolerance are taught and discussed. If you remove the DGR status for faith based charities, training and curriculums will suffer as the donations of the philanthropist will be greatly compromised. As a curriculum creator, I can only meet the highest standards through the giving of generous donors and philanthropists. Without this support my resources will be compromised as will the employment of camera operators, editors, script writers, actors, dancers, musicians, recording studios, fancy dress hire, film footage creators and local takeaway food outlets. Removing the DGR status will greatly compromise this great work. This would be a sad loss to the community. On another note, Faith-based education is in huge demand across in Australia and growing rapidly – as a school teacher myself I can clearly see this is what our communities want and are actively choosing. It would be an extremely foolish decision to slow the growth and success of our faith based schools because many of our public schools are already bursting at the seams and are not sustainable without an overflow of students into the faith based schools.
220	Please keep tax deduction status for religious institutions. It would be discrimination to stop this in light of any applicable philanthropic contributions for any worthwhile purpose
221	I understand that the Commission wants to increase philanthropy in Australia, yet it is endeavouring to remove the tax deductions for donations to Churches/building funds. I fail to see how that “computes”?? Historically , Churches have been the most philanthropic organisations!
222	As this is my Religion being effected , I feel we all have the right to donate to our churches as a tax deduction, to assist in our Churches endeavour to help more of it parishioners. We all need to receive the much needed counselling we all deserve, especially since the pandemic when so many Australians have lost their businesses and loved ones due to covid and the excessive lock downs ! To have to pay tax on our donations means i wont have the financial wear with all to do so!! I suspect many of us will be in the same situation ! We as Australians are one of the highest taxed countries in the world now to remove our tax deductibility puts yet more financial strain on a population already stressed! We are currently in a financial crisis, so it makes no sense to take away more from the people who in my opinion need more spiritual support than ever before!
223	Hi, I wish to make a comment in support of retaining the tax-deductible status for Religious Education in public schools. I am a registered teacher. The opening statement above states that the Productivity Commission's mandate is to identify opportunities to GROW philanthropic giving, so why would you look to remove the tax- deductible

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	<p>status for programs that are already delivering a service to the community? I would guess that it's more to do with ideology than lack of acceptance of the program. In my city (Rockhampton), the uptake from parents is over 70% - and that's with an 'opt-in' enrolment, not an 'opt-out'. Clearly, parents and caregivers see the benefit. Religious Education presents values to children - values that the majority of families consider important. It also introduces spirituality; whether ideologues agree or not, we all have a spiritual side. The position of removing tax deductible status for this program within a drive to increase giving across the community makes little sense, unless of course, it's a deliberate ideological attack on Christianity. I'm interested to hear an alternative scenario. Ian Belz</p>
224	<p>I don't see why the commission is looking into changing the law concerning special religious education and for taxation deduction giving to school building funds. Students are required to learn about Aboriginal belief system about the dream time and other aspects with creation. Religious people have the right to teach their religion to their children at school and there should be a freedom if other students would like to go and listen to their teaching to give them a chance. Why is the commission looking into it? What harm has it done? What is the commission afraid of? As a voter I am very upset about this. I will vote against this government if they put this change with regarding to this freedom. Concerning giving to private schools for building funds: Why is the the commission and government against private schools? Doesn't this help the education and government spending, it means more is happening for less dollars because private individuals are giving to this rather than the Government via taxes. Why are you going to take away the tax deduction with regard to giving to private schools? I find this appalling and I will be very upset with this current government if they bring changes to it. I will vote against them if this happens.</p>
225	<p>Religious institutions do a lot of good work in the community. They rely heavily for this on donations. It has been an Australian TRADITION to get a tax deduction for donations. I am a financial adviser and I have a lot of clients who make donations to various religions and are very keen to get the tax deduction. If there was not tax deduction they would not make as much a donation; if at all. I know this because I know their motivations intimately. The work the religions do would not be able to be done with out donations. It is the more wealthy who make more donations than others and they do this for the tax deduction. Without these donations the burden would fall back onto the tax system for the work to be done by governments. The less wealthy people in the community pay tax and so this burden would fall to them also. These are the current governments constituents - the people who voted for the current government. Taking away tax deductibility for donations to religious institutions is going to have a negative effect on the people who are helped by the religious donations; people who really need help.</p>
226	<p>I financially support the Anglican Youthworks because of their teaching of SRE in public schools and training provided to youth. I personally came to understand the Christian faith deeper through teachers who taught me the stories about Jesus from the Bible as a child and have attended their youth camps many years ago.. As an adult I was trained through a Youthworks course to be a volunteer SRE teacher and until recently I have taught their curriculum over the past decade in some local schools. I hear that such faith-based programs will no longer be supported financially through the tax system which I find highly disturbing. The SRE curriculum has been so beneficial for my own understanding of life and how to live in our community, that I would be disappointed if our volunteer work and financial support is neglected or abolished by our governments.</p>
227	<p>I have been made aware that the Australian Gov Productivity Commission has undertaken a review of the DGR status recommending that charities that provide religious education be excluded. As a long term, conscientious donator and supporter of Religious Institutions and the cumulative good these institutions provide for our society, I am appalled to be made aware of such a potential stance from our government. There are too many virtues to list in this brief comment, but one does not need to look too far to asses the benefits of a religiously inclined society. Drug Reform and Moral Standards being two key points. I urge the powers that be, seriously consider the potential good of Religious Institutions and the benefits from those who are willing to offer financial support with their tax exempt donations.</p>

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228	<p>Thank you for your work on this report, and thank you for the opportunity for being able to speak into this. Two major concerns for me are the proposed changes that would remove the DGR status for giving to SRE and faith-based school-building funds. Surely SRE and faith-based schools provide community-wide benefits? That SRE promotes social cohesion, thick multiculturalism and benefits young people psychologically has been well-researched. Further, faith-based schools enable the government to educate people at a lower cost compared to government schools, and already the government does not provide all the capital required for school buildings in faith-based school compared to government schools. Why make the it harder for faith-based schools to do a job that community is benefitting from? I suggest that there may be some lack of awareness on the part of the Productivity Commission as to the great benefits that communities of faith have to the wider community. People of faith are much more likely to volunteer their time and give financially to socially beneficial programs. I would earnestly plead that these inadequacies be addressed before the report becomes final.</p>
229	<p>Deductible Gift Recipient status should NOT be taken away from religious institutions! Religion is the comforting place for many Australians of all denominations. Indeed, Hospitals, Aged care facilities, and a long list of associated religious institutions, have provided ongoing charitable works and help across all facets of Australia life for a very long time. I believe it is short sighted to deny the help from our various religions by cutting out a large portion of their funding. Doing so would create a huge burden on the Government of the day, as more help would be asked of them! I say, don't let short sighted anti religionists create a chaos in our society, which surely would ensue, if this ill-thought-out idea was to be instigated. Thank you.</p>
230	<p>If the purpose of the report is to inform on means of increasing philanthropy, I fail to understand how curtailing specific avenues of philanthropy will accomplish that. Additionally, selecting religious organisations for specific exclusion seems discriminatory. Why should organisations advocating for spiritual advancement be hindered where organisations advocating for education or climate change would not?</p>
231	<p>I believe in the overall purpose of philanthropy and any activity that works to increase it is of value to our community and society. However, the specific recommendation of removing deductible gift recipient status for religions, building funds and education is in my opinion an incorrect action that will have a widespread negative impact on philanthropy in Australia. Individuals of faith and faith organisations do a lot of good in our society and being able to claim a tax deduction on donations directly influences the amount an individual is willing and able to give. I personally give more to a variety of faith based organisations - my own faith and others like the Salvation Army and this change would reduce my personal philanthropy not increase it. I believe promotion of philanthropy and the good it does is better than reducing any tax benefits associated with it.</p>
232	<p>It has come to my attention that the Commission has drafted a report to remove DGR for charities that have DGR status for school building funds or to provide religious education in government schools. I am against this proposal. I personally volunteer my time once a week to provide scripture teaching to primary school aged children. Scripture teachers are the largest year round volunteer group in Australia. We are able to provide quality curriculum and resources because others donate. Please allow the DGR status to remain. I love my time with the children and feel I am teaching them good morals and am building community.</p>
233	<p>At a time when the Australian education system is under immense pressure to educate the young leaders of our future, it has never been more important to ensure that schools receive as much financial support as possible to provide the resources necessary for this to occur. Donations to schools via school building funds will encourage and ensure that parents, carers, stakeholders and community members who are able, can willingly donate funds to schools to assist in building up local schools. The ability to claim these donations as tax deductions is a primary motivator in encouraging these donors and the removal of this DGR status will significantly and negatively impact</p>

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	the ability of Australian schools to continue to grow and adapt to the needs of our students. We urgently request these factors to be considered in the Commission's upcoming determination.
234	I give to those organisations who use my donations to genuinely help others. I give to so that others lives might be bettered. I give because I cannot do the work that these mainly volunteer workers do. And I am happy to do so. It makes me feel that I am helping in some small way to make the world a better place!
235	Tax deductible giving needs to not only be maintained but increased. People should have se power over where their money goes,which charities they want to support. Tax deductible giving is a key aspect of Australian Democracy!
236	I regularly contribute to my Church as I believe that I have a duty and obligation to help others in the way that I have been helped. If we can reach more people and increase their well being, productivity, happiness and general morality, we have a better society in which to live. Our aims are to create a world without crime and insanity and where people are free to reach greater heights. Surely donations to such a cause should be tax deductible...
237	My church is providing philanthropic services for the wider community and I would like to contribute as much as I can thru their activities. Having this tax deductible allows me to donate more and assist more people in need thru my church. I have faith that my church is using my money in a manner I approve. Therefore it is my preferred avenue for donations. I know my church does not take large percentages for administration and the money is being used majorly for philanthropic purposes.
238	I was interested to see the definition of productivity and why it matters- "Why does it matter? Productivity has been the driver of long term improvements in living standards. For example, the average Australian worker produces about as much in one hour today as it took a full day's work to produce at Federation in 1901. This improvement in productivity has allowed incomes to rise even while working hours have fallen and Australian households have been able to enjoy more leisure." If I were a professional manager and I have been..my advice would be- There are certain successful actions that contribute to this trend-Education is certainly one of them -we need to do everything we can to foster education to increase this trend. Having educational facilities/ buildings that are less drain on the public purse, paid for in part by donations from Australians under the "eligible gift recipient" status need to be further encouraged (not diminished) to continue and grow this trend. Please continue this benevolent structure that is helping to improve our societies productivity. Thankyou very much the opportunity to comment. What a great feature of the democratic process. Yours Very Sincerely Shaun Carbins
239	Hi, I am one of many who donate funds to an organisation helping impoverished children around the world and knowing that the Government supports this by offering my donation to be tax deductible, makes my already financially strained position a little less intense. If these new laws which remove my ability to claim the donated amount are implemented, I am not sure that I will be able to continue to provide the donations and this will be only to the detriment of the child I sponsor where on average, are either sold off to slave labour or married at a very young age which she is currently at. Please reconsider this path you are sending us on as there should be incentives to help others in this world and not burdens. Thank you.
240	Christian communities and teachings at schools, provide children with a Christian education that they most likely do not receive at home. This influence helps deter criminal behavior and behaviors similar. We are already seeing on the news how youth crime has risen and is imploding within the community. Theft, home invasions, assaults and even murder are the direct result of lack of moral teachings in our homes and schools.
241	Hi, Churches, church schools, and SRE programs in public schools add a great deal to the flourishing and prosperity of our society. The care these institutions give to individuals, and to their well-being is hugely significant and cannot be underestimated. For people to have such care and function as a healthy human-being is of great

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	<p>service to the wider community. Many adults and kids who are a part of these communities are blessed with the friendships and real love these places provide for them. Sometimes these people fail to find such care anywhere else. To remove funding and concessions for these institutions will have a deep effect on society as a whole. To remove DGR status will have a very costly effect to the good ordering of society.</p>
242	<p>Australia has always been a country where the volunteer and donors put their hands up to support a Charitable organization to raise funds. But this proposal to remove tax deductible giving will affect school, churches, community radio stations etc. that are supported by volunteers and donations. Our volunteers want to see that what they do, no matter how small or large, is making a difference.</p>
243	<p>Dear Commissioners, I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. I think it is good that you are looking at expanding the system to cover more initiatives such as animal welfare, but I am quite concerned that to achieve this you are taking away DGR status from almost exclusively religious charities – which will have a huge impact on important initiatives such as school building funds and religious education in government schools. Australia is the most multicultural nation on earth, and approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on an ideology that religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that one of the best ways to promote social cohesion is through religious education in schools – putting extra pressure on this education, and its teachers, is not a quality decision for Australia, and will have long term ramifications. The Religious Education teachers in Australia represent the largest weekly group of volunteers in our nation. In a report where on the one hand, you are articulating the government’s goal to double giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030, on the other hand you are removing privileges and help from faith communities that represent a huge proportion of the people who will help you, and are helping you right now, achieve that goal. This is not a wise decision. On top of that, school building funds are to have their DGR status removed, because back in the 1950s when DGR status was established, no government support was given by other means and now it is. This is not a good enough reason – unless the government is going to actually front up and supply ALL the capital expenditure needs of these schools (which I’m sure they won’t) why would you then seek to penalise both the schools AND the private citizens who are donating to these schools and funding education? Faith-based education is the fastest growing sector of education in Australia – which tells us that this is what our communities want and are actively using. So why make it harder for this to happen and be successful? In short, you are penalising both the fastest growing sector of education – which is predominantly privately funded by citizens – and are also putting undue pressure on the largest weekly group of volunteers in Australia, and risking a lower level of social cohesion as a result. I think we, and you, can do a lot better than this. In light of everything I have stated above, I completely reject your presumption that these initiatives are of little “community-wide benefit” and would encourage you, even if you don’t have a religious belief yourself, to understand that your report is discriminatory and minimising in its ideology – and that this will damage Australia as a result. Thank you for using your authority to uphold what is good. Yours sincerely, Nadine Flanigan (Mrs)</p>
244	<p>I write in support of Special Religious Education in NSW public schools and MAINTAINING DGR status for SRE. SRE makes a valuable contribution to young lives and Australian society. It delivers positive benefits to students’ mental health and wellbeing, strengthens the multicultural fabric of Australian schools and reduces the risk of student radicalisation. Removing DGR status for financial contributions to SRE would significantly impact the ability of organisations to provide quality supports, such as training and resources, to the many volunteers who give their time to teach SRE. By MAINTAINING DGR status for SRE you will be recognising and valuing the contribution faith communities make to Australian society.</p>
245	<p>Given the parlous state of education in this country, mainly due to lack of money, it would seem to be a retrograde step to remove incentives for people to be rewarded when giving donations to projects which tax payers will otherwise have to pay for.</p>

