

Brief comments received

No.	Comment
600	<p>Dear Commissioner, There are not enough words to describe how impactful and supportive it is to have religious education and lunchtime groups in schools. During stressful exam seasons and particularly the HSC, having a group of fellow Christians to share our struggles and successes with was a great help, and this wouldn't have been possible without the good work of the religious education volunteers from Scripture Union. By removing the DGR status from religious groups in schools, you would significantly cripple their ability to raise funds to run Religious Education across thousands of schools across Australia.</p>
601	<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 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>
602	<p>I am writing to express my concern with the news of the potential withdrawal of DGR funding to religious organisations. As a person of faith who volunteers at church, Lifeline telephone crisis support, Kairos prison ministry and scripture in schools, the impact would be significant. As a volunteer</p>

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	<p>scripture teacher taking four classes a week I see the benefits these classes bring. At a time when there is data showing that parents are shifting from public to faith based educational facilities I find this potential consideration ill-conceived. Anecdotally I hear from parents and children that faith based schools provide the moral and discipline factor that is seen as increasingly absent in the public system . Please will you consider the long term impact of the potential withdrawal of funding. I am concerned that the increasing disparity between public and faith based schools will only further the concerning disparity already so evident in our once proud Australian multicultural and multifaceted Australia. Thank you so much for your consideration of this email.</p>
603	<p>In response to the draft report, I wish to address the potential withdrawal of the DGR status for providers of religious education in schools. As a publicly educated student (primary and secondary) who also attended Special Religious Education, I know the value first hand SRE provides; not only to students but staff and the community around the school. Beginning at a NSW Priority Funded Highschool in 2001 (Marsden High School), I remember noting a lack of community feel to the school. No community events were organised, we didn't participate in inter-school sport and there was minimal crossover of the year groups. In 2005 we had a SRE teacher begin. This drastically began the renewal of culture at the school. Different generations were meeting, free events were being organised, people started volunteering outside the school community! This is further notable when thinking about the demographics of Marsden which was and is a very culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse place. The richness, diversity, support and care that SRE teachers provided here and I'm sure in other schools is so valuable. They can provide mentorship to young people, aiding teachers in this role who have reduced time to invest outside the classroom due to other commitments. They may also help reduce the "culture" gap between private and public schools. Outside the school walls, having multiple faith communities support one person also creates a great sense of community throughout the suburbs. I know multiple churches meet together regularly to support the current SRE worker at Marsden High School. These new relationships wouldn't have otherwise existed if it wasn't for the SRE teacher. To aid the local community in their support for these workers, I request that DGR status to be maintained for religious education in government schools. In this current cost of living crisis, removal of DGR will impact giving, resulting in less volunteer time, less community interaction and less additional school resources for public schools that need it most. Kind regards</p>
604	<p>Dear Commissioner I used to have scripture in school and loved it. The volunteers willingly gave up their time to teach it. For some, it may be the only way to hear about god. We had christian books read to us such as joni and pilgrims progress.</p>
605	<p>Dear Commissioners, I write to express my deep concern regarding the proposed reforms to the Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) system outlined in the draft report. While I appreciate the intention to expand the system's coverage to include initiatives like animal welfare, the decision to revoke DGR status from religious charities such as Scripture Union NSW is troubling and will have far-reaching consequences for the well-being of students engaged in religious education and associated programs. Australia prides itself on being a multicultural nation, with approximately 60% of its population identifying with a religious affiliation. Despite this rich diversity, the draft report appears to disregard the significant community-wide benefits that religious education provides. Research consistently demonstrates that religious education, particularly in schools, plays a vital role in promoting social cohesion. Removing support for this essential aspect of education is short-sighted and undermines our collective efforts towards a cohesive society. Religious education teachers constitute the largest weekly group of volunteers in Australia. It is contradictory to advocate for an increase in charitable giving and volunteering while simultaneously withdrawing support from faith communities that contribute significantly to these goals. Penalizing this</p>

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	<p>dedicated volunteer force and undermining their efforts is not conducive to achieving the government's stated aim of doubling giving by 2030. Furthermore, the proposed removal of DGR status for school building funds disregards the preferences of many Australians who actively choose faith-based education for their children. The growth of this sector underscores its importance to communities across the country. It is counterproductive to hinder the success of this thriving sector by imposing additional obstacles. In summary, the proposed reforms risk penalizing both the fastest-growing sector of education and the largest weekly group of volunteers in Australia. Such actions not only undermine social cohesion but also perpetuate discrimination against religious communities. I urge you to reconsider these proposals and recognize the invaluable contributions of religious charities and volunteers to our society. It is imperative that the DGR system remains inclusive and supportive of all charitable endeavors, including religious education. Failure to do so would not only be detrimental to the fabric of our society but also contrary to the principles of equality and diversity that Australia upholds. Thank you for considering my perspective on this matter. Yours sincerely</p>
606	<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. 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. Thank you for your time in considering this.</p>
607	<p>January 30, 2024 Dear Commissioners, As a concerned grandmother, and a practising Christian, I disagree with the DGR draft report recommending that “charities that have DGR status for school building funds or to provide religious education in government schools” have their DGR status withdrawn. The weekly run Scripture Union NSW lunchtime groups in Government Schools, impact around 2,000 students every week and are vital to Scripture Union’s work. Removing DGR status from religious charities like Scripture Union NSW, will have a detrimental impact on the health and well-being of students both now and in the future and hence our communities generally and for this reason I think it unwise. Our Religious Education teachers, represent our nation's largest weekly group of volunteers!!! If the government’s goal is to double financial and voluntary giving by 2030, then what you are doing seems to contradict this goal. I reject your presumption that these initiatives are of little “community-wide benefit”. Your report comes across as discriminatory and it seems it will very likely result in damage to Australia’s Multicultural society.</p>

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608	<p>View this email in your browser Logosdor doesn't normally send through emails such as this however, given we are passionate about children everywhere walking with Jesus, we thought it right that we bring this to your attention. BACKGROUND – TAX DEDUCTIBLE REFORM As you know Australia allows certain charitable organisations to offer tax deductible receipts to their donors. Logosdor benefits from this (through our IAM Arts fund) and will continue to do so HOWEVER a proposal currently in front of the Government, from the Productivity Commission, recommends a number of changes including that “charities providing religious education in government schools” have their Tax Deductible status withdrawn. (The full report can be found here.) This means you won't be able to receive a Tax Deduction when financially supporting an organisation involved in SRE. This will negatively impact SRE, meaning less children in schools will hear the Gospel. Logosdor is focused on children EVERYWHERE walking with Jesus, including here in Australia, in our schools. URGENT AND IMPORTANT: The Commission is asking for public comment - By 9 February! Could I ask that you please take 5 minutes today to make a comment. You can do this here: Share a brief comment (less than 500 words) https://www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/current/philanthropy/comment Key points you could include in your comment &/or submission include: Your appreciation for the Special Religious Education within Government Schools, and the largest weekly volunteer labour force in Australia that enables this to happen – asking the government to maintain or increase their support for this, not reduce it. That you want Tax Deductibility status to be maintained for religious education in government schools. That you want to see volunteers within the faith communities recognised within the DGR (Deductible Gift Recipient) system. The community-wide benefits that faith communities bring, being student well-being and social cohesion If you are unsure what to write, here are some paragraphs you can use as ideas. You are welcome to use them as is, but perhaps more impacting would be changing some parts into your own words: I'm concerned about what these suggested DGR reforms will mean for Australia. Research shows very clearly that Religious Education provides strong community-wide benefits because 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. By removing DGR status from Religious Education, 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</p>
609	<p>Dear Commissioners, I was a shy, insecure teenager who didn't fit into a school playground group, and wandered lonely at lunchtimes. However, one day a week volunteers with Scripture Union ran a lunch time group which became a safe haven. I invited another student who hid in the library at lunchtime. We found acceptance, fun and friendship. We were introduced to the love of God, which shaped our lives for the better. As a result, I have supported the work of Scripture Union for over fifty years. I ask that you do not underestimate the value of providing religious education in schools. Please maintain the DGR status for religious education in schools to support the financial giving of supporters. Yours sincerely, Alison Olsen 12 Cocos Palm Drive, Bomaderry 2541</p>
610	<p>Dear Productivity Commission, I am writing to urge you to please not withdraw the DGR status of special religious education in government schools. I greatly benefited from the visits from the volunteers and paid workers from the Scripture Union when I attend Cromer Primary School during the 1990s, and I want children to have access to the diverse range of views on offer for the sake of a rich education in all matters. I understand that you are</p>