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246	To whom it may concern, Surely this isn't another attack on the founding principles of western democracy? This sadly sounds like anti-christian sentiment to me, but what do i know as a mere peasant. We are told to expect persecution as christians and this certainly sounds like something similar in a non violent way. Very clever strategy actually, over time, chip chip chipping away towards a Godly society. Congratulations!! In case you don't fully comprehend my comment, of course removing the tax deductible status for SRE is NOT an opportunity to grow philanthropic giving. Regards, Larissa
247	Please keep Australia a Christian country. Our children need to have the opportunity to hear the gospel. It's all about loving one another and how to be a good citizen. Allowing tax deductions will encourage people and businesses to give.
248	Please keep donations for this apply as it encourages people to give which allows Christian education to being delivered at it's best.
249	I would like to express my opposition to proposed changes to the tax status of, in particular, religious/faith based charities. I am an SRE teacher of over 20 years experience, plus I am currently on the Committee of another organisation (COBIS) which voluntarily funds the placement of workers in public local high schools. Over all that time, I can see the real benefits of having Christian based volunteers in our local schools. Many Christians willingly give of their time because they wish to make a difference to the young people of our next generation. I note that the Productivity Commission wishes to greatly increase philanthropic contributions and i think that is a good idea - Governments can only provide so many services to our community. However it seems totally illogical to exclude Christian based organisations by revoking their tax deductible status. I fear more of the usual and current anti-Christian agenda being at play here. Tax deductibility obviously encourages people to donate more readily but if that incentive is gone, the likelihood is that less people will be supportive and involvements will reduce. I am not looking for any personal benefit from this - I really love teaching SRE to the students and that is purely voluntary; however, with my role with COBIS (Churches of Blacktown in Schools), this is funded by tax deductible donations. It provides three workers to be in some of our local high schools. The testimonies from many of the school staff and students as to the great and positive impact made by these workers shows why they need remain in these schools. They are providing not just Christian input - in fact most of their time and energy is put into counselling, and student welfare where they are especially important in many of these areas where students are disadvantaged. I will be very disappointed and upset if the tax status is changed. Please reconsider this idea Productivity Commission - people wish to support in a charitable way many of our schools and I don't want to see additional barriers put in the way of helping our society. The Government will see negative impacts in the long term if this measure is adopted. Thank you for reading this and may God bless and guide you in your decision making.
250	My faith drives my giving habits (money and time), and the value of tax deductibility (DGR status) for my financial contributions I extremely value the contribution SRE makes to young lives and to Australian society I strongly support maintaining DGR status for SRE and school building funds, and I want the Government to recognise and value the contribution faith communities make to Australian society.
251	Please keep SRE donations tax deductible. This encourages matching financial support with volunteer and paid SRE teachers who are doing an invaluable job in spreading wholesome Christian values in the community. Those donations are unlikely to be given to other philanthropic causes as they are faith motivated for that specific cause.
252	I feel that SRE is vitally important to be available in all public schools. Today's generation are crying out for something to hold on to to give them a basis for living, to give them hope and a basis to reach for when things are tough. Too many youth suicides in this world for kids with no where to go to find a faith to help them hold strong.
253	I am very disturbed to see that the draft report recommends removing tax-deductibility for gifts towards organisations which support SRE. this is particularly harmful for those organisations which maintain the SRE curriculum. this material is constantly upgraded to keep it current and relevant and to address feedback from the DoE. We

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	need to have the best possible materials to work with and I am extremely disappointed to see this financial support being removed. These organisations do not make money from the sale of their materials. Costs are kept at a minimum to make them affordable for everyone. Donations are used to finance upgrades and new materials.
254	SRE in govt schools to be retained. Volunteers give students encouragement to cope with life through faith. Should be valued and recognised. Faith community brings benefits to wider community. Life being so expensive faith communities' provision of food, cheaper clothing through opshops, fetes etc and free counselling invaluable. Please retain the DGR status for religious charities.
255	Faith-baaed charities and education providers, and the communities they serve so well, contribute so much to building a strong nation - far more than just economic benefits - it would be a tragedy for them and their many vulnerable clients (including children, the disabled, and elderly) to be harmed by this short-sighted tax grab. I urge the Commissioners to resist the temptation to appease those who do so little for others by harming those who do so much.
256	As one who has been an SRE volunteer in NSW Public Schools for over 40 years, it is a matter of great concern to me that the Federal Productivity Commission Draft Report is recommending the removal of tax deductions made to charities in support of SRE. The excellent resources I have been able to access are heavily subsidized by tax deductible donations.SRE provides an important opportunity to strengthen young people's personal identity and moral and ethical development
257	I support SRE in public schools and give financially so that this occurs. I would not like to see the tax deduction for giving to SRE removed. I give financially to those companies that have a clear and direct positive effect on the well being of children, both mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually. I understand SRE to benefit students in public schools in all these areas, and removing the tax deductible status will impact the scope of SRE in public schools. I give to companies and charities that are ethically sound and accountable to their members. I give to companies / charities that will impact children and the wider community with positive spiritual benefits, so there will be truth and safety within our communities.
258	SRE is encouraging to children the base message of love & hope for children being exposed to many fearful theories eg climate heating, confusing promotions sexualising children & other frightening details they are exposed to.SRE teaching of prayer & a loving God always helps children to be calm & have courage in a troubled world & is a positive teaching for children .please don't take that away from them Narelle
259	I commend the desire to increase philanthropic giving in our society. This can only serve to strengthen our community. I would encourage the continued Tax deductible statuses of SRE in state schools in NSW. SRE continued to provide a opportunity for students to explore issues and values that flow from faith. There is ample evidence that a positive engagement with faith can greatly benefit the well-beings of individuals, families and communities. It would be unfortunate if changes to the DGR discouraged philanthropy in this one area.
260	Please consider the value to the community and society of Special Religious Education (SRE) in schools. Kids that participate in SRE learn that life is important and that we can all contribute to helping one another. That is, kids get a more balanced view of the world and are less likely to become radicals. SRE instruction teaches kids that everyone is important, and breaks down racial barriers between ethnic groups. Australia is multicultural, and needs people to have this worldview so we can all live peacefully together. SRE is run by church organisations which are charities. If you remove Tax benefits to these charities, then SRE may be reduced or disappear altogether to the detriment of kids growing up and the detriment of society as a consequence. Religious charities are very beneficial to society, and should be given every assistance to operate by favourable taxation considerations. Please do not remove tax benefits from religious charities.

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261	I'd like to comment that my faith is the primary motivator for my philanthropic giving. God has given us so many good things, it only makes sense to pay it forward. Also, supporting SRE teachers in is a high value. SRE helps kids experince a holistic education, prevents radicalisation (better a trained teacher than youtube) and promotes wellbeing through relationships and safe spiritual practices like prayer.
262	I believe that SRE Should be tax deductible. SRE provides children with a Prospective that is important When they are making life decisions. It is important that a child is given a full view of the different views that are being presented in our society today so they can make informed decisions for themselves. That's why think SRE should tax deductible.
263	The work performed by Christian Schools and Special Religious Education is under attack by this Bill. Christian Schools perform a great service and often provide where Public Schools cannot. The benefits of SRE have been investigated and are outlined in the Department of Education yet this work could be severely compromised if people no longer give towards the cost of resources etc that help this function effectively in public schools.
264	My faith drives my giving habits (money and time), and the value of tax deductibility (DGR status) helps me to give generously. I so value the contribution SRE makes to young lives and to Australian society. I want the Government to recognise and value the contribution faith communities make to Australian society, and therefore request the maintaining of the DGR status for SRE and school building funds.
265	Please do not remove the tax deductibility for SRE support. It is clearly non-profit, and SRE provides psychological benefits to students, promotes multiculturalism and social acceptance and reduces the risk of student radicalisation. Without this blessing, it will further impact SRE in schools.
266	I give donations to support SRE in schools because SRE promotes good morals and helps children with self esteem because they are being taught that there is an outside power, God, who loves them unconditionally. We need tax deductibility otherwise the activity books needed for lessons would be harder to buy. Some people would not give as much.
267	Thank you for giving us an opportunity to comment on this matter , In our society we seldom have a means to try and influence our government and the giving of our money is one way for individuals to let you know of subjects that we feel are important to us. Philanthropy by individuals should be encouraged as it is an easy way for govt to have an indication that it is doing what the public wants especialy used along with the social conscious of responsible decision making . I would guess that it is used by more older people (with a lot more experience than young people) and can be used as a means of helping govt use their money wisely .
268	It is the right of parents to decide on the type of education they want for their children. This is not the responsibility of government. It is the responsibility of government to assist parents in this task by directing educational resources fairly across all education sectors to make this possible. By law SRE is allowed to be taught in schools. Contrary to the report, parents do value SRE. The negative spin on SRE in this report is regrettable but not unexpected. The government provides no funding to assist SRE teaching therefore it should be a right for parents to receive tax deductions for their commitment to such teaching. I, Sylvia, spent 40 years of my life as an SRE teacher and found the work very rewarding in teaching children Christian values including tolerance, non violence and respect for others. Neville has spent 20 years as both teacher and principal in Christian schools. It is only in the last few days, after 20 years that I had a message of thanks for the inpu I had into a child's life whose life had turned around as a result of his schooling. We are also concerned about the recommendation to remove existing concessions available to school building funds. Whilst the draft report recognises the valuable contribution parents make to philanthropy and wishes to see this contribution increase we cannot understand why you would seek to remove tax deduction status from SRE and private school building funds. Please understand that SRE teachers are the largest group of volunteers in our Australian community. This

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	would appear to be yet another attack on Christian teaching in both government and non government schools. Our country is grounded in the Judeo Christian ethic and is the basis for our constitution and laws. There is no doubt that there is a left wing marxist push to remove Christianity from our society. We are asking that the government do everything possible to stop this continuing attack on Christianity in general and SRE and building funds in particular.
269	I fully endorse the Productivity Commission`s analysis of philanthropic giving as it is a huge part of the provision of social welfare and takes a big load off the government`s shoulders. We must not forget history and the mostly beneficial influence of the church and as an extension of that, teaching religious education in schools has had on our society. In teaching the basic principles of Christianity to young people we instil into them an understanding of selflessness, and in due course they will be challenged to be generous with their resources when they are earning. You will notice my preference to not tick the aboriginal/Torres straight Islander box. If you want a starting point to reduce the divisions existing in Australia today, start here and not include these classifications in any communications.
270	As someone who is involved in an organisation that helps connect local Christian based communities with the well being of local schools both public and private I just wanted you to know that it is important to continue to do all that we can to take care of the most vulnerable in our schools. Recently a public school principal shared with me that they have had to let go of many support staff in their school because of the funds being needed to pay teachers. He was deeply thankful for the community funded chaplain in his school through tax deductible giving. This community funded chaplain is funded by local people committed to a local community primarily sourced through local churches. I am learning that the idea of less organisations with DGR status means more redirected philanthropy to a more centralised approach does not motivate philanthropy or streamline philanthropy. People give to causes not institutions. The more causes the more philanthropy. Grow it don't streamline it.
271	To Whom it may Concern, I would like to plead with the government not to affect the funding of SRE,scripture in schools, as these children need to learn about faith in God. The parents don't teach them, and it is proven that people with faith survive all that life has to throw at them. Please help us to tell the children and help the people who volunteer to teach to continue in this valuable work. Yours sincerely, Heather Grinter.
272	For the past 30 years I have donated thousands of dollars and thousands of volunteer hours to help my Church. I have personally helped hundreds of individuals find a greater understanding of themselves and gain tools to lead a better , more productive and happier life. I ask the Australian Government Commission not only to maintain the current status quo but to rigorously assist religious organisations to fulfill their efforts to be a calming force in our society; to give people hope and bring greater spiritual freedom to those seeking to improve their lives through these religious organisations.
273	Dear Commissioners, I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. I think it is good that you are looking at expanding the system to cover more initiatives such as animal welfare, but I am quite concerned that to achieve this you are taking away DGR status from almost exclusively religious charities – which will have a huge impact on important initiatives such as school building funds and religious education in government schools. Australia is the most multicultural nation on earth, and approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on an ideology that religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that one of the best ways to promote social cohesion is through religious education in schools – putting extra pressure on this education, and its teachers, is not a quality decision for Australia, and will have long term ramifications. The Religious Education teachers in Australia represent the largest weekly group of volunteers in our nation. In a report where on the one hand, you are articulating the government's goal to double giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030, on the other hand you are removing privileges and help from faith communities that represent a huge proportion of the people who will help you, and are helping you right now, achieve that goal. This is not a wise decision. On top of that, school building funds are to have their DGR status removed, because back in the 1950s when DGR status was established, no government support was given by other means and now it is. This is not a good enough reason – unless the government is going to actually front up and supply ALL the

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	<p>capital expenditure needs of these schools (which I'm sure they won't) why would you then seek to penalise both the schools AND the private citizens who are donating to these schools and funding education? Faith-based education is the fastest growing sector of education in Australia – which tells us that this is what our communities want and are actively using. So why make it harder for this to happen and be successful? In short, you are penalising both the fastest growing sector of education – which is predominantly privately funded by citizens – and are also putting undue pressure on the largest weekly group of volunteers in Australia, and risking a lower level of social cohesion as a result. I think we, and you, can do a lot better than this. In light of everything I have stated above, I completely reject your [presumption that these initiatives are of little “community-wide benefit” and would encourage you, even if you don't have a religious belief yourself, to understand that your report is discriminatory and minimising in its ideology – and that this will damage Australia as a result.</p>
274	<p>I teach SRE at 3 local public schools, and have been teaching SRE for over 20 years. The community in which I live is a relatively small community, so It's not unusual for me to meet the students (with their parents) at the local supermarket or playing fields/beaches, and I find it encouraging that the parents value the SRE classes and my efforts as a SRE teacher. The children are pleased to have SRE classes and are very welcoming as I arrive at the school and in the classrooms. Teaching SRE is a delight because of the relationship that develops between the children and myself, and the opportunity to answer their questions about the Bible, God and faith. My profession as a physiotherapist, did not equip me very well to teach classes of children and I am very grateful for and reliant on the resources, curriculum and training provided by GodSpace. The quality of these is excellent and provided by professional educators, and I am therefore concerned that any move to remove tax deductibility status from SRE will have a serious and deleterious affect on their funding and subsequently on the provision of SRE at a local level. Evidence gathered by Zehavit Gross and Suzanne D. Rutland in "Study of Special Religious Education and its value to contemporary society" shows that SRE : 1. Delivers key psychological benefits to students 2. Promotes thick multiculturalism and social acceptance 3. Reduces the risk of student radicalisation I am aware that SRE funding is supported by others in the faith community and the fact that their donations are tax deductible enhances the financial support that is so vital to the continuance of SRE. sincerely Wendy Job</p>
275	<p>I am an SRE teacher as well as a regular classroom teacher. I have worked in government and private schools for over 35 years. I have a Masters in Special Education and a Graduate Certificate in Divinity. I believe that SRE funding ought to be a tax deduction as scripture benefits children's faith exploration and allows children to broaden their view of the world and themselves. Also Faith Education ought to encouraged in a safe environment and government schools can monitor what is taught in a religious curriculum which is transparent. Therefore any attempt to weaken the delivery of SRE through the potential problem of funding resources ought to bring disapproval.</p>
276	<p>I with to support maintaining the DGR status for SRE and school building funds and would like the Government to recognise and value the contribution faith communities make to Australian Society</p>
277	<p>I would like to oppose the withdrawal of government support for SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION & TAX DEDUCTIBLE GIVING TO SCHOOL BUILDING FUNDS. These new and specific reforms that have been proposed to remove the tax deductibility of donations for religious charities, through school building funds and religious education in government schools will have a massive negative impact for all people of faith, and the wider community. I am hoping sincerely that my voice can help stop this from happening.I am a member of our local Presbyterian church and I donate to several religious charities and school building funds, and I value greatly the DGR system for these financial contributions. I also deeply appreciate Special Religious Education within Government Schools, and the largest weekly volunteer labour force in Australia that enables this to happen – I am asking the government to maintain or increase their support for this, not reduce it. WE SHOULD BE REPRESENTING THE INTERESTS OF FAITH COMMUNITIES IN AUSTRALIA I want to see faith communities – both their initiatives and their volunteers – valued and recognised within the DGR system. Faith communities bring massive community-wide benefits that should never be compromised.</p>

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278	<p>would like to oppose the withdrawal of government support for SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION & TAX DEDUCTIBLE GIVING TO SCHOOL BUILDING FUNDS. These new and specific reforms that have been proposed to remove the tax deductibility of donations for religious charities, through school building funds and religious education in government schools will have a massive negative impact for all people of faith, and the wider community. I am hoping sincerely that my voice can help stop this from happening. I am a member of our local Presbyterian church and I donate to several religious charities and school building funds, and I value greatly the DGR system for these financial contributions. I also deeply appreciate Special Religious Education within Government Schools, and the largest weekly volunteer labour force in Australia that enables this to happen – I am asking the government to maintain or increase their support for this, not reduce it. WE SHOULD BE REPRESENTING THE INTERESTS OF FAITH COMMUNITIES IN AUSTRALIA I want to see faith communities – both their initiatives and their volunteers – valued and recognised within the DGR system. Faith communities bring massive community-wide benefits that should never be compromised.</p>
279	<p>I don't recall ever donating to a school's building fund, but I am grateful for the way religious schools help stabilise an over-stretched Australian educational system. It would be a shame to introduce anything that disincentivises contributions to such schools. I hope the 'deductible gift recipient' system remains in place.</p>
280	<p>In short, you are penalising this sector of education – which is predominantly privately funded by citizens – and are also putting undue pressure on the largest weekly group of volunteers in Australia, and risking a lower level of social cohesion as a result. I completely reject your presumption that these initiatives are of little “community-wide benefit” and the report is discriminatory and minimising in its ideology – and that this will damage Australia as a result.</p>
281	<p>I support maintaining DGR status for SRE and school building funds. My giving is driven by my faith, and the value of tax deductibility for my financial contributions. SRE has proven benefits (see report 'Special Religious Education and its value to contemporary society', by Z. Gross & S.D. Rutland). I have seen firsthand through my children and their friends how positive relationships are demonstrated through SRE teachings. SRE is recognised by many teachers and Principals as being so helpful to their students and they see the positive impact SRE has in teaching important social values such as respect and empathy. Once again, I am in support of maintaining DGR status for SRE & school building funds.</p>
282	<p>The removal of tax deductions for donations to SRE is ill advised. Most schools and the community welcome SRE and recognise the benefits of its teaching of social equality, harmony, forgiveness and kindness to all. Please do not remove this important asset to schools.</p>
283	<p>I am encouraged by the governments desire to continue and increase philanthropic giving in the coming years. I believe this is a admirable goal. However, I am greatly concerned by the desire to remove DGR status of giving towards Special Religious Education in public schools. SRE has had an incredible influence on children in our schools for several decades and has contributed towards a strengthened psychological stability in many students as they are encouraged to consider the significance of faith as one of the pillars underpinning a life that contributes towards a healthy and flourishing society, where a sense of worth and wellbeing are integrated into the fabric of their being. Please consider maintaining the opportunity to support this service to the community by continuing to provide the DGR status to charities that support SRE in public schools.</p>
284	<p>I understand a recent Productivity Commission Draft report advises the government to remove the tax deductions for donations made to religious charities in support of SRE, in the hope that this will help increase philanthropic donations to other charities by 2030. SRE provides many benefits to the school community in all areas of learning, with psychological benefits, social acceptance, helps literacy and an understanding of history and art. People of faith , are 25% more likely to give to charities in general. If</p>

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	people are passionate about the benefits of SRE they will continue to give to SRE, but if there is no tax deduction they will have less money to give to other charities and general philanthropy may be less rather than more.
285	please do not remove funding to SRE in schools! Why would you remove the teaching to be kind to one another, care for others as you care for yourself, respect your parents and teachers, help others and be generous and understand that every person has value because God says so! SRE teachers are wonderful role models and a different adult in the child's sphere of influence, another adult who is trustworthy and caring. Please keep SRE as a worthy charitable cause.
286	We are a Nation wide Organisation. We strongly stand against the removal of tax deductions for donations made to religious charities in support of Special Religious Education (SRE). If implemented this would cripple the efficacy of all churches which utilise a 'RIGS' (Religious Instruction in Government Schools) tax-deductible fund for a portion of their offertories. SRE 1. Delivers key psychological benefits to students 2. Promotes thick multiculturalism and social acceptance 3. Reduces the risk of student radicalisation We strongly support maintaining DGR status for SRE and school building funds. The government should recognise and value the massive contribution all faith communities make to Australian society.
287	My motivation to give my time or money to others stems from my Christian faith foundations. Why would you want to remove support from SRE programs across the country that teach these same principles to the next generation?
288	I am concerned about the proposed changes to charity rules and removal of deductible gift recipient status for Christian school building programs and the Support of Special Religious education in schools. I saw a significant benefit to my children from the Special religious education in Public schools and know that these teachers are either volunteers or completely funded by donations. The Local Christian school in my area has significantly impacted the overall healthy development of students and is also receiving a significant number of enrollments from children who have had difficulty in State schools. This is a needed educational option in our community. I personally have contributed financially through donations and also in a voluntary capacity for both these community services. I think it is important for government to continue to support these for the good of Australian society in general.
289	As a person who has sought to promote a healthy diverse and positive culture in Australia, over the last five decades, I am keen to speak in favour of maintaining the current tax deductibility status for direct giving to charities. So many fine organisations operate with very low levels of government funding support. They provide a huge range of support for our community that if left to government funding would lead to huge increases on the tax burden for the average Australian. The people making these donations are often taxpayers. The tax deductibility status assigned to charities assists these tax payers to support organisations that benefit the wider society by allowing them to give more for the same impact on their personal budgets. The USA has very generous structures in place for charity donations. Australia, while having some of these structures is not as encouraging as the USA. Rather than ramp back tax deductibility benefits from charities, I would like to see the scheme expanded. It would also be great to see the culture of philanthropy grown in our country, which benefit so much from people of goodwill who volunteer, or do important work at lower rates of remuneration, than they could receive if they worked for the government or private enterprise that has a profit making philosophy. I urge those undertaking this review in the productivity commission, to examine the situation holistically, and without prejudice.
290	Tax deductibility encourages more individuals donations & business sponsorship to support school community causes which frees us government funding to go to other more pressing needs.

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291	The SRE program in public schools is the only formal avenue available to students to be exposed to a Christian world-view and be given any opportunity to grow their faith. If monetry donations to Christian faith groups for the purpose of funding SRE has tax deductability removed, I fear the monetry support of SRE will be effected, and may cause the collapse of SRE in public schools. This would be disasterous. Australia still upholds freedom of conscience in faith matters.
292	Hi I am a dad of two 'almost teenagers' and are currently working as a paid SRE teacher in the NSW government High School system. In this job I work 3 days at three different High schools on average per week. To do this I earn a little over \$30,000 per year before my expenses and spend a lot of time outside the teaching space preparing lessons, visiting churches, training, and attending to a range of various other matters. I do this work for several reasons. A key motivation is offering students the opportunity to do something different to enrich their lives at school and work within the context of an agreed curriculum to allow students to consider God and His love as detailed in the Bible. Studies have shown the benefits of this in our young people's lives. For example, the 'Study of Special Religious Education and its value to contemporary society' by Zehavit Gross and Suzanne D. Rutland) has shown SRE 1. Delivers key psychological benefits to students 2. Promotes thick multiculturalism and social acceptance 3. Reduces the risk of student radicalisation In short, I believe for these and other benefits SRE students can receive, and the setting SRE teaches work in, that any form of giving to support this work should be encouraged. SRE teachers are clearly not high-income earners and donations to support their work are hard to come by and should not be taxed or discouraged so this work can continue. Kind regards, Greg Brooks
293	I have taught SRE in various nsw primary schools over all the grades for more than 20 years.Over all that time,the school principal, teachers , parents and students welcomed and encouraged me because they could see the benefits of SRE in their school.We teach and try to model ; putting others first, always doing your best, taking responsibility for your words and actions, being kind, patient, respectful and encouraging to others.Removing SRE from nsw schools would be a serious mistake and have long lasting , detrimental effects on the students,schools and communities.Our schools in nsw were founded on religious education and it has been an integral and significant factor ever since.Nothing else gives the students such a sense of worth and purpose.
294	SRE makes a valuable contribution to young lives and to Australian society. Philanthropy DGR must be maintained, to ensure that we teach the younger generation the truth, as we have been commanded to do. Australian government should be in fear and trembling on judgement day when JESUS returns. !!!
295	Hi I am a Father of 4 beautiful children, I am a Christian and put a high value of Christian Values. I am sending my eldest child to a Christian high school and intend sending all my children to Christian high school after they finish primary school in the public system. Christian Values such as Love, compassion for others, peace and forgiveness are values that should be pushed and preserved within our school system, I believe removing the charity status of of these organisations will hinder and holt the ability for this message to be present to our children. It would also significantly decrease my financial ability to send my children to our desired private high school. I ask the commission to reconsider removing the charity status of these organisations. A community build on Christian Values will be set up to grow, prosper and flourish. Remove this status and remove this message from our communities and watch crime and violence increase. Please look into the benefits of Christian faith and values within our communities. Check this study for the Uk. https://humanjourney.org.uk/articles/health-benefits-of-christian-faith/ Regards Joshua Brown
296	SRE (Special Religious Education) is a nonprofit, non-denominational organization run by trained volunteers and supported through the generosity of folk who want children to succeed in life. The community based goals of SRE fall well within the philanthropy guidelines for DGR. There are many good news stories about Scripture in Schools, here is just one from our local area: After one weekly SRE class where the teacher had been explaining to the children that they were valued and loved by God a little girl came up to the scripture teacher and asked, "Does God really love me, because my parents always tell me that I was a mistake!" The teacher assured her that yes, God truly does love her. This student had been doing very poorly at school and was extremely introverted. Almost overnight her little life was turned around. Her grades