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	considering removing DGR status for building funds; please consider special religious education as completely separate and highly worthy in its own right. Yours sincerely, Adam Wood Clemton Park NSW 2206
611	Dear Commissioner's Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools that are highly beneficial to students and to teachers. Anchor RE supports two teachers on northern beaches schools - the schools are very appreciative of their services. I am highly concerned you are removing DGR status from religious charities like Scripture Union NSW and Anchor RE. This will be a discouragement to those that give to that organisation. This is not a quality decision for Australia of whom over 60 percent admit to having a religion and it will have long-term ramifications for society and the schools. 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.
612	Dear Commissioners, I am very disappointed to hear that the Government is proposing the withdrawal of Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status from Scripture Union (SU). SU NSW is a well established religious organisation that runs lunchtime groups in Government schools impacting 2000 or more students per week. These groups offer religious education to student given by volunteers who give their time for a very worthy cause. Studies have shown that religious education has proven to have well-being benefits for students in schools and is vital for promoting social cohesion. Taking this away from students would have a significant impact on their welfare. I myself benefited greatly from the Scripture classes I attended as a primary and high school student. I lived in a dysfunctional home with parents who had major relationship issues and my Scripture teachers taught me resilience, understanding, compassion and forgiveness. They can still do the same for the new generations and should be given priority in schools. Therefore I strongly oppose any possibility of the DGR status being removed from SU NSW as it would have a disastrous affect on the resources available for religious education in schools. I thank you for your time and attention to this very important matter. Kind regards
613	For many years I have supported financially the ministry of Scripture Union in government schools. I have also been a volunteer school scripture teacher for over 35 years. This is and should continue to be a vital part of the school curriculum. Looking back the classes, lunchtime meetings, holiday camps and other activities all have a positive impact on today's students. Being financed by donations it is now a concern the Department is now considering the withdrawal of the Deductible Gift Recipient status from all faith based organisations. I encourage you to reconsider the benefits to the community made by such organisations and restore the taxation benefit. Yours Sincerely
614	Scripture Union was a vital resource for me in my years at high school. I was helped immensely at a time when I was considering suicide. I would urge you not to consider removing support for such a positive influence in our schools.
615	It is not in the interest of this country and our children to remove Special Religious Education within government schools. Our country has a rich Christian heritage that has benefited every area of our society. Funding should not be cut but increased to maintain the largest volunteer force in our country. Throughout our history the funding of the the teaching and growth of Christianity has been strongly by governments in this country. It has always benefited and grown the social cohesion of our society. Continual withdrawal of support has led to the breakdown of our society. So continue to fund and encourage funding so as to maintain and grow our society.

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616	I feel it is important to have the opportunity for children to learn about faith practice in school so they are educated in body, mind and spirit. the whole volunteer system this depends on needs the financial support through the tax system.
617	Dear Commissioners, In the earliest days of the colony in NSW it was the church leaders that began education and fast forward to today the Scripture Union of NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, benefiting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union NSW's ministry programs and in turn contribute to the greater good of Australian society. just as Scripture in Schools contributes to the growth of good character in students based on the sound biblical principles that were established in the early colony of NSW. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is commendable that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, reducing red tape, and simplifying the current system. However, 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 Special Religious Education (SRE) and lunchtime groups. Australia is one of the most multicultural nations on earth, and over 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on a misguided ideology that suggests religion is of no community-wide benefit. I would humbly submit that research shows that religious education in schools is one of the best ways to promote social cohesion. Both religious and non-religious parents choose to place their children in SRE. Putting extra pressure on religious education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications for our society. The SRE 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 philanthropic 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. I do not believe that this is not a wise decision, and sincerely pray that the final report is amended to consider this broader perspective. Yours faithfully Charles Thomas Noonan J.P.
618	I'm a strong advocate for Special Religious Education within government schools. It is the largest weekly volunteer labour force in Australia. I am asking the government to maintain or increase their support for this, not reduce it.
619	Dear Commissioners, I am concerned that the proposed reforms to the DGR system, due to the crippling effect it will have on religious charities and their ability to support and improve the wellbeing of school students in NSW. It is a well recognised fact that religious groups have an overall positive effect on society. This is especially true of organisations (such as Scripture Union NSW) that support SRE and lunchtime groups in NSW schools. Given the wide reach of these organisations (due to a large and committed volunteer workforce) and the clear benefits they provide to students, it is clear that government support to these groups should be increased and not withdrawn. If the government truly seeks the wellbeing of its young people, the proposed changes to the DGR will not help achieve those goals.
620	Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, benefiting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union NSW's ministry programs and in turn contribute to the greater good of Australian society. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is commendable that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, reducing red tape, and simplifying the current system. However, 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 Special Religious Education (SRE) and lunchtime groups. Australia is one of the most multicultural nations on earth, and over 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your

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	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.
623	Sample response (400 words) Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, benefiting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union NSW's ministry programs and in turn contribute to the greater good of Australian society. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is commendable that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, reducing red tape, and simplifying the current system. However, 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 Special Religious Education (SRE) and lunchtime groups. Australia is one of the most multicultural nations on earth, and over 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on a misguided ideology that suggests religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that religious education in schools is one of the best ways to promote social cohesion. Both religious and non-religious parents choose to place their children in SRE. Putting extra pressure on religious education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications for our society. The SRE 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 philanthropic 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.
624	It is time to protect individuals' freedom and belief - not restrict it. I am disappointed with the Government's track record on this and other matters relating to individual choice and belief..
625	I'm really disappointed that this enquiry seems to contain an attack on religious institutions. The recommendation that giving to Special Religious Education providers lose its tax deductible status shows a poor understanding of the value this service provides, both to the many Australian families who choose this service, to the school (providing a volunteer teaching force in a time of grave teacher shortages) and to the wider community.
626	I want government support for SRE and school building funds through the maintenance of their DGR status. Faith institutions offer so much to the community in terms of citizenship, moral teachings and multiculturalism but they also add instructional and educational programs in ESL, family support, protection of the needy and disadvantaged etc. With so many services provided freely at no cost to the government, all assistance should be given to enable their reach to continue.
627	I am very disappointed to learn that the Draft Report of the Productivity Commission is recommending the removal of SRE in public schools and private school building funds from its Deductible Gift Recipients. Thousands of children benefit from SRE every week and SRE teachers represent the largest cohort of volunteers in the country. Given that people of faith are inclined to be much more philanthropic, this move seems to fly in the face of the Government's desire outcome of promoting philanthropy. And given that SRE is the only target, this seems to be in tune with the current wok agenda rather than with pragmatic government.

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628	I believe that spiritual education plays a vital role in the wellbeing of children and young people. Particularly in a diverse Australia. SRE is done by volunteers for the good of young people and should have protection as a charity.
629	Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, benefiting thousands of students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union NSW’s ministry programs and in turn contribute to the greater good of Australian society. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is commendable that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, reducing red tape, and simplifying the current system. However, 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 Special Religious Education (SRE) and lunchtime groups. Australia is one of the most multicultural nations on earth, and over 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on a misguided ideology that suggests religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that religious education in schools is one of the best ways to promote social cohesion. Both religious and non-religious parents choose to place their children in SRE. Putting extra pressure on religious education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications for our society. The SRE 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 philanthropic 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.
630	Hi there, I am writing to say that Special Religious Education (SRE) has had a vital impact on me, both as a student and now an SRE teacher at a local primary school (Botany Public School). I value the contribution of SRE in fostering in me a love for the bible and Jesus which teaches me to be generous in all aspects of life - relationships, with my time, and with my money. This love for Jesus, which SRE helped foster is critical in my disposition to give towards philanthropic causes. This is why I support maintaining DGR status for SRE and school building funds.
631	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 assist with one such group - SUPA Club at Timbumburi Public School. 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. Australian community is based on volunteers - people volunteering in many ways to help others. 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. I completely reject your presumption that these initiatives are of little “community-wide benefit” and would