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	improved dramatically, and her outlook improved out of sight. If only for this one child Scripture made a difference, it would be worthwhile. Sadly, there are many kids who need to know that they are loved and while this may be the parent's responsibility, schools need to reinforce the values and morals of students to prepare them for life and SRE helps to provide this.
297	Hi, I am a person of faith and give my time and money. I recently completed SIX years as President of the Emu Park Men's Shed. Fortunately their Constitution has a six year limit on their Executive. Special Religious Education to students is voluntary but well supported by most parents. It is proven to provide Key psychological benefits to students. Promotes understanding and acceptance of multiculturalism and others who are different physically and culturally. Certainly reduces the risk of student radicalisation Quite clearly removal of DGR Status for Private School Building Funds would severely and dramatically impact all student education and is a short sighted idea. I am told that in the Paul Keating Days or another PM (I am not Catholic by the way) funds or something was going to be taken from Private Schools. This idea was scrapped when Catholic Education said they would close their schools and direct students to State Schools. Make decisions for the best and in the best interests f all in the community. Cease funds to the Environmental Defenders' Office and dictate any and all funds to HAMAS be managed exclusively by Australian Government Aid Workers. PS I have two grandchildren attending a Catholic School in Mackay Qld
298	It is my experience that people will be generous with giving to causes that they see as beneficial to life and society. Where a person's individual finances are tight, tax deductibility becomes a factor in choosing between multiple options for their philanthropy. To selectively remove tax deductibility from some sectors and not others, in my opinion, may have the effect of removing the givers' options. This may be seen as a form of directing philanthropy to certain ideologies and away from others. In general, I do not see this as a valid role of government.
299	Dear Commissioners, I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. I think it is good that you are looking at expanding the system to cover more initiatives such as animal welfare, but I am quite concerned that to achieve this you are taking away DGR status from almost exclusively religious charities – which will have a huge impact on important initiatives such as school building funds and religious education in government schools. Australia is the most multicultural nation on earth, and approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on an ideology that religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that one of the best ways to promote social cohesion is through religious education in schools – putting extra pressure on this education, and its teachers, is not a quality decision for Australia, and will have long term ramifications. The Religious Education teachers in Australia represent the largest weekly group of volunteers in our nation. In a report where on the one hand, you are articulating the government's goal to double giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030, on the other hand you are removing privileges and help from faith communities that represent a huge proportion of the people who will help you, and are helping you right now, achieve that goal. This is not a wise decision. On top of that, school building funds are to have their DGR status removed, because back in the 1950s when DGR status was established, no government support was given by other means and now it is. This is not a good enough reason – unless the government is going to actually front up and supply ALL the capital expenditure needs of these schools (which I'm sure they won't) why would you then seek to penalise both the schools AND the private citizens who are donating to these schools and funding education? Faith-based education is the fastest growing sector of education in Australia – which tells us that this is what our communities want and are actively using. So why make it harder for this to happen and be successful? In short, you are penalising both the fastest growing sector of education – which is predominantly privately funded by citizens – and are also putting undue pressure on the largest weekly group of volunteers in Australia, and risking a lower level of social cohesion as a result. I think we, and you, can do a lot better than this. In light of everything I have stated above, I completely reject your [presumption that these initiatives

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	are of little “community-wide benefit” and would encourage you, even if you don’t have a religious belief yourself, to understand that your report is discriminatory and minimising in its ideology – and that this will damage Australia as a result.
300	Dear Madam / Sir; As a volunteer & regular donator over many years to both faith based and government based (eg SES) volunteer organisations, I am deeply concerned to learn that the Productivity Commission is considering withdrawing deductible gift recipient status from faith based charities, faith based school building funds and special religious education in government schools. This would severely reduce the level of funding and therefore work these organisations are able to perform. If your aim is to increase philanthropic donations and assistance then this is the opposite of what you should be doing! It seems incredulous that you would seek to alienate one of the largest sources of community assistance in this manner. I only have a finite amount of time and resources I can donate. Since I consider these faith based organisations essential and more important for the long term benefit of our community, I would be forced to reduce my support of government based organisations to try and assist the religious faith based ones for the loss of income that your recommendation would produce. Please reconsider.
301	I am deeply concerned with the motive behind the recommendation to remove tax deductible giving from faith based schools. It appears to be purely anti-religious and not philanthropic and certainly nothing to do with Productivity, the vast majority of faith based giving helps to improve communities. Why would you put more pressure on faith based schools when it is one of the few places that people go above and beyond to help others? The commission should be recommending that more religious institutions be allowed to have tax deductible contributions , not fewer.
302	The Draft Report recognises the invaluable contribution of philanthropy in Australia and signals the government’s desire to double philanthropic giving by 2030. HOWEVER, the ONLY Deductible Gift Recipients (DGRs) the Draft Report recommends REMOVING are for SRE in public schools and school building funds. This is despite the fact that SRE provides significant community benefits and has wide community support. SRE: Delivers key psychological benefits to students Promotes thick multiculturalism and social acceptance Reduces the risk of student radicalisation And people of faith are 25% more likely than their secular counterparts to donate money and 23% more likely to volunteer time. The idea the Commission seems to have that if you close down one tax deductible giving opportunity that people will redirect their giving to a different tax-deductible cause is misguided at best. Givers to SRE are cause- and relationship- driven – we give to what we are passionate about! I am company secretary for a company that raises funds to employ a scripture teacher in our local High School. I believe that teaching scripture to those children whose parents wish them to have it is valuable for those children and think that this proposal to discriminate against Christians in treating their charitable contributions as less important is of a very serious concern, and seems more like a policy that China would bring in and had no place in Australia. We should all be treated equally and not discriminated against because of our religion.
303	I have recently read that the Productivity Commission is recommending that faith-based schools and SRE teaching should have their DGR status revoked. I believe that faith-based schools and SRE have a vital input into our community that is of great economic as well as social value to our society. In many cases, the building of solid moral foundations in our children offers a kind of support to students that is desperately needed and not found elsewhere. Sometimes it is the faith-schools that are the last resort of those who are struggling overcome social disadvantages, and it is the charitable status that allows such support to be extended to those who need it most.
304	I would like to comment regarding the analysis by the Productivity Commission (Federal Government) to remove the tax deductibility for initiatives such as Special Religious Education in Government Schools etc. I believe this is another way that we can be moved away from basic foundations as a Christian Country. I am a volunteer as a mentor (part of a scripture team), in our local High School. It is a privilege to be a part of these teens' lives, when they are living in such a hard society where

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	<p>encouragement, worthiness and affirmation are almost nonexistent. Christians are generous and giving- a sign of sacrificial and unbiased love. Is this going to just affect Christians and Christian Schools? If so: this is discrimination! Volunteers (scripture teachers) are the largest volunteer group in Australia and need to be applauded for their commitment! I understood that our Constitution upheld our rights of freedom of choice and freedom of worship. Today when many people are struggling with inflation, interest rates and many other concerns, this move would make things worse. Is that what you want??? Please think again, as this may affect the whole army of volunteers across the whole of Australia.</p>
305	<p>I am extremely disappointed to read that the ONLY Deductible Gift Recipients (DGRs) the Draft Report recommends REMOVING are for SRE in public schools and school building funds. It is my belief that SRE provides significant community benefits to students. I am a passionate faith based giver to SRE and Christian Schooling both locally and in communities of poorer socio-economic means. Removing DGR status will impact my ability to give and the ability of those organisations to fund their programs that provide immense value to our communities. In a time when children and youth are feeling more overwhelmed, confused, depressed and unworthy, SRE and Christian schooling provide hope and value for these kids. • How your faith drives your giving habits (money and time), and the value of tax deductibility (DGR status) for your financial contributions • Why you so value the contribution SRE makes to young lives and to Australian society • Your support for maintaining DGR status for SRE and school building funds, and how you want the Government to recognise and value the contribution faith communities make to Australian society.</p>
306	<p>To the Productivity commission, In light of the current reports by the productivity commission to remove the deductible gift recipient status for giving to religious education in schools I'd like to make the below comments. • SRE/CRI programs in government schools have proven student wellbeing benefits and contribute positively to the school community • There is an intrinsic link between formative religious instruction in childhood years and religious service in adult years, and the community-wide benefits of this Christian service • The removal of DGR status for giving to religious instruction in government schools will significantly impact organisations responsible for the delivery of quality SRE/CRI programs • My giving as is motivated purely by my faith and not motivated by any financial benefits. It is mandated in the constitution in New South Wales that all schools must provide an option for Scripture education which is primarily funded via private philanthropic giving. The removal of such status which greatly impact the ability of these organisations to deliver these services which has been mandated by our state laws. It is my hope that the federal government sees the benefit religious education provides to our youth and society as a whole.</p>
307	<p>I greatly value the contribution SRE makes to young lives and to Australian society I support maintaining DGR status for SRE and school building funds, I want the Government to recognise and value the contribution faith communities make to Australian society. It is vital for children to gain a fully rounded education to gain insight into faith.</p>
308	<p>I'm so worried about what these suggested reforms will mean for Australia – and hope there is room within this process not just to comment on their outworking, but to change what they are proposed to be. Research shows very clearly that Religious Education provides strong community-wide benefits, it helps diffuse racial and religious tensions. It enables instruction to be within a monitored environment – as opposed to either be non-existent and fed by radical events in the media, or for education to be outworked by radical content online. I'm sure you will probably say at this point that your report is not trying to remove religious education – but by removing DGR status, you will. You are placing undue financial pressure on a system that actually represents Australia's largest weekly volunteer group. I don't understand why this wasn't taken into account in your report, when you articulate that the government wants to double giving (finances and volunteering) by 2030. Your reforms, and this goal, seem to be at odds. Perhaps everyone who was part of forming this report has no connection to a religion? 60% of the population in Australia does, and Australia is the most multicultural community on earth. Social cohesion is therefore hugely important in Australia – and religious education is well-researched to build this. This IS a community-wide benefit –</p>

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	<p>and yet religion in your report appears to be treated otherwise. I am also concerned about the pressure your reforms will place on school building funds. Faith-based education is the fastest growing sector of education – it is what Australians are increasingly turning to. Funding for these schools is mainly through fees and donations – so why are you therefore making it harder for them to provide quality education, just because the government provides a bit more support for them through other means than in 1950s? I think the government SHOULD provide more support – not be taking it away. DGR mechanisms enable the people of Australia to donate and fund some of our education system themselves. If these schools go under, or have to provide lower quality facilities, then then Australia will pay a heavy price. It seems to me that because they have the word ‘religion’ associated with it, that other contrary particular voices have been elevated, and these initiatives have been labelled as not ‘community-wide benefit’. This is an error. Your report shows that overall donations have increased, but that they are coming from a smaller pool of people. Together with cost of living pressures, I read this to mean that the average income person in Australia is not giving as much anymore. If people have the option to give somewhere either with or without DGR status, I think the average Australian would ultimately lean towards choosing those with. So – you are making it harder for these volunteers to do their valuable work, and for schools to provide the best education facilities they can for the next generation.</p>
309	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to speak as a volunteer Special Religious Education (SRE) teacher of 16 years and a donor for 30 years. In NSW, as in the rest of Australia, our community service supported by donors is encouraged by being tax-deductible. Generosity towards community activities that reach a diverse range of students in public schools is demonstrated by over 10,000 volunteers giving their time to offer the choice of a range of religions as well as secular ethics so that students can question and explore worldviews for themselves with the permission of their parents/caregivers. Recently a mother was walking with her seven year old son after the school bell had rung. Her child introduced me to his mum who shared that her son loved SRE and although she was an atheist, she let him choose to go. The quality of SRE/SEE curriculums and training come at a cost. Tax deductibility ensures that students in Australia do not miss out.</p>
310	<p>Encouraging our community to consider philanthropy is a positive step, However taking DGR status from one specific area ie support of SRE in schools is very unlikely to achieve that aim. School SRE promotes respect for other people and other faiths and helps build positive community involvement in our schools and children's lives. As a person of faith, my philanthropic giving, both in time and financially, is informed by a world view that supports and champions the marginalised and vulnerable in our community.</p>
311	<p>The removal of DGR status for building funds for faith-based schools will have a profound impact on low-fee faith-based schools whose students cost the government far less to educate than if those same students were in a local public school. There is a growing demand for faith-based schools – which is the fastest growing sector of education. Governments provide all the capital funding (e.g., buildings and facilities) for government schools, but only a fraction of the capital needs of faith-based schools. Removal of DGR status will have a massive negative impact on this sector of education. Special Religious Education (SRE) in Government Schools provides well-researched benefits for social cohesion and key psychological benefits for young people. It promotes thick multiculturalism, social acceptance, and reduces the risk of student radicalisation because the education is based within the school system, instead of an unregulated environment (for example online). SRE teachers represent the largest year-round volunteer labour force in Australia – and with the government wanting to focus on increasing giving and volunteering, we find it extraordinary that the Productivity Commission would seek to penalise this and other religious initiatives, and place severe limitations upon the resources that enable this instruction.</p>
312	<p>As a member of a small rural town in NSW, I can directly see the benefits of contributing to SRE teachers in the school. In our town, the community helps during the Eisteddfod by giving their time and money to raise more finances to keep the SRE teachers in the public schools. Please do not remove SRE from the beneficiary list.</p>

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313	<p>The teaching of SRE in public schools is done voluntarily by local people who give of their time to make a vital contribution to enabling a child to grow up knowing right from wrong. This should help them to make wise decisions, to help them overcome temptations that entice them, especially on social media and help solve the difficult problems they will face throughout life. SRE also contributes to building up a child's character by giving them ways to form and keep healthy relationships and hope for the future. Therefore the government should not be seen to be making money from an essential service to our community and should, in any and every way possible, try to help and support the RE work by not taxing resources needed for this vital work.</p>
314	<p>At the end of last year the Productivity Commission released a draft report to the Federal Government on philanthropy in Australia. This comprehensive and detailed consideration of a complex sector of our society has significant implications for churches and religious organisations if the recommendations are adopted. The Productivity Commission is attempting to simplify the regulation of Australia's charity sector and to promote giving to a wider range of charities. Many of its recommendations concern which charities should receive DGR (Deductible Gift Recipient) status. Donations to these charities are tax deductible, which makes them more attractive to donors. Some of its recommendations would be very welcome. Two recommendations that are of strong concern to us are: 1. It recommends that charities that exist to provide religious education should no longer have DGR status — this would include support for SRE teachers. SRE teachers represent the largest year-round volunteer labour force in Australia. 2. It recommends that independent schools (including low-fee Christian schools) and religious education organisations should no longer have DGR status for building funds. We would urge that these 2 recommendations be scrapped, and the existing DGR status for SRE & independent schools be retained.</p>
315	<p>Deductible Gift Recipient status should not be taken away from religious institutions as these organisations help and support their local and wider communities and rely on donations of goodwill to continue their philanthropic endeavours. Donations made to these organisations should maintain their tax deductible status. It has been shown that Religious and Faith communities have a very beneficial impact to the communities they volunteer in and the removal of tax deductible status on donations will only have a negative impact on communities Australia-wide.</p>
316	<p>I am a Christian. My faith supports my decisions around my giving. My desire to see equity and to support those in need is a direct result of the faith that I find taught within the Bible. The Bible teaches generosity, and support to the sick, hungry and isolated. My faith influences my decisions to think outwardly. I cannot say what my life would be like without my faith, but I do know that it is a motivation for my philanthropic giving.</p>
317	<p>I help teach SRE at two local high schools. Having DGR status makes raising funds to pay our teachers so much easier and ensures we can get good candidates to fill those roles. I strongly recommend keeping DGR status for Religious education.</p>
318	<p>I have always given a substantial portion of my income to both tax deductible and non-tax deductible entities with Christian beliefs since I started working over 35 years ago. I believe strongly in giving what I have away and tax deductible giving enables my dollars to go further in how I give. Taking away the DGR status for SRE will greatly impact the positive effect that SRE has in the school system enabling students a safe environment to ask questions as they work out their beliefs and where they fit in a rapidly changing society. It is unreasonable to target this area of DGR as well as school building funds - both directly effecting the education sector.</p>
319	<p>I am surprised at the recommendation of the Productivity Commission about withdrawing DGR from charitable organisations. I would have thought that an increase in DGR would increase donations and productivity. The effect of withdrawing DGR will be to dampen the participation of volunteers, with a loss to social well-being. The availability of DGR is seen as a thank you, and a positive incentive to give. Taking this away will be seen as a strong negative attitude, with political repercussions if the government</p>

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	agrees to this recommendation. Personally, I give 10% of my income to charities which will be affected by this recommendation. The DGR makes a difference to how much I can give. I suspect that many schools and faith organizations will suffer should this recommendation be accepted.
320	The plan to remove tax deductibility for donations to funding for SRE in schools and for school building funds as a means to increase donations for other areas is a retrograde one, not only because it removes this allowance from funds that are of benefit to children and, hopefully in the long term, for society as a whole but for other reasons. Evidence from studies is that SRE is of psychological benefit to students, encourages multiculturalism and social acceptance of other students and reduces the risk of radicalisation. Nielsen, T.W. 2010 Towards Pedagogy of Giving for Wellbeing and Social Engagement in International Research Handbook on Values Education and Student Wellbeing. and Gross. Z 2013 The attitudes of Israeli Arab and Jewish High School students towards extrinsic and intrinsic values. in Journal of Moral Education 42(1) 88-10q Most people donate time or finances to causes they consider of benefit to the community or to a section of it, e.g. children. The assumption that with the removal of tax deductibility for SRE in schools and School building funds that these funds will be redirected to other causes is a false one and so the pool of funds donated to charitable causes could well decrease rather than increase. The article Religious Faith and Charitable Giving by Arthur C Brooks of Wednesday 1 October 2003 published by Hoover Institution pointed to findings that people of faith were 25% more likely than the population as a whole, to make donations of time and funds to community organisations For this reason their contribution to society should be valued rather than devalued and these folk should not be penalised for donating to causes that in the long term are of benefit to the whole community.
321	In general we tax things we think are harmful to the community such as cigarettes and we give tax relief to things that benefit the community. SRE does a world of good and is made possible by an army of volunteers. It is literally multiculturalism in action, as the largest volunteer organisation outside of Surf Life Saving Australia, turns up every week to teach students in the faith of their family. I come from a family of strong volunteers. My mother was a volunteer SRE Teacher. My Father and myself and my two daughters are volunteer life savers with the Bronte SLSC. Volunteering is what makes Australia great! Please keep the tax deduction so that coordinators and organisations like Youthworks can keep supporting the vital work in our schools for hope, kindness and connection to something bigger than ourselves. SRE makes a valuable difference in the lives of young people and we should support it. Please keep this vital and unique teaching experience that helps build student identity and gives students of all backgrounds an opportunity to celebrate their culture and their religion at school. This diversity must be supported and nurtured.
322	I am very concerned and disappointed in the proposed changes to remove tax deductibility from donations to faith based schools. This is a part of the push to punish non government schools of which we desperately need. Faith based volunteers are by far the largest body of volunteers in Australia and yet by promoting these changes you will further alienate them. Yes animals are important but not more important than the education of our children.
323	I strongly advocate that the Federal Government not follow the Commission's recommendations because they are based on false assumptions and evidence. The Commission has missed the point that research has shown that faith communities are 25% more likely to donate and 23% more likely to volunteer their time. I have given 20% of our income for over 40 years. Our giving receives first priority in our budget, as is the practice of the majority of Christians. This is because we follow and believe in the super generous God who gave his only Son. The Commission also seems to have missed the point that SRE benefits the social flourishing of young people. It delivers key psychological benefits to students. Promotes deeper multicultural and social acceptance. Reduces the risk of radicalization. Is delivered in a controlled and monitored educational environment. Does the Commission recognize that SRE teachers are the largest year around time giving, volunteer group and as such fully already align with the Commission's objectives? NSW Department of School Education after a recent review has welcomed SRE NSW government schools because of the benefits revealed by their investigations. Low fee, faith-based schools would be disadvantaged and with less of them the Government would be disadvantaged through having to provide

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	increased capital to more government schools contrary to its financial aims. through philanthropy. I understand that about 5,000 charities which contribute to our communities at grass root levels will be adversely affected. That these are the Commissions ONLY recommendations; that they will penalize a very, very large group of people of diverse cultural backgrounds, and that these recommendations, if adopted by the Government would penalize the very people who give and volunteer, causes me to be strongly opposed to their adoption.
324	Hi, I am writing to mention that I think taking away tax deductibility for support of SRE in schools is a bad plan. SRE has been so good for my kids and the teachers give up their time and money to invest in the kids. My kids have been encouraged, listened to and been able to ask questions in a caring environment. My donations will not be transferred to any other Philanthropic giving, tax deductible or not as I think that SRE is a wonderful initiative to support.
325	I have benefitted from SRE as a pupil, volunteered as an SRE teacher, and donated to support SRE work. I value SRE and the benefits that faith based organisations add to the community. I want DGR status maintained for religious charities and SRE in government schools.
326	Some of the recommendations are narrow-minded and lump all institutions and worth to society into one category - e.g. 'religious' organisations. Religious beliefs are a key motivator to providing charitable work in society. It seems like the Commission is trying to take shortcuts in taking away a DGR status from a broad range of 'religious' organisations i.e. schools and SRE by implying that they don't serve the community as a whole, which is false. This seems more focused on economic values more than considering the social welfare of Australians.
327	My comment is in regard to the recommendation of the Federal Productivity Commission (draft report) to remove tax deductible status for donations made to religious charities in support of Special Religious Education (SRE). At first glance, this appears contrary to the commissions brief to identify opportunities to grow philanthropic giving further. A further investigation reveals that the only deductible gift recipients (DGR) the the draft report recommends removing are for SRE in public schools and private school building funds. This appears to me more like anti-faith ideology dressed up as tax policy. I believe that SRE receives good community wide support and that removal of DGR status will materially effect the ongoing teaching of SRE. I understand that more than 10,000 lessons are unsupervised in NSW public schools each week and removing SRE DGR status will only amplify that current crisis. My Christian faith drives my philanthropy and I believe that the Federal Government should continue to recognize and value the contribution that faith communities make to Australian society.
328	Dear Commissioners, I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. I think it is good that you are looking at expanding the system to cover more initiatives such as animal welfare, but I am quite concerned that to achieve this you are taking away DGR status from almost exclusively religious charities – which will have a huge impact on important initiatives such as school building funds and religious education in government schools. Australia is the most multicultural nation on earth, and approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on an ideology that religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that one of the best ways to promote social cohesion is through religious education in schools – putting extra pressure on this education, and its teachers, is not a quality decision for Australia, and will have long term ramifications. The Religious Education teachers in Australia represent the largest weekly group of volunteers in our nation. In a report where on the one hand, you are articulating the government’s goal to double giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030, on the other hand you are removing privileges and help from faith communities that represent a huge proportion of the people who will help you, and are helping you right now, achieve that goal. This is not a wise decision. On top of that, school building funds are to have their DGR status removed, because back in the 1950s when DGR status was established, no government support was given by other means and now it is. This is not a good enough reason – unless the government is going to actually front up and supply ALL the capital expenditure needs of these schools (which I’m sure they won’t) why would you then seek to penalise both the schools AND the private citizens who are donating to

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	<p>these schools and funding education? Faith-based education is the fastest growing sector of education in Australia – which tells us that this is what our communities want and are actively using. So why make it harder for this to happen and be successful? In short, you are penalising both the fastest growing sector of education – which is predominantly privately funded by citizens – and are also putting undue pressure on the largest weekly group of volunteers in Australia, and risking a lower level of social cohesion as a result. I think we, and you, can do a lot better than this. In light of everything I have stated above, I completely reject your [presumption that these initiatives are of little “community-wide benefit” and would encourage you, even if you don’t have a religious belief yourself, to understand that your report is discriminatory and minimising in its ideology – and that this will damage Australia as a result.</p>
329	<p>I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. I think it is good that you are looking at expanding the system to cover more initiatives such as animal welfare, but I am quite concerned that to achieve this you are taking away DGR status from almost exclusively religious charities – which will have a huge impact on important initiatives such as school building funds and religious education in government schools. Australia is the most multicultural nation on earth, and approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on an ideology that religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that one of the best ways to promote social cohesion is through religious education in schools – putting extra pressure on this education, and its teachers, is not a quality decision for Australia, and will have long term ramifications. The Religious Education teachers in Australia represent the largest weekly group of volunteers in our nation. In a report where on the one hand, you are articulating the government’s goal to double giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030, on the other hand you are removing privileges and help from faith communities that represent a huge proportion of the people who will help you, and are helping you right now, achieve that goal. This is not a wise decision.</p>
330	<p>Our motivation for giving to the SRE programme is simple. We believe that the programme gives students clear moral and ethical guidelines in a society where these are being eroded. The benefits to our society to have young people know what is right, and to live accordingly, are huge.</p>
331	<p>Please Reconsider the proposal to remove Tax Deductible giving from faith based schools and affected charities. Please allow the schools and charities, to continue their good work, by allowing donations/ fund raising to be tax deductible, to do otherwise is mean spirited. Removing tax deductibility, will have a profound effect on low fee, faith based schools to raise much needed funds. This will have an impact on fund-raising of vital SRE programs required for student resilience, well being and ultimate growth. I ask the Government not to except the proposed change for tax deductibility as it will have a great impact on the ability of low fee, faith based schools to raise much needed finds for their SRE programs.</p>
332	<p>Please do not remove the current tax deductible capacity for raising funds by low fee, faith based schools and by SRE providers who do such a wonderful job in our community. Low fee schools like this do struggle to supply this service, so please help those who wish to make that choice for their children, which does ultimately keep capacity in our state schools.</p>
333	<p>At 42 years old, and not a Christian, I was in debt to the tune of about \$70,000.00. I became a Christian and became a greater supporter of charities that are helping humans in need - as this is what Christians are taught to do. I am now better at handling my own finances and I'm out of debt. I now support more charities and donate more money (and time) to people in need than ever before. Helping out those more need than yourself is a Christian ethos. And it should be encouraged by peers, teachers, parents/guardians and the governments.</p>
334	<p>I am very disappointed in your proposal to remove DGR status from some Christian charities and school building funds. I prefer to choose DGR Christian charities when making donations. The impact that Christian education has had on my life is profound, and has saved me in times of depression, anxiety and anger. It is this life-saving</p>

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	education that I want to share with the next generation so they can learn of the hope and salvation that is found in the bible. The words in the bible meant nothing to me until someone explained it clearly. I hear of many kids with anxiety and depression at such a young age, it is heartbreaking they know nothing about the unconditional love of God, the freedom in Jesus. It is only since I have become a Christian that I understand this, I would've loved to have learnt this as a kid or teenager! Please consider the hope you are removing from Australia's future by removing DGR status from religious institutions.
335	I would like to voice my support for the continuing of the government upholding the teaching of Scripture in Public Schools. The suggestion of the withdrawal of tax deductibility for donations to support SRE or moves to remove or discourage the long-established teaching of SRE in schools is a most unfortunate proposal. This long-standing government approved teaching which is non-denominational has provided a strong foundation for moral and ethical behaviour in students making them better life-long citizens and contributors to our country.
336	Re tax-deductibility for donations to SRE/CRI I would like to point out that the SRE (School Scripture) in government schools has proven student wellbeing benefits and contribute positively to the school community.. In addition, I would like the Federal Government to recognise and value the positive contribution that faith communities make to Australian society.
337	As a parent of four, I have been a SRE volunteer Primary teacher for over 20 years in three regions, as well as a SRE coordinator, Generate employee in High School SRE to 800 students, and church board delegate. The sacrificial giving and dedicated service of volunteers is worth acknowledging. Removing Deductible Gift Recipient Status for SRE and Christian Schools could substantially cripple these long-standing organizations, heavily reliant on donations. No other subjects offer the opportunity for students to explore their own faith or values. Decades ago, SRE was core curriculum from the Education Department. Volunteers have carried the cost ever since, saving Government several thousands of dollars. I believe "the earth is the Lord's and everything in it" and He would find another way for His work to continue; in the event of the productivity commissions perceived anti-religious direction. Excluding entry or timetabling out for volunteer SRE teachers in today's inclusive education environment might also remove freedom of choice for students. At a public meeting in our local club I heard first-hand accounts from a regional Police sergeant being thankful for SRE and the statistical direct correlation of the drop in crime rate and juvenile delinquency. Locally a principal informed me that the Christian school enrolls the students that public schools don't want to teach. If these private schools could no longer afford to pay their teachers, existing occasional funded out of school programs would not have a big enough net to hold these rising number of students, disillusioned with public education.
338	As a person of faith, my religious worldview greatly impacts my desire to contribute towards numerous philanthropic causes to benefit the vulnerable and support causes which promote health, wellbeing and flourishing for people of all ages and backgrounds, for the common good. This includes supporting DGR status for contributions to religious causes, including Special Religious Education, school building funds and other such initiatives. I hope the Government recognises the value of the significant contributions faith communities make to Australian society, and do not make changes which may undermine such contributions which have proven ongoing positive impacts in our communities.
339	The proposed changes to rules on charity donations appear discriminatory against religious freedom. Donations to charities of many ideologies have been accepted as tax deductible even if it only benefits a small minority. Therefore religious organizations should not be singled out. Changes to the rules will remove the community's democratic choice to support it's preferred ideology especially when it is legitimately charitable and would benefit the wider community. Religious denominations do a lot for community charities including those projects which do not get government support. Changes to the charity rules would reduce and even remove the support for many much-needed projects. Some charities rely totally on such support and the proposed changes may mean they cannot continue.