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	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.
632	I am very concerned that the Draft Report recommends the removal of tax deductions for donations made to religious charities in support of SRE. It appears that the Commission believes that SRE does not produce community-wide support - given that 'community-wide support' is the first guiding Principle of the report. This belief of the Commission regarding SRE is NOT supported by the evidence (see https://ccd.sydneycatholic.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/SRE-executive-summary-Nov2018.pdf) , nor by my experience of SRE - as a long-term volunteer SRE teacher. In a context of crisis in public schools, where thousands of lessons are unsupervised each week, why on earth would we want to cripple Australia's largest year-round volunteer army of SRE teachers who provide close to 10,000 lessons each week? As a person of faith, I highly value and practise philanthropic giving (my wife and I give away about 20% of our income each year). If the Commission is interested in increasing philanthropic giving (eg. the Government's desire to double giving by 2030), then attacking the giving from people of faith is not a smart move - especially given the evidence that people of faith are 25% more likely than their secular counterparts to donate money and 23% more likely to volunteer time (see https://www.hoover.org/research/religious-faith-and-charitable-giving). I fear that a blinkered ideological agenda is driving the proposed undermining of SRE rather than any informed understanding of its benefits.
633	The removal of tax-deductibility from SRE donations expresses an opinion that religious education is not seen as a benefit to communities. In a space in which the religious beliefs of children and their parents hold little influence, the space of SRE provides students with an opportunity to explore their belief and learn. Given the emphasis and pride our politicians have about our multicultural Australia, religion, which for many Australians is richly intertwined with culture, is constantly being quietly sidelined. In order for Australia to be a country full of curious and kind people, questioning of religious groups should continue to be common practice, but the education of young people in their faith is important if they must prepare for a life of questions. Rich community is built through hard conversations, and for Australia to have pride in its multiculturalism, we should encourage the rich cultural and religious practices of the people who live here. Donations toward SRE will decrease as a result of this removal of tax-deductible giving and religious groups will not have the resources to provide teachers and continue to advocate for SRE.
634	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

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	<p>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.</p>
635	<p>I'm writing with regard to the DGR system and how it is important in the provision of funds to continue religious education through SRE in Government Schools and Scripture Union Lunch Time groups for children. I have ran a lunch time group for Scripture Union at Mt Colah Primary School and have seen the encouragement it provides to the children attending, helping them build confidence in themselves and helping them to grow in life skills. I am also a scripture teacher at Hornsby South Public School, and see how much the children enjoy learning about God and ways to live in harmony with others and the world. I strongly support the continuance of DGR status for funds donated to help religious education. Research has shown that people with faith in God in their lives are happier, less anxious individuals. Kerry Wills Mob 0459759306 11 Maranta Street Hornsby NSW 2077</p>
636	<p>It has been proven that SRE in schools has a huge impact on the wellness of those students who attend. As the teachers who faithfully fulfill this role are professional trained and supported by the local community, one encouragement to give is the tax incentive. Please reconsider taking this away as it will impact our children's wellness and feelings of self-worth.</p>
637	<p>It has been proven that SRE in schools has a huge impact on the wellness of those students who attend. As the teachers who faithfully fulfill this role are professional trained and supported by the local community, one encouragement to give is the tax incentive. Please reconsider taking this away as it will impact our children's wellness and feelings of self-worth.</p>
638	<p>I write in relation to the Productivity Commission Draft Report regarding philanthropic giving in Australia (Future foundation for giving). I strongly support maintaining the DGR status for SRE (Special Religious Education) in public schools. I have volunteered to teach SRE at my local public school and my own children have participated in SRE classes at the same school. I value the impact that these lessons have had assisting the students to develop a faith-based world view. I value the connections that SRE fosters between faith-based communities and students within the school. I value the contribution that SRE classes make to fostering a vibrant, authentic, and respectful pluralistic community at the school. I believe that it is critical for a democratic, multi-faith society (like Australia) to recognize the role that religious communities play in the social fabric of the nation. Citizens with a religious worldview are 25% more likely to donate their money and 23% more likely to donate their time. The government should both recognize and celebrate this philanthropic motivation that exists within religious communities. At a personal level, my Christian faith provides me with the motivation to make regular donations to the SRE program at my local school. I derive great joy from making tax deductible donations to a program that engages students with the tenets of faith and cultivates social acceptance amongst the wider student body. Without such programs, the link between students</p>

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	and their faith communities would be threatened and the risk of isolation and radicalization increase. For these reasons I strongly support maintaining the DRG status for SRE.
639	My husband, Rev. Warren Esdale and I are concerned that reforms are being proposed to remove the tax deductibility of donations for religious charities. We and our church currently support two excellent SRE teachers who serve in our local high schools and are well loved and respected by their students, some of whom attend our church. Knowing that financial gifts to support these teachers will be tax-deductible is a great motivation for our church members and us to give generously in support of this ministry. Our own two children have benefited greatly from SRE in government schools, and we hope that the Government will increase rather than decrease their support for such work. Along with many other Australians of faith, we hope that DGR status will be maintained for religious charities, school building funds and special religious education in government schools, and that faith communities will be recognised and valued within the DGR system. Faith-based schools, churches and organisations bring immense value to Australia - caring for the marginalised and bringing hope, belonging and joy to many (young and old). We hope that the committee will recognise this and reject an anti-faith bias as they make their decision.
640	I attended SRE as a student and it was an important and meaningful part of my life. The genuine love and care of the SRE teachers towards every child was one of the things that drew me to the Christian Faith. As an adult, that faith motivates me to be generous with my time and money, including volunteering and charitable donations. Statistics show that people with faith are more likely to support charity. Tax deductibility is an important factor that encourages people to donate, and shouldn't be removed from institutions supporting SRE. With over 10,000 lessons going unsupervised in schools each week, one would think that the government should be SUPPORTING the 100s of volunteers who generously up their time each week to look after those children, and share messages of love, joy, hope, peace and forgiveness.
641	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.
642	I am concerned that removal of DGR from religious institutions is counterproductive. Research shows very clearly that Religious Education provides strong community-wide benefits because 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. A review of Christian organizations such as the Salvation Army, Vincent de Paul for instance provide immense benefit to the poorer section of community and provide a service that is not provided by any government body. More than half of the population in Australia has some connection to religion and to take away DGR status will have an impact on the contribution that religious organisations are able to provide to the vulnerable people within the community. 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 that should not be taken away.

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643	<p>Please keep donations for sre in schools tax free. Since knowing there is a God who created them,loves them and wants a relationship with each of them is vitally important to every person"s spiritual health, and young people in particular. SRE was were I first heard this good news. I learnt every person has worth and value inciuding myself and so to treat others the way I wanted to be treated. So I want to see our government support SRE in every way possible ,piease.</p>
644	<p>Please do not remove the DGR status from Christian schools and government schools that support SRE Special Religious Education. Society benefits from and seeks these types of education, as seen by the increase in enrolment, and they are largely supported via donations from families within such schools, who need the tax deductions.</p>
645	<p>Dear Commissioner, I am greatly concerned by the proposed reforms to remove tax deductibility status from a number of organisations who are trying to benefit their communities. The proposed changes will not only impact the organisation's who seek donations, but also the community who are willing to give of their hard earned cash in seeking to make a difference. Tax deductible status on these donations has the potential to double the impact, as the community can afford to give generously. However, without tax deductible status, in this cost of living crisis people who desire to make a difference may not be able to, or they may have to reduce what they can afford to donate. There are so many far reaching impacts of this decision, that I urge you to carefully consider these before impacting the lives of so many. Sincerely,</p>
646	<p>Dear Commissioners, I recognise you may have seen the following words many times already. I don't want that to detract from the strength of my opposition to the recommendation following the DGP system review. I believe the words below eloquently capture my thoughts. I urge you not proceed with the review recommendations. 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-</p>

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	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.
647	I am very sad to hear that in analysing motivations for philanthropic giving there is a move to discontinue tax deductions for religious instruction in schools and elsewhere. The basis for this country was Christian ethics, and I am just reading about the wonderful difference Lachlan Macquarie made to the colony with those ethics. As a child I enjoyed Scripture at school and also Sunday School, but these days many do not have this opportunity except at School. I am asking you not to remove this option to improve children's lives.
648	Philanthropy is vital to our Australian society, however I would argue that for developing minds SRE is even more so. I am only a 19 year old and I have never filled out anything like this but when I saw this report I felt that I had to write, primary school for me and more specifically SRE is very recent and fresh within my mind. The program itself for me brought a deeper and more rich understanding to life and how we should reasonably interact with each other than anything else taught in school. For many kids I know it was a space in which they felt more vulnerable to open up and share and whether you believe in what is taught or not, the values themselves from a humanitarian standpoint build a better society than anything else could. The change of character I saw in myself as well as my friends as a result of attending SRE is without a doubt in my mind the most positive change I experienced as a child.
649	God in Jesus brought me to Himself over 40 years ago and convicted me of sharing my money and time with others. Tax deductibility (DGR status) is one way charities and churches have of increasing gifts people like my husband and I give. I so value the contribution SRE makes to young lives and to Australian society because of the impact relationship with God improves other’s relationships in the wider community thus decreasing antisocial behaviour and improving kids and their families’ lives immeasurably. I ask you to continue to support maintaining DGR status for SRE and at least low fees school building funds, and want the Government to recognise and value the contribution faith communities make to Australian society. I have been an SRE teacher for almost 30 years and am one of the 10000 volunteers in this position. Please do not dismiss this aspect of our contribution to our community.
650	To enable the very valuable contribution SRE makes in our schools it is vital that tax deductions are not taken away. Youthworks does much to educate, train and ensure correct accreditation of all volunteer SRE teachers. Taking away RIGS tax deductible funding would cripple Youthworks. SRE provides effective values education which empowers student decision making and gives a basis of the values of our Western society. It is a safe place to explore the deeper questions of cultural and religious identity in an environment of trust and respect. Special Religious Education needs to be encouraged so that children can learn and come to an understanding of the spiritual side of life. It is from here they can make informed decisions on how they shape their lives. SRE teachers work voluntarily so are not a drain on government spending but Youthworks and organisations involved in making SRE possible need all the support they can get to continue making sure that SRE is of high quality. SRE is not something that should be "swept under the carpet". It should be valued and supported by the government.
651	My faith drives my giving habits ,money and time, and the value of tax deductibility (DGR status) for your financial contributions. I value the contribution SRE makes to young lives and to Australian society and have enjoyed teaching this for over a decade. The students' faces show joy and interest in