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340	<p>As a volunteer special religious education teacher, I see the positive role I play in the lives of children at school, having a space for children to ask questions and know what the Bible says. I've also valued the positive impact I make on the school I go to in Darlington. I've valued the part I play as part of the largest volunteer labour force for special religious education, and know this could not be done without the support of organisations that rely on Tax Deductibility and government support. I would like the government to maintain and increase the support provided to help those who volunteer to teach special religious education in schools, as well as religious charities that support this, like Youthworks. I want to see faith communities valued and recognised for the contribution they make to our society. I also value faith-based school institutions, that bring community-wide benefits to the communities they support and want their school building funds to remain tax deductible.</p>
341	<p>The recommendation for the removal of tax deductions for donations made to religious charities in support of SRE is misguided and bad policy. SRE provides important psychological benefits to students' health and wellbeing and SRE classes can strengthen the multicultural fabric of Australia and foster social cohesion by providing a sense of belonging and safe places for students to explore deeper questions of cultural and religious identity in an environment of trust and respect. If one tax deductible giving opportunity is closed people will NOT necessarily redirect their giving to a cause. Givers to SRE are cause and relationship driven (i.e. they give to what they are passionate about!)</p>
342	<p>Dear Commissioners, I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. I think it is good that you are looking at expanding the system to cover more initiatives such as animal welfare, but I am quite concerned that to achieve this you are taking away DGR status from almost exclusively religious charities – which will have a huge impact on important initiatives such as school building funds and religious education in government schools. Australia is the most multicultural nation on earth, and approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on an ideology that religion is of no community-wide benefit</p>
343	<p>Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, impacting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union's ministry programs. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is good that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, such as animal welfare. Still, to achieve this, you are removing DGR status from religious charities like Scripture Union NSW, which will significantly impact the health and wellbeing of current and future students engaged in religious education and lunchtime groups. Australia is the most multicultural nation on earth, and approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on an ideology that religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that one of the best ways to promote social cohesion is through religious education in schools – putting extra pressure on this education, and its teachers, is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications. The Religious Education teachers in Australia represent our nation's largest weekly group of volunteers. In a report where, on the one hand, you are articulating the government's goal to double giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030, on the other hand, you are removing privileges and help from faith communities that represent a huge proportion of the people who will help you, and are helping you right now, achieve that goal. This is not a wise decision. On top of that, school building funds are to have their DGR status removed. Faith-based education is Australia's fastest-growing education sector – which tells us that this is what our communities want and are actively using. So why make it harder for this to happen and be successful? In short, you are penalising both the fastest-growing sector of education – predominantly privately funded by citizens – and putting undue pressure on the largest weekly group of volunteers in Australia, risking a lower level of social cohesion as a result. I think you and I can do a lot better than this. In light of everything I have stated above, I completely reject your presumption that these initiatives are of little "community-wide benefit" and would encourage you, even if you don't have a religious belief yourself, to understand that your report is discriminatory and minimising in its ideology – and that this will damage Australia as a result. Sincerely Ian Altman</p>

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344	<p>I give 10% of my income to charitable organisations. I believe philanthropy is a very significant way to impact the world and love the initiative to grow it further. But the recommendation to remove tax-deductibility for donations to SRE and school building funds doesn't seem congruent. I've seen SRE have a really positive impact in the local schools of my area, and the research has shown SRE to reduce the risk of student radicalisation, to promote thick multiculturalism and social acceptance and to deliver key psychological benefits to students who take part in it. I can't understand why DGRs would be taken away from such a positive, donation-reliant cause as SRE.</p>
345	<p>I would like to express my concern about the proposed changes to the deductible gift recipient (DGR) system. I note that the government hopes to increase the amount of giving, financially and through volunteering, however, the proposed changes would appear to be working against this goal. As a retired public school teacher, I can confirm the value of Special Religious Education in primary schools. Most parents, even non-believing ones, are more than happy for their children to participate in these lessons which form an important part of a child's education and well-being. I keep in touch with a wonderful retired SRE teacher who sometimes meets former students who are always keen to have a chat with him. SRE teachers build real and lasting relationships with students. On the subject of donations to faith-based schools it makes no sense to me that the government would consider discouraging donations. Surely, if students are being educated in private schools, the generous donations from the public save the government money. This proposal smacks of an attempt to cripple faith-based education and I can only see it as ideological persecution. My heart has always been with public education but it is worth noting that from the earliest days of the colony of New South Wales it was the church who cared enough to provide education in the form of schools. In my own town members of the community built and ran a school specifically for Aboriginal children. The task of such educators would have been greatly enhanced if there had been a DGR scheme in the nineteenth century! Perhaps our citizens and government could show some gratitude for the role faith-based schools continue to play. I urge the government to reconsider the current proposals.</p>
346	<p>I strongly believe that removing the supports in place religious charities will have a notably detrimental effect on the success of religious institutions, education and the wellbeing of the wider community. I have personally grown from my experience in SRE studies during my school years (this was made possible by current entitlements). Subsequently, I work at a Christian school now; here I see our students experiencing the same kind of growth in stature and intellect. It is clear to me this is largely due to the supports currently enabling religious charities to initiate and sustain the crucial movements mentioned above. Therefore, I suggest we DO NOT remove the tax deductability of donations for religious charities.</p>
347	<p>Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, impacting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union's ministry programs. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is good that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, such as animal welfare. Still, to achieve this, you are removing DGR status from religious charities like Scripture Union NSW, which will significantly impact the health and well-being of current and future students engaged in religious education and lunchtime groups. Australia is the most multicultural nation; approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on an ideology that religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that one of the best ways to promote social cohesion is through religious education in schools – putting extra pressure on this education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications. The Religious Education teachers in Australia represent our nation's largest weekly group of volunteers. In a report where, on the one hand, you are articulating the government's goal to double giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030, on the other hand, you are removing privileges and help from faith communities that represent a huge proportion of the people who will help you, and are helping you right now, achieve that goal. This is not a wise decision. On top of that, school building funds are to have their DGR status removed. Faith-based education is Australia's fastest-growing education sector – which tells us that this is what our communities want and are actively using. So why make it harder for this to happen and be successful? In short, you are penalising both the</p>

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348	Dear Commissioners, I write to you today concerning the recent draft report on reforms to the Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) system. As a keen observer and participant in our nation's educational and charitable landscape, I've noted with interest the proposed changes and their potential impact. Firstly, I commend the initiative to broaden the DGR system, including sectors like animal welfare. However, I am compelled to express my deep concern regarding the removal of DGR status from religious charities, notably impacting organizations like Scripture Union NSW. Such a shift risks destabilizing the support networks for thousands of students engaged in religious education and lunchtime groups, particularly in government schools. In a country celebrated for its multicultural ethos, where a significant proportion of Australians identify with various religions, it is imperative to consider the role of religious education in promoting social harmony. Contrary to the suggestion in the report that religious activities do not significantly contribute to the community, evidence suggests they are instrumental in fostering unity and understanding among diverse groups. Moreover, it's important to highlight that the largest contingent of weekly volunteers in Australia comes from religious education sectors. These volunteers are not just contributors but are integral to achieving the government's ambitious goal of doubling community involvement by 2030. Removing DGR status from these groups seems counterproductive to this aim. Additionally, the proposed exclusion of school building funds from the DGR system, particularly within the rapidly growing faith-based education sector, is a matter of concern. This sector's growth reflects community preference, and impeding its progress seems out of step with public interest. To conclude, the draft report, in its current form, appears to overlook the vital contributions of key education sectors and volunteer groups. Such oversight could inadvertently weaken the social fabric of our diverse society. I urge a re-evaluation of these reforms to better align with the values of inclusivity and support for all segments of our multicultural nation. Thank you for considering these perspectives. I am confident that a collaborative approach can lead to more equitable and effective policies.
349	I would like to register my support to keep Tax Deductible donations available to those who wish to give of their hard earned money. Those who give are of a compassionate heart and only want to see benefits for the community in general and are often people who aren't of great means themselves. They are often encouraged that if they give to worthwhile causes that it is helpful when it is a Tax Deductible donation option. Please consider the ramifications if the Tax Deductible option is taken away. Our nation has been well known for it's generosity in the past, please don't be the government known for not being generous to those great services to the community.
350	I believe we should appreciate what the SRE program does within Government Schools, and ask the government to maintain or increase their support for this, not reduce it. I want DGR status to be maintained for religious education in government schools and to see volunteers within the faith communities recognised within the DGR system. Because of the community-wide benefits that faith communities bring, the opportunity to have my philanthropic giving going to SRE should be maintained - it benefits everyone and also specifically, those who cannot attend a private school to get faith teaching.
351	Tax deductible gift towards voluntary organisations is a keystone of our community. For workers who donate regularly, appreciate the valuable contribution of scripture teachers in our schools. Our society will continue to lean on the generosity of time and experience of hundreds of scripture teachers, whether or not people believe the importance of it. Please reconsider this important decision, both for building churches and facilities (Building Funds) and volunteers who love to work tirelessly to teach children and teenagers religious, moral and ethical truths.

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352	I request that DGR status to be maintained for religious education in government schools. I believe that there are community-wide benefits that faith communities bring. I found RE helpful in my life values as I was growing up. I understand that Special Religious Education within Government Schools, is the largest weekly volunteer labour force in Australia that enables this to happen and ask that the government maintains or increases their support for this, not reduce it.
353	For this government to remove the tax break from RSI is simply another way of kicking God out of our country. The reasons given are opposite to the findings of the benefits of RSI. While this looks like another simple tax, it really is taking away the individuals right to choose for themselves. We already face an opt in program about whether a student attends RSI classes, so now this government is attacking RSI resources, along with those organisations who prepare the resources. What is this government afraid of? The benefits of RSI have been made evident and are being ignored because of your own agenda. I find this change to the tax benefits an offensive and totally unnecessary act. Again those of all religious persuasions are under attack.
354	Dear Commissioners, Regarding the proposal to withdraw the DGR from “charities that have DGR status for school building funds or to provide religious education in government schools” it appears that the true value of these institutions has not been taken into account. Research shows that schools and parents who are not religious at all esteem the work of groups such as Scripture Union very highly. SU runs on the smell of an oily rag and depends on the generosity of donations and grants to exist. Please assess the data before making such a big decision as to cut funding to groups such as this, which have a huge impact on the well being of kids all over Aus. Regards, Paul D
355	Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, impacting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union’s ministry programs. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is good that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, such as animal welfare. Still, to achieve this, you are removing DGR status from religious charities like Scripture Union NSW, which will significantly impact the health and well-being of current and future students engaged in religious education and lunchtime groups. Australia is the most multicultural nation; approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on an ideology that religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that one of the best ways to promote social cohesion is through religious education in schools – putting extra pressure on this education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications. The Religious Education teachers in Australia represent our nation's largest weekly group of volunteers. In a report where, on the one hand, you are articulating the government’s goal to double giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030, on the other hand, you are removing privileges and help from faith communities that represent a huge proportion of the people who will help you, and are helping you right now, achieve that goal. This is not a wise decision. On top of that, school building funds are to have their DGR status removed. Faith-based education is Australia's fastest-growing education sector – which tells us that this is what our communities want and are actively using. So why make it harder for this to happen and be successful? In short, you are penalising both the fastest-growing sector of education – predominantly privately funded by citizens – and putting undue pressure on the largest weekly group of volunteers in Australia, risking a lower level of social cohesion as a result. I think you and I can do a lot better than this. In light of everything I have stated above, I completely reject your presumption that these initiatives are of little “community-wide benefit” and would encourage you, even if you don’t have a religious belief yourself, to understand that your report is discriminatory and minimising in its ideology – and that this will damage a Multicultural Australia as a result.
356	Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, impacting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union’s ministry programs. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is good that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, such as animal welfare. Still, to achieve this, you are removing DGR status from religious charities like Scripture Union NSW, which will

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	<p>significantly impact the health and well-being of current and future students engaged in religious education and lunchtime groups. Australia is the most multicultural nation; approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on an ideology that religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that one of the best ways to promote social cohesion is through religious education in schools – putting extra pressure on this education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications. The Religious Education teachers in Australia represent our nation's largest weekly group of volunteers. In a report where, on the one hand, you are articulating the government's goal to double giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030, on the other hand, you are removing privileges and help from faith communities that represent a huge proportion of the people who will help you, and are helping you right now, achieve that goal. This is not a wise decision. On top of that, school building funds are to have their DGR status removed. Faith-based education is Australia's fastest-growing education sector – which tells us that this is what our communities want and are actively using. So why make it harder for this to happen and be successful? In short, you are penalising both the fastest-growing sector of education – predominantly privately funded by citizens – and putting undue pressure on the largest weekly group of volunteers in Australia, risking a lower level of social cohesion as a result. I think you and I can do a lot better than this. In light of everything I have stated above, I completely reject your presumption that these initiatives are of little “community-wide benefit” and would encourage you, even if you don't have a religious belief yourself, to understand that your report is discriminatory and minimising in its ideology – and that this will damage a Multicultural Australia as a result.</p>
357	<p>I am an adjunct professor teaching theology and leadership, and It has come to my attention that there may be threats in the interim report in terms of fundraising for Special Religious Education within Government Schools. I myself have taught SRE and was grateful for the organisations that make resources available, as well as for the opportunity to do it. I therefore request that DGR status be maintained for religious education in government schools. I think this is critical for a well-functioning society. It would be helpful for the report to recognise volunteers within faith communities who provide amazing support to their communities through education, pastoral care, skills development and so forth. Faith communities impact on wider communities in so many unheralded ways. Our church runs play groups, fundraises for local youth initiatives, delivered Christmas gifts to at-risk youth, provides concerts and youth activities, as well as free education open to the community on faith, marriage and parenting. We also provide practical care to our church members, their families and friends, and anyone else who comes to our door. Please revise your recommendations on removal of DGR-status to faith community/church/Christian groups; particularly if your goal is ultimately to grow philanthropic giving. My husband and I give away 20% of our income every year to our church, charities and other causes, and DGR status is part of our consideration in that giving.</p>
358	<p>We are greatly concerned at the possibility that the tax deductibility status for charitable institutions providing SRE and lunchtime Christian groups could be withdrawn and also that the tax deductibility for school building funds is also threatened with the new DGR proposal. We in NSW have benefitted enormously from having continuing SRE and Christian lunchtime groups in public schools. I have been involved personally over 50 years as a participant and volunteer and have consistently seen the immense benefits in the lives of my own family and in the lives of countless others. To cut tax deductibility to this sector will have big detrimental effects for our society. It is faith based organizations that provide the foundations and stability of our society. My husband and I are completely against this change in the DGR provisions and wish to register our opposition.</p>
359	<p>Please do NOT withdraw tax deductibility from religious education. These organisations enhance the life and freedom of our community, create legacy and cultural continuity and are generally under-resourced. Tax-deductibility provides a key component of these organisations' income and do not degrade revenue raising. Please reduce government bloat and wastage without ripping into our community, religious, grass roots organisations.</p>

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360	I appreciated SRE when I went to school and believe that the Government should continue to support it as it does much good, whatever the faith, by continuing the DGR status of funds that meet the current requirements.
361	Dear Commissioners, I highlight the vital work of Scripture Union NSW, impacting 2,000 students weekly through lunchtime groups in Government Schools. However, I'm deeply concerned about proposed reforms to the DGR system, removing status from religious charities like Scripture Union. This jeopardizes the well-being of students engaged in religious education. Australia, a multicultural nation, sees 60% identifying with a religion. Yet, the report appears to undervalue the community-wide benefits of religion. Research emphasizes the role of religious education in fostering social cohesion. Imposing hurdles on this education contradicts the government's goal of doubling contributions by 2030. Religious Education teachers are Australia's largest weekly volunteer group. While the report aims to boost giving, it paradoxically withdraws support from faith communities pivotal to achieving this goal. The removal of DGR status from school building funds contradicts the popularity and growth of faith-based education. In summary, the current approach penalizes the fastest-growing education sector and strains the largest weekly volunteer group, risking social cohesion. I reject the report's presumption of little "community-wide benefit" from religious initiatives. I urge reconsideration, recognizing the discriminatory impact on multicultural Australia.
362	Religious charities and institutions form the backbone of many attempts to do good in our society and should be enabled to continue to fundraise as this enables many donations to be made tax free and achieve much good.
363	I greatly value the Special Religious Education program in Government Schools, recognizing it as the largest weekly volunteer labor force in Australia. I urge the government to maintain or increase their support for this essential initiative, emphasizing its positive impact on students and communities. It is crucial to maintain Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status for religious education in government schools. This designation ensures continued financial support for a program that plays a significant role in shaping the moral and ethical development of our youth. Additionally, I advocate for the recognition of volunteers within faith communities within the DGR system. Their selfless contributions play a vital role in fostering a sense of community, understanding, and shared values. Recognizing the community-wide benefits that faith communities bring, I encourage the government to acknowledge their positive impact. These communities contribute to social cohesion, promoting values that enhance the overall well-being of society.
364	I am writing concerning the move to withdraw DGR status for Scripture Union for their religious education in public schools. As an educational leader over 30 I greatly appreciate the historic and contemporary value Special Religious Education within Government Schools. It has been enshrined through gazetted in NSW since the 1800s, when the church handed over the responsibility for public education to the state. The significance of this work is demonstrated by the largest weekly volunteer labour force in Australia that enables this to happen. All of these people see the immense value of SRE as a non option in the broad education of children in exploring important spiritual questions of life: who am I? where do I come from? What is the purpose life? How can I face and overcome adversity? I respectfully submit that rather than reduce the funds available to support SRE, it should be maintained or increased. I request that DGR status to be maintained for religious education in government schools and that SRE volunteers within the faith communities recognised within the DGR system. I offer two other personal perspectives for your consideration. Most recently, I have served as a school wellbeing leader focussing on Years 7-9. I can 100% testify that young people have been severely impacted by Covid and the disruption to this important stage if their social and emotional development. Moreover they have the exact existential questions which SRE is resources and positioned to addressed as there is little other space devoted to spiritual development in the curriculum. It is also often overlooked just how much faith communities contribute to the wellbeing of all people through community-wide benefits that faith communities bring. The provide a place of belonging discovery, hope, restoration, social justice, medical and aged care, poverty relief,

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	just to mention a few. I trust this submission will speak to the great value of SRE and the necessity of maintaining and increasing resources for this work through the DGR provision.
365	<p>Hi, my name is Michelle and I've been teaching SRE and running ISCF groups in NSW high schools for over 20 years. Some of my work is voluntary, using resources from Scripture Union, and some of my work is financially supported with funds donated to a local combined churches SRE Board. Both of these organisations currently have DGR status and they are both heavily reliant on donations from the public for them to be able to operate. Through my work in schools I often encounter young people who struggle with their mental health and well being. In my role as an SRE teacher and ISCF leader I have had the privilege of helping provide safe spaces for students to explore their faith, express their emotions, and seek guidance. Compassionate listening is an important part of my SRE lessons alongside a curriculum that offers invaluable support to students who are facing various challenges - helping them to develop resilience, coping skills and a sense of belonging. There is an old saying that "it takes a village to raise a child". In today's society, families are increasingly finding themselves broken down and isolated, often disconnected from the extended support systems most young people used to have easy access to such as grandparents, uncles, aunties, neighbours, sporting and religious communities. I firmly believe that religious education provides a safe environment where students are nurtured and hear informed and sensitive answers from trained SRE teachers who genuinely care about them, have more time to listen to them and can connect them with local networks of support. I urge the Productivity Commission to recognise the importance of maintaining DGR status for charities that provide religious education in schools. Doing so will not only safeguard the vital support that I, and others like me, provide for students but also reaffirm the Australian governments' commitment to fostering a pluralistic society where all voices are heard and respected. By supporting charities that provide religious education, we contribute to the diversity and richness of educational opportunities available to students, empowering them to explore and understand faith in a respectful and inclusive manner.</p>
366	<p>I have recently been made aware that DGR has or is in the process of being withdrawn from donations made to support scripture in schools. I am thankful for every teacher who donates their time to encourage and support children in their school years and ask you to keep the DGR status for all giving to support this good cause.</p>
367	<p>Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, impacting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union's ministry programs. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is good that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, such as animal welfare. Still, to achieve this, you are removing DGR status from religious charities like Scripture Union NSW, which will significantly impact the health and well-being of current and future students engaged in religious education and lunchtime groups. Australia is the most multicultural nation; approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on an ideology that religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that one of the best ways to promote social cohesion is through religious education in schools – putting extra pressure on this education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications. The Religious Education teachers in Australia represent our nation's largest weekly group of volunteers. In a report where, on the one hand, you are articulating the government's goal to double giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030, on the other hand, you are removing privileges and help from faith communities that represent a huge proportion of the people who will help you, and are helping you right now, achieve that goal. This is not a wise decision. On top of that, school building funds are to have their DGR status removed. Faith-based education is Australia's fastest-growing education sector – which tells us that this is what our communities want and are actively using. So why make it harder for this to happen and be successful? In short, you are penalising both the fastest-growing sector of education – predominantly privately funded by citizens – and putting undue pressure on the largest weekly group of volunteers in Australia, risking a lower level of social cohesion as a result. I think you and I can do a lot better than this. In light of everything I have stated above, I completely reject your presumption that</p>

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370	Many organisations doing great work will be affected by this new rule. Governments would find it difficult to service the many charitable groups run mostly by volunteers if the groups had to change how they operate. Please don't break what isn't broke!
371	I want to urge the Productivity Commission to reconsider this matter. The work of many Christian organisations is very important. It is not from a point of view of sharing the Christian faith, but things like the SU lunchtime groups helps participants deal with the challenges of life in a way which acknowledges their need to be heard. We all need to learn to listen and consider the opinions of others in a group which is not judgmental but looks at alternatives.
372	Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, impacting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union's ministry programs. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is good that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, such as animal welfare. Still, to achieve this, you are removing DGR status from religious charities like Scripture Union NSW, which will significantly impact the health and well-being of current and future students engaged in religious education and lunchtime groups. Australia is the most multicultural nation; approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on an ideology that religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that one of the best ways to promote social cohesion is through religious education in schools – putting extra pressure on this education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications. The Religious Education teachers in Australia represent our nation's largest weekly group of volunteers. In a report where, on the one hand, you are articulating the government's goal to double giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030, on the other hand, you are removing privileges and help from faith communities that represent a huge proportion of the people who will help you, and are helping you right now, achieve that goal. This is not a wise decision. On top of that, school building funds are to have their DGR status removed. Faith-based education is Australia's fastest-growing education sector – which tells us that this is what our communities want and are actively using. So why make it harder for this to happen and be successful? In short, you are penalising both the fastest-growing sector of education – predominantly privately funded by citizens – and putting undue pressure on the largest weekly group of volunteers in Australia, risking a lower level of social cohesion as a result. I think you and I can do a lot better than this. In light of everything I have stated above, I completely reject your presumption that these initiatives are of little “community-wide benefit” and would encourage you, even if you don't have a religious belief yourself, to understand that your report is discriminatory and minimising in its ideology – and that this will damage a Multicultural Australia as a result. Yours sincerely Rebecca Eastment
373	I think organisations that provide SRE from all faiths should have their tax deductible status maintained. Organisations such as Scripture Union are not for profit and provide key support for volunteers who go into government schools to provide SRE. This includes training and the provision of resources. Please keep this Status for these types of organisations. Thank you.
374	I am distraught to hear that tax deduction may be removed for supporting scripture (Special religious education) in schools. What this will be do is drive up parents to send their religious children to religious schools, leading to more fragmentation than ever in our society. SRE provides an important element of students spiritual wellbeing being nourished by people they trust. They can play in the same playground as kids from other faiths (or with no faith), go to the same classes, but one hour a fortnight hear more about how the religion that is so important to their family and culture. I urge you to go into a scripture or volunteer-led school religious lunch time group one week and see the benefit it provides to all manner of students. Do nothing until you have seen how impactful it has on the ground. Taking it away by placing financial pressure on the organisations that provide it will just bring more pain and suffering in the long term.
375	I'm writing to you, as I am alarmed by the reforms to the DGR system that impacts volunteer religious education in public schools. As one that in my youth, attended Special Religion Education programs, I testify to how much of an impact faith and religion has brought to my well-being and social network. To revoke DGR privileges to these

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	organisations will bring a significant impact my direct community, and I urge and plead that you would look to other alternatives. Please help support the free opportunity to learn about religions, rather than hinder and suffocate the efforts for many many individual volunteers.
376	I would like the continued support of SRE in public schools as well as the increased government support of all the volunteers. SRE creates vital opportunities for kids to have an opt-in chance to head about Jesus. I would support the continued plan for all donations to continue to be tax deductible.
377	I am writing to thank you for the Special Religious Education within Government Schools, and the largest weekly volunteer labour force in Australia that enables this to happen. I am asking that the government continue to maintain or increase their support for this very worthwhile activity for all children and not reduce their support. I want the Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status to be maintained for religious education in government schools and I want to see volunteers within the faith communities recognised within the DGR system. Australia is the most multicultural nation; approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on an ideology that religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that one of the best ways to promote social cohesion is through religious education in schools – putting extra pressure on this education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications. Please do not overlook and dismiss the community-wide benefits that faith communities bring.
378	I grew up with scripture classes, which I was cynical about but still gave me a good values base and came to mean alot to me in later years. Nothing should be done to diminish teaching and aupporting scripture in school - it is only aimed at helping people to care about and value themselves and others. The devil is all around, scripture in sxhool is a good reminder that God exists and cares about people.
379	Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, impacting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union’s ministry programs. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is good that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, such as animal welfare. Still, to achieve this, you are removing DGR status from religious charities like Scripture Union NSW, which will significantly impact the health and well-being of current and future students engaged in religious education and lunchtime groups. Australia is the most multicultural nation; approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on an ideology that religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that one of the best ways to promote social cohesion is through religious education in schools – putting extra pressure on this education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications. The Religious Education teachers in Australia represent our nation's largest weekly group of volunteers. In a report where, on the one hand, you are articulating the government’s goal to double giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030, on the other hand, you are removing privileges and help from faith communities that represent a huge proportion of the people who will help you, and are helping you right now, achieve that goal. This is not a wise decision. On top of that, school building funds are to have their DGR status removed. Faith-based education is Australia's fastest-growing education sector – which tells us that this is what our communities want and are actively using. So why make it harder for this to happen and be successful? In short, you are penalising both the fastest-growing sector of education – predominantly privately funded by citizens – and putting undue pressure on the largest weekly group of volunteers in Australia, risking a lower level of social cohesion as a result. I think you and I can do a lot better than this. In light of everything I have stated above, I completely reject your presumption that these initiatives are of little “community-wide benefit” and would encourage you, even if you don’t have a religious belief yourself, to understand that your report is discriminatory and minimising in its ideology – and that this will damage a Multicultural Australia as a result. Cooper Rispin