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	learning about God - a higher and stronger power, and how he loves them. I support the maintenance of DGR status for SRE and school building funds, and I urge the Government to recognise and value the contribution faith communities make to Australian society.
652	tax deductions for donations made to religious charities in support of SRE. SRE is an important implementation to learn Gods word at school and without it we risk kids doing many things which don't align for Gods grace.
653	Hello, My faith in God drives my desire to give not only of my money, but also of my time as a volunteer in the community. I teach SRE in public schools every week as a volunteer. I do this because I believe it has a huge impact on the spiritual well being of the students in my class. I also believe that SRE has a positive influence on inclusivity in our public schools. I regualry donate money to charities in Australia and overseas. Knowing that charity donations are tax deductible enables me to give more. Without the tax deductions, I would be more reluctant at times. Please do not abolish the tax deductible aspect of charitable giving.
654	At a time when it is reported that almost 10,000 lessons are unsupervised each week in NSW public schools, to penalise SRE where the volunteers provide close to 10,000 supervised lessons in NSW public schools is foolish. SRE delivers key psychological benefits to students, leading in the longer term to greater generosity, an aim of the Government. It promotes multiculturalism and social acceptance and also reduces the risk of student radicalisation. It is therefore not in the Governments best interest to remove SRE from the Deductible Gift Recipients list. Instead, it should be promoted.
655	Special Religious Education (SRE) is a positive contribution to school life. I have taught SRE in local primary schools for 29 years. Because of my faith and belief I have given significant amounts of time and money to support SRE in schools. SRE is valuable in schools because it contributes and promotes positive values in school communities. Well being and mental health of students are enhanced through SRE programmes; and positive attitudes toward unity and multiculturalism are presented. I ask that the government recognise and value the contribution that faith communities make to our Australian society and I ask that the government maintain tax deductibility (DGR status) for organisations and funds supporting SRE.
656	I recommend maintaining tax deductions for donations made to religious charities in support of Special Religious Education (SRE). Young people today are easily led astray, & need to be taught good christian values. My faith drives my giving habits, both money and time, and tax deductibility allows me to make larger financial contributions. I want the Government to recognise and value the contribution faith communities make to Australian society.
657	My understanding is that The Productivity Commission is recommending the removal of SRE in public schools as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR). It seems like the Productivity Commission does not believe that there is not community wide support for SRE. However, numbers of SRE enrollments are on the rise. SRE provides spiritual and psychological benefits to it young participants and is conducted by an army of 10 000 volunteers. Faith groups are not commercial ventures so support from DGR scheme is helpful and the removal of it will negatively impact people from multiple faith backgrounds (including secular) who value SRE for their children. Kind Regards, Steven Thurgar
658	SRE is an invaluable resource in our society. As someone whose has observed its benefits for almost 20 years I can see the way it impacts lives and that is way people give towards it, because they believe in it. It makes a difference in individual lives, in families and whole communities.

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659	<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 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>
660	<p>I value value the contribution SRE makes to young lives and to Australian society through its many volunteers, teaching and educating the next generation on the foundational basis of morality and ethics in our world.</p>
661	<p>I have been an SRE teacher in NSW Public Schools for 23 years. I have also been involved in the committee responsible for raising funds for SRE in local High Schools. I am now branching out to run lunchtime groups in NSW Public Schools. Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, benefitting 2,000 students weekly. 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. Still, to achieve this, you are removing DGR status from religious charities like Scripture Union NSW and committees who raise funds for SRE in High Schools, which will significantly impact the health and well-being of current and future students engaged in religious education and lunchtime groups. There is clear evidence that SRE provides key psychological benefits to students; promotes multiculturalism and social acceptance; enables students to safely explore their identity and reduces the risk of student radicalisation. Australia is the most multicultural nation; approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Aboriginal Australians are also a religious people. 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. The evidence indicates that people of faith are 25% more likely than their secular counterpart to donate money and 23% more likely to volunteer time. 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</p>

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	<p>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. I have taught for many years in Faith-based schools and my sons attended Faith-based High Schools. Faith-based education is Australia's fastest-growing education sector – which tells us that this is what our communities want and are actively using. These schools are predominantly privately funded by citizens, so why make it harder for them to function and be successful? 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>
662	<p>I value the opportunity to contribute to this enquiry. I am a retired teacher, counsellor and also worked in the area of nursing, (did not complete my formal training). I am writing to ask that tax deductibility be continued, (DGR), regarding SRE. I have been a volunteer as an SRE teacher for the past 10yrs. Benefits to the students ages 5yrs to 12yrs are invaluable on a personal level and to Australian society. * The curriculum encourages self-esteem, care for others, honesty, respect, regard for the environment, care for their surroundings and their own belongings, (as well as others) and gratitude for our beautiful country, our democracy and Australian values. The average class size is 22 students. I teach in 3 schools and 4 classes in Western Sydney. The workbooks and teacher resources are of a high standard and quality and freely given to each student. They can take these home and discuss the content with their carers/parents. The class encourages teamwork and friendships, as (SRE classes are comprised of students from their regular roll classes, according to the SRE choice of their parents). Our training is thorough according to all Government regulations. I have not been aware of any waste regarding the use of teaching resources. The curriculum cycles every 3yrs, so waste is avoided, new material may be sparingly added, as required. Volunteers are encouraged to look after these resources which are returned midyear and the end of the year. The values and learning are foundational to the children growing up to be fulfilled, respectful and contributing citizens, hopefully, generationally. This has been my experience, (now, age 72yrs) as a past student participating in SRE. Also, my daughter and her 3 children, have had these benefits. That is my experience of SRE going back 4 generations, (including my mother). I would also like to add the value of DGR for private school funding, as my daughter and grandchildren have benefitted from this funding. The money for school building projects, is being already, put to extensive use of these facilities, (again, for generational use). Auditing and accounting practices are in place for all monies spent, as should be the case for all monies received. I understand that "money doesn't grow on trees", as my mother would often, remind me. We need to pay taxes and for everyone who receives tax benefits to be accountable and transparent, in the genuine use of this money. Also, for any and all fraudulent activity to be uncovered. Unfortunately, cases of fraud, in many forms has occurred, as is reported by various news outlets. I need to add this, (just to reinforce my comments), that the SRE material taught, emphasizes, honesty and the far-reaching impact of lying in people's lives. Thank you for the privilege of contributing to this valuable enquiry. Your expertise and the Government request, that DGR be evaluated according to the guidelines is appreciated.</p>
663	<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</p>

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	<p>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>
664	<p>To It May Concern: A serious matter has come to my attention as a Christian who worships in Port Macquarie. This matter concerns tax reductions for Christian Schools, SRE in government schools and many charities that are enabled to reach, help and bless countless thousands of people in need. I strongly oppose any such Bill that would be devastating to all those who would be affected by it. It would seriously affect the ongoing ministry of Christian schools who are enabled by this tax reduction to give affordable Christian education to countless young Australian students and ultimately deny the opportunity for another countless number of students in our government schools to be nurtured in the Christian faith which has been the foundation of this great country from the beginning. Thirdly, it would ultimately largely cripple the essential help given by thousands of charities, to so many who desperately need that special help given by these charities, particularly at this time when so many families are suffering because of serious economic conditions. To me it seems amazing that anybody would want to introduce such a Bill that would so desperately affect the lives of so many families and people with such special needs. Praying that this unbelievable and seriously negative Bill will be totally and completely rejected for the sake of so many Australians. Yours very sincerely, Retired Christian missionary and pastor</p>
665	<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</p>

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	<p>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>
666	<p>I am a person of faith who believes in giving generously to support the wellbeing of others and the community. I value the tax deductibility of my donations to charities that have DGR status, as it allows me to give more and reduce my taxable income. One of the charities that I support is SRE, which provides special religious education to students in public schools. I think SRE is a vital service that helps young people develop their spiritual, moral and ethical values, and fosters social cohesion and respect for diversity. I urge the Government to maintain the DGR status for SRE and school building funds, and to recognize the positive impact that faith communities have on Australian society.</p>
667	<p>My attention has been drawn to some proposals by the Australian Government Deductible Gift System (DGR). This proposal is discriminatory, very negative and undermine positivity of charitable works It is indisputable that ‘faith based’ good works historically have contributed to enormously to the quality of our attitudes to life in general, to caring institutions and as a basis of moral, ethical and community standards. We should be encouraging these positive contributions not undermining them. The Commission , with the betterment of Australian Society should wisely REJECT these negative proposals.</p>
668	<p>It is a fundamental part of my Christian faith to prompt me to love others, and in action that translates to giving money and time. I have been volunteering as an SRE teacher for the local primary school for the past 6 years, and have also made monthly monetary donations to 3 different charities. Tax deduction is seen by me as a positive government response to support my contribution to the society</p>
669	<p>We really appreciate the volunteers who go into our government schools the teach Special Religious Education. These volunteers are the largest group of people in Australia. We are asking that the government maintain their support by increasing tax deductible amounts , not decreasing. We want them recognised for all their time and effort to be there week by week. Even the government doesn't seem to recognise that about 60% of Australians identify with religion and feel that it contributes to promoting social cohesion which is badly needed in the community. It seems that on one hand the government's goal is to double giving by 2030, but on the other hand is removing privileges and help from faith communities that represent this huge proportion who volunteer each week help children . Often these children come to SRE teachers when things are not good at home and they can often give advise that is needed. They are trusted. This is not a wise move to reduce giving from hundreds of people to support this work.</p>
670	<p>In the current review, I ask that DGR status be maintained for religious education in government schools to be maintained. Religious Education teachers in Australia represents Australia's largest group of volunteers. They provide a huge level of support to our students. 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet you are proposing to withdraw (or make harder) ministry to these students.</p>

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671	<p>Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, benefiting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union NSW’s ministry programs and in turn contribute to the greater good of Australian society. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is commendable that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, such as social welfare, health promotion charities and animal welfare. However, 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 Special Religious Education (SRE) and lunchtime groups. Australia is one of the most multicultural nation’s on earth, and over 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on a misguided ideology that suggests 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. Both religious and non-religious parents choose to place their children in SRE. Putting extra pressure on religious education, and its teachers, is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications for our society.</p> <p>The SRE 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 philanthropic 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. We urge you to reconsider the suggested changes, recognising the significant role that Scripture Union NSW, SRE and people of faith provide for the greater good of Australian society.</p>
672	<p>Scripture in school is something I support financially and with my time. It is an important part of who I am to contribute in this way. My faith drives my giving habits and I support things of value and that make a positive difference to my community. My giving to this is tax deductible giving that makes a real difference in the lives of young Australians. I want the Australian Government to recognise and value the great contribution faith communities make to Australian society</p>
673	<p>I am in support of maintaining DGR status for SRE in public schools, and I want our Government to recognise and value the contribution faith communities make to our Australian society. There are no high and lofty requirements to generosity. The Bible reveals great nuggets from people who lived attainable, generous lives on a daily basis (Matthew 6:2; Luke 8:1–3, 10:35-37, 19:8; 2; Corinthians 9:7, 9:11; Philippians 4:19). I strive to live by these principles and be more Christ-like in my earthly actions. I am a Christian, a member of an Anglican Church in Sydney, a nurse by profession, and a community volunteer. I am not wealthy, but choose to work part-time to enable me to be philanthropic with my time, as well as financially. I do this through being an SRE teacher for 12 years in several local public primary schools, a Cub Scout Leader, and P&C Association President at my local school. My role as an SRE teacher means there is a consistent volunteer (i.e. unpaid) that provides hours of 'free' classroom teacher release time within the school curriculum every year, in addition to the pastoral and spiritual wellbeing support for students within the SRE classes, which plays a recognised</p>

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	important role in successful learning. SRE nurtures a child’s sense of meaning and purpose and promotes positive connections with faith and community. SRE makes a strong contribution in supporting young lives and to Australian society. SRE teachers are Australia’s largest year-round volunteer army, providing close to 10,000 lessons each week. Removing support for SRE will only amplify the current staffing crisis in NSW public schools.
674	Introducing children to the concept of faith gives them the opportunity to connect with a spiritual belief. Spiritual beliefs are associated with better mental health outcomes and encourage positive interactions between people, nurturing attributes such as kindness and compassion.
675	Hello I have taught sre for 30years, what an honour to teach children about Jesus. How can children make a decision about God, if they don’t know bible stories, and our Christian heritage, whether they choose to follow Or not.
676	I’m writing in support of maintaining tax deductions for donations made to religious charities to keep SRE running in public schools. I and my family are Christians and our children have attended public schools for their education. I’m also an SRE teacher in 3 local public schools. As a person of faith I keenly support SRE financially as it provides many children the chance to develop and enhance their faith. I highly value the tax deductibility status as it enables me to give more each year. I see the value my giving provides first hand in the classroom and I agree that Australian society is better with the values we teach. I want the Government to recognise and value the contribution faith communities make to Australian society across the board but particularly in public schools. There is evidence I’ve seen myself that SRE delivers key psychological benefits to students, it promotes robust multiculturalism and social acceptance, and it reduces the risk of student radicalisation. Donating money and time are things I and Christians do as part of their faith and are more likely to do so than secular people.
677	SRE is such a valuable community oriented program, that helps broaden the perspectives and understanding of children in thinking about varied world views and how to live with purpose and be generous toward others. It is supported by multiple faith and non-faith groups. It’s an enriching part of NSW educative life for those who opt in. Why would we want to weaken the thick multiculturalism it systematically supports in Australia by removing tax deductibility for the organisations that run this service free to the system? Do we want to make our education system harder for valuable programs to flourish? This would be a dire mistake for and unproductive for our system of education.
678	I highly value the contribution SRE makes to the education of young people. My donations to this work would be impacted if DGR status is removed. I personally know more than 30 people who volunteer their time to teach SRE and the financial assistance they receive from people like myself for their resources I know is important to what they do.
679	Dear Commissioners. I have become aware that Tax-Deductible Status for SRE may be removed. This will, of course, negatively impact the ability for SRE to do its wonderful work in schools. I understand that SRE volunteers are the single biggest group of volunteers in the country. And the affects for the good of schools which SRE provides is enormous, in my view. Please do not remove TDS from SRE.
680	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

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	<p>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>
681	<p>I had the privilege over the past two years of being a Protestant SRE teacher for years 7 and 8 girls. I spent roughly 5 hours each week to preparing, giving and revising the lesson. Every minute of prep was worth it. SRE provided a safe space for those girls to come together and feel comfortable to explore and question things in a way that other context do not really allow for. If schools are a place where we are raising up the next generation. It makes sense that we provide a well-rounded education. As a former Mathematics senior teacher I understand the value of education and am still deeply invested in enabling young people to understand and interact with the world around them. However, my once-a-week SRE lesson was of far more value than any of my Mathematics lessons because it provided a framework to place everything else they had been learning in. It gave them answers which provided peace and stability while enabling them to understand how to love others in their lives. These are massive things for early high school students who are trying to learn what their teachers are teaching them while also trying to understand their who they are. All students in my class massively benefited from the SRE lessons because it provided a community in which they felt safe to explore Protestant Christianity. Those who did not come from a Protestant background were able to ask their questions, find answers and hear their peers openly discuss their views. They were able to investigate and have a wider appreciation for different religions. For those who did come from Protestant backgrounds, they were provided the space to learn how to lovingly express their views and seek answers to questions that they do not feel comfortable asking in other situations. All of them were taught how to critically find answers for themselves and that there were answers to their questions. SRE is a wonderful space for raising up young Australians to understand the world around them, to give context to what they are learning in the rest of their schooling, and to learn how to lovingly interact with the world and the people in it. SRE is not only a space for developing critical thinking and profound observation, but also for developing them as kind and compassionate humans. So many people volunteer time, energy, money and resources to provide the young students in their classes from all backgrounds with a richer and clearer understanding of who they are. However, SRE is not run on purely volunteer work and finances enables these dedicated teachers to be well equipped and to teach in so many different contexts to raise up the next generation with a well-rounded education.</p>
682	<p>SRE is so very vital to so many families directly & this flows on to their peers quite profoundly but less directly.</p>