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380	Dear Commissioners Further to the submission to remove DGR status for Scripture Union in NSW. Rather than remove the Tax Deductible status, I believe strongly that the Australian Government should instead match dollar for dollar all donations made to similar volunteer organisations which strive to provide an invaluable cohesive moral compass to our children.
381	I have a deep appreciation for Special Religious Education within Government Schools, and the largest weekly volunteer labour force in Australia that enables this to happen. I think the government should increase financial support of this not decrease it. I want DGR status to be maintained for religious education in government schools and building funds for all educational communities. I find the removal of this status discriminates against faith based schools and faith based instruction in public schools.
382	Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, impacting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union's ministry programs. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is good that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, such as animal welfare. Still, to achieve this, you are removing DGR status from religious charities like Scripture Union NSW, which will significantly impact the health and well-being of current and future students engaged in religious education and lunchtime groups. Australia is the most multicultural nation; approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on an ideology that religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that one of the best ways to promote social cohesion is through religious education in schools – putting extra pressure on this education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications. The Religious Education teachers in Australia represent our nation's largest weekly group of volunteers. In a report where, on the one hand, you are articulating the government's goal to double giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030, on the other hand, you are removing privileges and help from faith communities that represent a huge proportion of the people who will help you, and are helping you right now, achieve that goal. This is not a wise decision. On top of that, school building funds are to have their DGR status removed. Faith-based education is Australia's fastest-growing education sector – which tells us that this is what our communities want and are actively using. So why make it harder for this to happen and be successful? In short, you are penalising both the fastest-growing sector of education – predominantly privately funded by citizens – and putting undue pressure on the largest weekly group of volunteers in Australia, risking a lower level of social cohesion as a result. I think you and I can do a lot better than this. In light of everything I have stated above, I completely reject your presumption that these initiatives are of little “community-wide benefit” and would encourage you, even if you don't have a religious belief yourself, to understand that your report is discriminatory and minimising in its ideology – and that this will damage a Multicultural Australia as a result.
383	I notice that animal welfare is included in the charitable organisations to be ring fenced from losing DGR status, yet those charitable organisations that care for the spiritual and educational welfare of any students at school whose parents desire this to occur are to be stripped of their DGR status. Special Religious Education classes not only teach spiritual and behavioural values that help children in their navigating of life's issues, but also actively support literacy and numeracy during the lesson. This changing of DGR rules seems to put animal welfare above human welfare.
384	The removal of DGR status for religious education within government schools and school building funds within schools is not something that I support. This will make it more difficult for people of faith to raise the funds needed for special religious education. It does not represent the many many hours of volunteer work that go into providing such education. Special Religious education is part of a wider, broader, inclusive society in which people of faith are part of the fabric of social life. This provides many benefits to the community as a whole. While Australians are able to claim tax deductions on donations to political parties, membership of those parties, and union fees, it seems genuinely unfair to prevent members of religious organisations from claiming similar deductions. Stripping special religious education of its DGR status will be difficult for regional communities in particular, where faith plays an important role in community life. This proposal therefore seems to disproportionately target vulnerable

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	regional communities who are scraping together funds for this education. Furthermore, at a time where Indigenous spirituality and belief are very much part of the education of Indigenous and non-Indigenous children, there may be consequences that come from withdrawing support for special religious education. This could mean that any organisation that promotes Indigenous spirituality in schools may be considered to be equivalent to other types of special religious education providers. This would mean that such organisations should also have their DGR status removed. This is not something that the community would or should support.
385	I would like to express my appreciation for the Special Religious Education within Government Schools, and the largest weekly volunteer labour force in Australia that enables this to happen. I ask the government to maintain or increase their support for this, not reduce it. That you want DGR status to be maintained for religious education in government schools. I want to see volunteers within the faith communities recognised within the DGR system. The community-wide benefits that faith communities bring.
386	Please do not change the status for faith related charities as we support the community and establish networks to help those in need.
387	Dear Commissioners I feel Religious education and religious activities conducted in public schools (all faiths not just Christian) are important to the general well being of youth and therefore society as general. The suggestion of removing DGR status from these groups would be unwise. Most of the people working in these areas are volunteers and therefore need to be supported well by their organisations for them to remain transparent and professional. The additional burden would result in less volunteers and lower standards. Many children will feel isolation within the education system, Yours Faithfully Fiona Brown
388	Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, impacting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union's ministry programs. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is good that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, such as animal welfare. Still, to achieve this, you are removing DGR status from religious charities like Scripture Union NSW, which will significantly impact the health and well-being of current and future students engaged in religious education and lunchtime groups. Australia is the most multicultural nation; approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on an ideology that religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that one of the best ways to promote social cohesion is through religious education in schools – putting extra pressure on this education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications. The Religious Education teachers in Australia represent our nation's largest weekly group of volunteers. In a report where, on the one hand, you are articulating the government's goal to double giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030, on the other hand, you are removing privileges and help from faith communities that represent a huge proportion of the people who will help you, and are helping you right now, achieve that goal. This is not a wise decision. On top of that, school building funds are to have their DGR status removed. Faith-based education is Australia's fastest-growing education sector – which tells us that this is what our communities want and are actively using. So why make it harder for this to happen and be successful? In short, you are penalising both the fastest-growing sector of education – predominantly privately funded by citizens – and putting undue pressure on the largest weekly group of volunteers in Australia, risking a lower level of social cohesion as a result. I think you and I can do a lot better than this. In light of everything I have stated above, I completely reject your presumption that these initiatives are of little "community-wide benefit" and would encourage you, even if you don't have a religious belief yourself, to understand that your report is discriminatory and minimising in its ideology – and that this will damage a Multicultural Australia as a result.
389	I am a retired High School teacher with a long association with Scripture Union NSW as a teacher, SRE teacher and volunteer worker in lunchtime groups and camps. I now live in Queensland and was informed today of plans to remove tax-deductibility from SU as an approved charity. Comments have been called for. In my view the removal of DRG status is a retrograde step given the proven value of NSW SU work over the years. There are many teachers like myself who have seen the benefit of such work with the attraction of tax-deductibility for sizeable giving. With this withdrawn the valuable work of SU will suffer. I have 50 years experience of RE teaching in both

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	NSW and QLD and have seen the benefit in many students and teachers alike from a variety of city and country towns especially central NSW. Please reconsider your proposed changes.
390	<p>Dear Commissioners, The largest group of volunteers in this country are from christian churches, they are involved in all kinds of charity work and without them, the government would have to/not be able to continue to run these needed services. I was a teacher in NSW Primary schools and I am a supporter of one of these volunteer groups who helps school children face the challenges of life, i.e. the Scripture Union NSW who run lunchtime groups in government schools, impacting 2,000 students weekly and I am greatly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is good that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, but to achieve this, if you are removing DGR status from religious charities like Scripture Union NSW, which will significantly impact the health and well-being of current and future students engaged in religious education and lunchtime groups. Australia is the most multicultural nation; approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on an ideology that religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that one of the best ways to promote social cohesion is through religious education in schools – putting extra pressure on this education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications. The Religious Education teachers in Australia represent our nation's largest weekly group of volunteers. In a report where, on the one hand, you are articulating the government's goal to double giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030, on the other hand, you are removing privileges and help from faith communities that represent a huge proportion of the people who will help you, and are helping you right now, achieve that goal. This is not a wise decision. On top of that, school building funds are to have their DGR status removed. Faith-based education is Australia's fastest-growing education sector – which tells us that this is what our communities want and are actively using. So why make it harder for this to happen and be successful? In short, you are penalising both the fastest-growing sector of education – predominantly privately funded by citizens – and putting undue pressure on the largest weekly group of volunteers in Australia, risking a lower level of social cohesion as a result. I think you and I can do a lot better than this. In light of everything I have stated above, I completely reject your presumption that these initiatives are of little “community-wide benefit” and would encourage you, even if you don't have a religious belief yourself, to understand that your report is discriminatory and minimising in its ideology – and that this will damage a Multicultural Australia as a result.</p>
391	As an Australian Christian tax payer I would like to see organisations that are important to me supported appropriately and people like me not being discriminated against or disadvantaged because of our faith. Please don't withdraw DGR status from charities that have DGR status for school building funds or to provide religious education in government schools.
392	<p>Dear Commissioners, I strongly believe that Scripture Union has had an incredible impact for good on NSW school students well being over many decades. You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, impacting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union's ministry programs. I have personally experienced and seen in others how this organisation has impacted whole school communities, creating and strengthening friendship across cultures and social groups. I am deeply concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is good that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, such as animal and environmental welfare. Still, to achieve this, you are removing DGR status from religious charities like Scripture Union NSW, which will significantly impact the health and well-being of current and future students engaged in religious education and lunchtime groups. Australia is the most multicultural nation; approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on an ideology that religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that one of the best ways to promote social cohesion is through religious education in schools – putting extra pressure on this education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications. The Religious Education teachers in Australia represent our nation's largest weekly group of volunteers. In a</p>

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393	<p>I would like the government to keep the deductible gift recipient system available for SRE in schools. I believe that teaching children about matters that affect their spiritual well-being is vital to their development as people. Chipping away at these options by taking away tax deductible donations is a poor decision. However, God's word is living and eternal and so will continue in spite of any government policy mankind can imagine. It will be a shame if our government decides to go ahead with this.</p>
394	<p>I appreciate the desire of the reform to include more initiatives in the DGR system. However, I don't believe that this should be at the expense of charities such as Scripture Union - which I fear this bill will do. As a teacher in the NSW education department, I believe religious lunchtime groups and religious education play a significant role in the wellbeing of students - especially in a multicultural Australia. The reason many of these activities are sustainable is because of the giving of generous donors through the DGR system. In recent years I have also become an SRE teacher, being supported through Scripture Union. Why? Because I am convinced of the good it does in public schools, especially in terms of student overall wellbeing. Research shows that one of the best ways to promote social cohesion is through religious education in schools – and so I believe that putting extra pressure on this education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications. In short, I reject the bill's assumption that organisations such as Scripture Union are of little community-wide benefit. I reject this premise because that is not what I see on the ground. I would encourage you to speak to principles and gauge whether what I experience is widespread. I would suspect it is. Sincerely, Josiah Clarke</p>
395	<p>I believe Special Religious Education plays an important role within Government Schools and provides an opportunity for students to reflect on "Christian" centred values, such as kindness, compassion, serving others, volunteering, and identifying ways in which they can serve God and their broader community. Many local, interstate and international charitable outreach initiatives are provided by SRE and Christian based organisations, and for this reason it is important that DGR status to be maintained for religious education in government schools. I wish to see volunteers within the faith communities recognised within the DGR system so that the community may continue to benefit from the values and outreach that Christians organisations can bring.</p>
396	<p>Dear Commissioners, You want to identify opportunities to further grow philanthropic giving in Australia and no doubt use this to enhance community and cohesion as a nation. However, there is a push to exclude religious applications of this and this decision would be a detriment to countless individuals and the nation as a whole. Take for example, Scripture Union NSW which runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, impacting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union's ministry programs and offer a wide range of benefits to students and the school communities. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is good that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, such as animal welfare. Still, to achieve this, you are removing DGR status from religious charities like Scripture Union NSW. I personally know numerous individuals that have gone through tough times at school, feeling disconnected and are considered at risk, with Scripture Union providing a safe space, fostering connection and support. Australia is the most multicultural nation; approximately 60% of Australians identify with a</p>

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	<p>religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on a disturbing ideology that religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that one of the best ways to promote social cohesion is through religious education in schools – putting extra pressure on this education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications. The Religious Education teachers in Australia represent our nation's largest weekly group of volunteers. In a report where, on the one hand, you are articulating the government's goal to double giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030, on the other hand, you are removing privileges and help from faith communities that represent a huge proportion of the people who will help you, and are helping you right now, achieve that goal. This is not a wise decision. On top of that, school building funds are to have their DGR status removed. Faith-based education is Australia's fastest-growing education sector – which tells us that this is what our communities want and are actively using. So why make it harder for this to happen and be successful? In short, you are penalising both the fastest-growing sector of education – predominantly privately funded by citizens – and putting undue pressure on the largest weekly group of volunteers in Australia, risking a lower level of social cohesion as a result. I think you and I can do a lot better than this. In light of everything I have stated above, I completely reject your presumption that these initiatives are of little "community-wide benefit" and would encourage you, even if you don't have a religious belief yourself, to understand that your report is discriminatory and minimising in its ideology – and that this will damage a Multicultural Australia as a result.</p>
397	<p>Religious education groups made a strong positive impact on both me and my siblings while progressing through the public school system. The work they do benefits the children and teachers of those schools and should hence be considered suitable for inclusion in the DGR system.</p>
398	<p>Re the removal of DGR status for religious education in schools. There is no doubt that behavioural problems are increasing, with kids going on to breaking, car stealing etc. Religious education plays an important part in helping kids understand "right" from "wrong" based on our legal and social systems, much of which was, and is, based on Biblical teachings. Too many kids are not taught right and wrong in the home, at least try to get them taught somewhere</p>
399	<p>Dear Commissioners, Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, impacting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union's ministry programs. I am extremely concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is good that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, such as animal welfare. Still, to achieve this, you are removing DGR status from religious charities like Scripture Union NSW, which will significantly impact the health and well-being of current and future students engaged in religious education and lunchtime groups. Australia is the most multicultural nation; approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on an ideology that religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that one of the best ways to promote social cohesion is through religious education in schools – putting extra pressure on this education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications. The Religious Education teachers in Australia represent our nation's largest weekly group of volunteers. In a report where, on the one hand, you are articulating the government's goal to double giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030, on the other hand, you are removing privileges and help from faith communities that represent a huge proportion of the people who will help you, and are helping you right now, achieve that goal. This is not a wise decision. On top of that, school building funds are to have their DGR status removed. Faith-based education is Australia's fastest-growing education sector – which tells us that this is what our communities want and are actively using. So why make it harder for this to happen and be successful? In short, you are penalising both the fastest-growing sector of education – predominantly privately funded by citizens – and putting undue pressure on the largest weekly group of volunteers in Australia, risking a lower level of social cohesion as a result. I think you and I can do a lot better than this. In light of everything I have stated above, I completely reject your presumption that these initiatives are of little "community-wide benefit" and would encourage you, even if you don't have a religious belief yourself, to understand that your report is discriminatory and minimising in its ideology – and that this will damage a Multicultural Australia as a result.</p>