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683	<p>SRE provides hope and messages that our teens are valuable which I think is especially important in this era of increased mental distress. As a parent of a child with mental health and social challenges, I want him to be reminded that he is valuable and loved and has plenty to offer back to his community in his own unique way. SRE provides a non-academic environment to support kids whose learning struggles close them off from connecting with the good messaging from classroom teachers. The more avenues kids have to positive role models and life-affirming relationships the more their resilience grows. As a SRE teacher I see how students who have limited connection with faith outside SRE come and enjoy it, feel accepted and have a space to explore ideas, beliefs and moral citizenship, whether or not they come to the same conclusions as their teachers hold. They benefit from the forum to discuss ideas respectfully and see the benefit of community and serving others. These are the key reasons I support SRE with my time and my philanthropic giving.</p>
684	<p>Dear Commissioners, I am concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is commendable that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, reducing red tape, and simplifying the current system. However, 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 Special Religious Education (SRE) and lunchtime groups. Australia is one of the most multicultural nations on earth, and over 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on a misguided ideology that suggests religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that religious education in schools is one of the best ways to promote social cohesion. Both religious and non-religious parents choose to place their children in SRE. Putting extra pressure on religious education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications for our society. The SRE 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 philanthropic 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. I would ask that you increase rather than reduce support for these groups providing religious education in government schools.</p>
685	<p>Please look at the data for benefits of SRE in the schools. I have been teaching for more than 30 yrs.I am 60yrs old and have seen several generations through the school system. The schools that actively promote and support SRE are thriving encouraging schools. I have experience of 7 schools in my area . Please keep this caring network alive.Do not be afraid of the Love of God.Or of his son Jesus.</p>
686	<p>Dear Commissioners, I am very concerned about the draft proposal to take SRE and SU out of DGR status. I am a SRE Co-ordinator across three schools and sixteen teachers and teach in four schools for more than 10 years. Our teachers are experienced, well trained and supervised and very dedicated. We feel SRE and SU is very important in schools and research has shown it has huge benefits for society. It helps with mental health, sense of identity and purpose, among many other things. SRE teachers are the largest weekly volunteer labour force in Australia. May faith completely drives my money and time. I spend most of my time volunteering in SRE and Christian pastoral care. My husband and I very much value the DGR status for our financial contributions. I am asking the government to maintain or increase their support for this, not reduce it: • DGR status to be maintained for religious education in government schools. • Volunteers within the faith communities recognised within the DGR system. Thank you, Fiona van Horen</p>
687	<p>I would like to urge that all efforts be made to retain SRE in public schools across NSW, as it has immense psychological benefits for students in these uncertain days. Tax -deductibility status for philanthropic donations for the promotion of SRE should be maintained.</p>

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688	<p>My philanthropic giving is driven largely by my conviction that I have been given resources by God for the purpose of serving others (in my family and in the wider community). This conviction arises from my Christian faith. DGR status is one of the considerations that impacts how much I am able to give to both faith based and non-faith based community services. I am concerned about the proposal to remove DGR status from donations towards SRE. I greatly value the role of SRE in my three children's lives (two in high school, one in primary school). For one of my children it particularly plays an important role in his/her mental health at school. I respectfully request that the government continue to value the contribution that SRE makes in schools toward the mental and spiritual health of young people in NSW by maintaining it's DGR status.</p>
689	<p>I support maintaining DRG status for SRE. A proposal to remove DRG status from SRE fails to appreciate the significance that this volunteer-driven program makes to the social health of school communities (and beyond). SRE classes provide a unique setting for children from diverse cultures to engage together in reflecting on how shared beliefs and values can be used in the service of others. SRE also provides opportunities for volunteers from the wider community to become familiar with and invested in local schooling. As a side effect of training SRE volunteers, significant numbers of SRE volunteers participate in child protection training, making for a safer and more aware community.</p>
690	<p>The most crucial time for instilling positive, community, other person focused worldviews are the years of childhood. Given that people who identify with a religion are more philanthropic, due to this sort of world view, it would be counter-productive for the government to removed tax deductible status for donations to organisations that support sre. Sre is a place where such values, which are good for our communities, are taught.</p>
691	<p>I support maintaining the tax deductible status of donations made to religious charities in support of Special Religious Education (SRE). I am extremely disappointed to learn the Productivity Commission Draft Report recommends removing DGR's for SRE. I work with a team of volunteer SRE teachers. Our ability to fund books and material for school kids comes significantly from philanthropy; people who contribute towards SRE. Removing the tax deductibility status is an insult to the people who value what SRE brings to children's lives and their willingness to support it.</p>
692	<p>Firstly - my Christian faith motivates me to give to different charities and school building programs. I give to Christian SRE as it is such an important builder of psychological benefits to students, promotes multiculturalism and social acceptance amongst minority groups in school classes. Without SRE and Youthworks being a Deductible Gift Recipient I would not be able to donate nearly as much charity giving to this organisation nor to school building projects, which would seriously hamper school communities and children's development.</p>
693	<p>As a committed Christian and a leader of a church, our principle of generosity is practiced by what we preach. Just as we've been given much by God, so too ought we to give. In all Christian communities I've been part of, regular giving to social justice, the work of the church and Christian education (including SRE) is given without a hint of anything being received back. There is no quid pro quo or any other reciprocation, merely the joy of giving. The same is especially true of SRE since it makes a huge contributions to young lives, giving them a safe place to have their faith fostered where it is found, in turn making a healthy Australia, teaching that it is completely appropriate that we ought not to look down upon religions, but co-exist harmoniously. WHere else is this better taught than in living it out as different religious backgrounds teach SRE. It would be such a shame for these educational practices to be diminished by removing DGR status.</p>

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694	<p>Australia's Deductible Gift Recipient (DRG). I would like to make a submission regarding the Government's plan to withdraw DRG, or Tax Decuctibility status for donations made to support Christian Education in Public Schools in NSW. Since 1956 I have supported Inter School Christian Fellowship (ISCF), run by Scripture Union (SU) as it was a turning point in my life. I feel SU plays a very important role in school students lives during their formative years and ensures students leaving school are upright citizens. Many of the leaders are volunteers and the least i can do is support them with my donations. The very meager cost to the Commonwealth of DRG is repaid 100 fold by the children leaning to be responsible, honest citezens.</p>
695	<p>The proposed removal of DGRs for SRE teaching in public schools is I believe counterproductive to the entire community . If implemented it would have a severe impact on the production of SRE resources and the resourcing of teaching across our country. The benefits of SRE are well documented especially in the area of promoting multiculturalism. I urge the productivity commission to not proceed with this proposed course of action.</p>
696	<p>Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, benefiting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union NSW’s ministry programs and in turn contribute to the greater good of Australian society. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is commendable that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, such as social welfare, health promotion charities and animal welfare. However, 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 Special Religious Education (SRE) and lunchtime groups. Australia is one of the most multicultural nation’s on earth, and over 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on a misguided ideology that suggests 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. Both religious and non-religious parents choose to place their children in SRE. This is putting extra pressure on religious education, and its teachers, is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications for our society. The SRE 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 philanthropic 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. Considering 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. We urge you to reconsider the suggested changes, recognising the significant role that Scripture Union NSW, SRE and people of faith provide for the greater good of Australian society.</p>
697	<p>Dear Commissioners, Scripture Union NSW is an organisation that runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, positively impacting around 2,000 students every week. These groups are an incredibly important part of Scripture Union NSW’s ministry programs and significantly benefit to Australian society. I am really sad and troubled by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is a great thing that you are considering expanding to cover</p>

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	<p>more initiatives, reducing red tape, and simplifying the current system. But, 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 Special Religious Education (SRE) and lunchtime groups. Australia is one of the most multicultural nations on earth, and over 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on a misguided ideology that suggests religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that religious education in schools is one of the best ways to promote social cohesion. Both religious and non-religious parents choose to place their children in SRE. Putting extra pressure on religious education and its teachers is not a good decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications for our society. The SRE 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 philanthropic 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 education sector – 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. I think you can do a lot better than this. Considering 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. We urge you to reconsider the suggested changes, recognising the significant role that Scripture Union NSW, SRE and people of faith provide for the greater good of Australian society.</p>
698	<p>You are making a big mistake if you think that it is not worthwhile to encourage philanthropic giving to religious organizations. Even if you are not a person of faith yourself, you should not allow your prejudices to influence the giving of others who have a strong faith. There are many worthy organizations that are worth supporting, for the benefits they bring to our society. Faith based ones are some of them. Huge numbers of volunteers are involved in teaching children in our schools, and many families are choosing to send their children to faith-based schools for a reason. They recognize the importance of teaching faith-based values to their little ones.</p>
699	<p>Dear Sirs, I'm writing to you about the Productivity Commission report that is being pulled to together on Philanthropy. As I understand it your brief is to grow philanthropic giving in Australia and identify opportunities to grow it further. I am highly concerned by the draft report and suggested reforms to the DGR system. It is great that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, reducing red tape, and simplifying the current system. However, to achieve this, by removing DGR status from religious charities like Scripture Union NSW, and School building funds – is a really BAD idea. Australia is one of the most multicultural nations on earth, and over 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on a misguided ideology that suggests religion is of no community-wide benefit. This is alarming ! Research shows that religious education in schools is one of the best ways to promote social cohesion. Both religious and non-religious parents choose to place their children Religious Schools many with Special Religious Education (SRE) activity in the school. The SRE teachers in Australia represent one of 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 philanthropic 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</p>

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	<p>helping you right now to achieve that goal. This again is a poor decision that logic says is hard to defend. 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 to then hobble them by removing DRG status from such things as building funds – whilst at the same time the Government is dramatically dialling back the financial support to this sector (thus increasing the school fees for all paying students) sounds more like vandalism than anything to do with Productivity. So why make it harder for this sector to be successful? In short, you are penalising both the fastest-growing education sector – 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. I think you and I can do a lot better than this. Given all the above, I completely reject your suggestion 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 thus far is bordering on discriminatory and minimising in its ideology . I urge you to reconsider the suggested changes, recognizing the significant role that Faith Based Schools, Scripture Union NSW, SRE and people of faith provide for the greater good of Australian society.</p>
700	<p>Dear commissioners, thanks for the opportunity to give feedback about this. I am a long-time supporter/volunteer of Scripture Union NSW (SU) and a member of a local church which supports the provision of Special Religious Education (SRE) in government schools.. SU runs lunchtime groups in government schools, benefitting 2000 students weekly. I am very concerned about the draft report and proposed reforms, specifically the proposal to remove DGR status from charities like Scripture Union NSW. Australia is a multicultural nation, and over 60% of Australians identify with a religion. I do not agree with the suggestion that religion is of no community-wide benefit. The research shows that religions education is one of the best ways to promote social cohesion. The SRE teachers in Australia are possibly its largest weekly group of volunteers. I think this illustrates how important it is to many many Australians. Removing privileges from faith communities is not, in my opinion, a wise decision.</p>
701	<p>Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, benefitting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union NSW’s ministry programs and in turn contribute to the greater good of Australian society. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is commendable that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, reducing red tape, and simplifying the current system. However, 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 Special Religious Education (SRE) and lunchtime groups. Australia is one of the most multicultural nations on earth, and over 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on a misguided ideology that suggests religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that religious education in schools is one of the best ways to promote social cohesion. Both religious and non-religious parents choose to place their children in SRE. Putting extra pressure on religious education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications for our society. The SRE 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 philanthropic 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 education sector – predominantly privately funded by citizens – and putting undue pressure on the</p>

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	<p>largest weekly group of volunteers in Australia, risking a lower level of social cohesion. I think you and I can do a lot better than this. Considering 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. We urge you to reconsider the suggested changes, recognising the significant role that Scripture Union NSW, SRE and people of faith provide for the greater good of Australian society.</p>
702	<p>I would like to support the retention of tax deductability for donations to special religious education in schools. I personally found this of great value in providing a foundation for life which helped me significantly regarding my adult life and contribution to society. I am sure this has been the experience of many others. I believe the government has the responsibility to continue to support these programmes in every way possible.</p>
703	<p>Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, benefiting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union NSW’s ministry programs and in turn contribute to the greater good of Australian society. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is commendable that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, reducing red tape, and simplifying the current system. However, 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 Special Religious Education (SRE) and lunchtime groups. Australia is one of the most multicultural nations on earth, and over 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on a misguided ideology that suggests religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that religious education in schools is one of the best ways to promote social cohesion. Both religious and non-religious parents choose to place their children in SRE. Putting extra pressure on religious education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications for our society. The SRE 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 philanthropic 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 education sector – 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. I think you and I can do a lot better than this. Considering 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. We urge you to reconsider the suggested changes, recognising the significant role that Scripture Union NSW, SRE and people of faith provide for the greater good of Australian society. Yours Faithfully David McNaught</p>
704	<p>I'm writing regarding concerns over a Federal Productivity Commission Draft Report recommending the removal of tax deductions for donations made to religious charities in support of SRE. As a person of faith (and we call believe in something), my faith drives how I use my time and money. I consistently financially support SRE through religious charity donations, and the removal of tax deductions for these donations makes this less inviting. For 9 years I</p>

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	<p>was on the board of a local association that supported the work of a high school Scripture teacher in the local public high school (Galston High School). All the funding for this position came through tax-deductible donations. The positive influence that this teacher had (he was full time for 5 of those 9 years), is incalculable. He was in the school, he worked with staff, he aided in the support of students mental and emotional well-being. Without the person being funded to be in Galston High School, the school would have missed out on this critical support. Picture this impact and multiply it across public schools in Australia. Why would the government seek to cut the indirect support of its own interests (in public education), by eliminating tax-deductible giving to religious organisations for the purpose of SRE? In addition, removing tax-deductibility status will only amplify the current teacher shortage in NSW public schools. NSW Education Minister Prue Car reported that almost 10,000 lessons are unsupervised each week in NSW public schools. There is an 'army' of SRE teachers, who teach around 10,000 lessons per week. Can you imagine the further impact this will have on the amount of classes that go unsupervised each week in NSW schools because SRE teachers aren't supported and therefore stop teaching in local public schools? My encouragement would be for you to wisely consider the impact this recommendation would have on, not simply SRE, but public schools in general. Warm regards, Roger 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>
705	<p>I 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. I want DGR status to be maintained for Special Religious Education in government schools. I want to see volunteers within the faith communities recognised within the DGR system.</p>
706	<p>I appreciate for Special Religious Education within government schools, and the largest weekly volunteer labour force in Australia that enables this to happen. I would ask the government to ncrease their support for this, not reduce it. I want DGR status to be maintained for Special Religious Education in government schools. I want to see volunteers within the faith communities recognised within the DGR system. There are community-wide benefits that faith communities bring, including wellbeing benefits and social cohesion, as well as examples of freedom of thought and belief, a right that all Australians have.</p>
707	<p>As a parent and teacher I'm grateful for those who provide Special Religious Education within government schools, and the role they have in contributing to students' spiritual wellbeing. There are many volunteers in our local area, and so many more elsewhere, who enable this kind of education to take place each week. I would be grateful if the government could continue to support, and maybe even increase its support, in this area. Maintaining DGR status for Special Religious Education in government schools enables wonderful support for our students, and their families, to continue. Anything that improves the wellbeing of our students is a wonderful gift to them, to us as parents, to our families and our community as a whole. I would love to see volunteers within the faith communities recognised within the DGR system. Thank you for your consideration.</p>
708	<p>The number of people who give their time, voluntarily, to support students and staff via Special Religious Education i Australia is outstanding. It is one of the largest weekly volunteer groups in Australia. The people who go into our schools do so to love and support those school communities in a way that many people otherwise wouldn't receive. Consequently, it seems appropriate to increase funding for such activities, rather than reducing it, by maintaining the DGR status of such programs and the recognising the volunteers from various faith communities that bring about such programs. Faith</p>

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	communities increase the wellbeing of all who are involved in them and contribute to positive social cohesion. Seeking to dismantle them by coming at them from several fronts will only have a negative impact on the wider Australian community - sooner rather than later.
709	I was devastated to hear that the proposed DGR will withdraw funds from charities who provide special Religious Education in public schools. I myself received SRE classes and it was a huge benefit to me growing up in a public school. I was a timid and easily intimidated girl who struggled to find belonging at school. SRE and its volunteers helped me build confidence and a sense of belonging. It helped make me feel safe at school. I urge the government not to withdraw but to increase funding for such charities and their thousands of volunteers. It is important for the DGR status for Special Religious Education to be maintained or many students will miss its benefits that I enjoyed. I think it is so important that I volunteer my time to teach SRE in public schools despite my limitations as a mum of a baby and toddler. The students show they look forward to the lessons. They enjoy asking questions and grow in confidence within themselves increasing wellbeing and within their community. Faith communities in public spaces are highly beneficial bringing social cohesion as charities such as Special Religious Education create a safe environment for children to discuss faith and morals and to express this in healthy ways within their communities.
710	I have recently been informed of the productivity commissions' recommendation that "charities that have DGR status for school building funds or to provide religious education in government schools" have their DGR status withdrawn. I strongly disagree with this recommendation. I am a strong supporter of the benefits of groups who provide religious education in government schools. Many of these organisations rely on the time of volunteers and charitable donations by members of the public such as myself to purchase necessary materials purely to provide this voluntary service. As a parent of a child shortly entering the school system it is important to me that he has the opportunity to explore a range of new ideas and this includes religious education such as those offered by these volunteer led organisations. The UNHCR confirms that all children have a right to explore and express spirituality both at home and at school. Given the increasingly secular nature of the curriculum, groups that provide religious education in schools provide children with a necessary and vital place to explore this part of their personhood. I remind the commission that this is an optional choice in the public school system. A choice I feel my child and all other families should have an opportunity to make. I am concerned that withdrawing DRG status from groups providing religious education in schools will make continuing this activity virtually untenable meaning my own child, and all other public school children, will not have this opportunity. Please do not withdraw DRG status from organizations providing religious education in schools.
711	My family have all enjoyed and benefitted from camps run by Scripture Union, and I believe that the more religious education available in public schools the better. Selfishly, I donate far more to charities like SU, where my donation is tax deductible.
712	The position to withdraw DRG funding from school related religious teaching organisations would significantly reduce philanthropic behaviour in Australia. Donations are made to organisations where people believe in what they are trying to achieve and it builds a culture, habit and practice of 'giving'. The broad social benefits to the provision of religious education and this change if implemented would not achieve the goals of the report to grow philanthropic giving.
713	Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, benefiting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union NSW's ministry programs and in turn contribute to the greater good of Australian society. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is commendable that you are considering expanding the system to cover more

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	<p>initiatives, reducing red tape, and simplifying the current system. However, 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 Special Religious Education (SRE) and lunchtime groups. Australia is one of the most multicultural nations on earth, and over 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on a misguided ideology that suggests religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that religious education in schools is one of the best ways to promote social cohesion. Both religious and non-religious parents choose to place their children in SRE. Putting extra pressure on religious education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications for our society. The SRE 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 philanthropic 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 education sector – 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. I think you and I can do a lot better than this. Considering 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. We urge you to reconsider the suggested changes, recognising the significant role that Scripture Union NSW, SRE and people of faith provide for the greater good of Australian society.</p>
714	<p>"If the government removes tax deductibility, it will have a profound impact on the ability of low-fee, faith based schools to raise much-needed funds, which is what makes school fees affordable for most families. It will also drastically affect the fundraising of vital SRE programs that are vital for student resilience and wellbeing. If the Government accepts these recommended changes, then up to 5,000 charities across Australia will no longer be able to offer their donors tax deductible giving in key areas." With cost of living pressures its important that all schools whether private or public school should have the opportunity to fundraise and keep school fees at an affordable rate. When I was in school SRE programs gave me the opportunity to feel safe about my religious beliefs and helped my mental well-being especially in Grades eleven and Twelve where there stress level are high.</p>
715	<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</p>
716	<p>I pay tax on my income. What is left over shouldn't be taxed again if I choose to give it to churches who serve the common good. I was raised in a non-Christian household but am very thankful for being introduced to Christianity through my schooling. I got to choose. Questions of life and death and God are important questions which we need to continue to let young people grapple with. SRE is a valuable opportunity to allow young people to hear and assess the claims of various religions.</p>

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717	<p>Dear Commissioners, While I applaud the intent of the Productivity Commission to reform and streamline the DGR process, I write to express my concern about removing DGR status for religious charities such as Scripture Union. While for many, religion and faith-based organizations are seen as destructive and divisive, a fair analysis and good research will confirm the very positive effects that they have on the community. With the majority of Australian still identifying with a religion, appropriate special religious education in the education system can play an important role supporting the emotional, mental and physical health, and wellbeing of many students. removing DGR status from groups like Scripture Union will not help the development of our current and future students. Many parents still choose to have their children access Special religious instruction. This work is largely carried out by volunteers. Removing DGR status will reduce and dis-incentivize this army of volunteers and remove the positive influence from our education system. This does not seem to be a decision with the best interests of our society in mind. It seems to be more driven by an ideology which is dangerous and damaging to our society.</p>
718	<p>Dear commissioners, I'm writing to ask you to not remove the DGR status fro religious education in schools. It is my understanding, according to the best research, that religious education in schools is good for society, promotes understanding, especially in such a culturally diverse nation and reduces the risk of bullying based on religious beliefs and promotes discussion, which surely our schools should model. The proposal to remove the DGR status appears to be, itself, ideologically driven rather than research based. PLEASE MAINTAIN the DGR status for Special Religious Education in government schools, after all children and parents have the freedom to opt in or out according to their preferences. Let's maintain the diversity and openness! Yours sincerely, Xavier</p>
719	<p>Dear Commissioners, I am concerned about this draft report and reforms to the DGR system, as it removes DGR status from religious charities like Scripture Union NSW, who run Special Religious Education (SRE) in government schools across NSW. I believe if DGR status is removed from SRE in government schools, the community will be detrimentally affected in terms of well-being and social cohesion. I have volunteered with SRE before, and have seen first hand the enthusiasm of the students to be there, to learn about religion, and have heard from religious and non religious parents who value the work of SRE and want their kids to have the opportunity to make an informed decision for themselves what to believe, and removing DGR status will put extra pressure on teachers. Please reconsider this decision.</p>
720	<p>Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, benefiting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union NSW's ministry programs and in turn contribute to the greater good of Australian society. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is commendable that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, reducing red tape, and simplifying the current system. However, 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 Special Religious Education (SRE) and lunchtime groups. Australia is one of the most multicultural nations on earth, and over 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on a misguided ideology that suggests religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that religious education in schools is one of the best ways to promote social cohesion. Both religious and non-religious parents choose to place their children in SRE. Putting extra pressure on religious education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications for our society. The SRE teachers in Australia represent our nation's largest weekly group of volunteers. In a report where, on the one hand, you are articulating the</p>

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	government’s goal to double philanthropic 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.
721	<p>Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, benefiting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union NSW’s ministry programs and in turn contribute to the greater good of Australian society. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is commendable that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, reducing red tape, and simplifying the current system. However, 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 Special Religious Education (SRE) and lunchtime groups. Australia is one of the most multicultural nations on earth, and over 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on a misguided ideology that suggests religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that religious education in schools is one of the best ways to promote social cohesion. Both religious and non-religious parents choose to place their children in SRE. Putting extra pressure on religious education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications for our society. The SRE 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 philanthropic 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 education sector – 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. I think you and I can do a lot better than this. Considering 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. We urge you to reconsider the suggested changes, recognising the significant role that Scripture Union NSW, SRE and people of faith provide for the greater good of Australian society.</p>
722	SRE is incredibly important in the lives of young people, families and Australian communities. I want the Government to recognise and value the contribution faith communities make to our society. I am in full support for maintaining DGR status for SRE and school building funds.
723	I value SRE in schools that teach about who God is. I value the SRE teachers who volunteer their time. SRE should not be taken off the DGR list. It is a vital service to NSW public schools.
724	I believe SRE makes a valuable contribution to individual children's lives, and also to the broader Australian community, with Christian teaching especially being foundational to the formation of Australia, its character and values. My Christian faith drives where I invest my resources of time and money and, as a long-term tax-payer, I recognise and appreciate the value of the tax deductibility for my financial contributions. As someone who works

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	in fundraising for a non-faith-based community health charity I fully understand how important DGR status is in encouraging financial support for the important work the for purpose sector undertakes.
725	As a Christian I am deeply concerned about children and youth of our community. SRE plays a vital role of teaching kids about faith giving them hope in their future. I feel that this bill discriminates against my faith and therefore is deeply concerning. Please amend the bill to include SRE. Thank you.
726	<p>2/02/2024 To whom it may concern As now a senior, I recall the Special Religious Education being provided for my siblings and myself with weekly lessons through Infants and Primary School by volunteers given and supported by Scripture Union. I am shocked to hear that a 'draft report' (released 30th November 2023) is recommending that "charities that have their DGR status for school building funds or to provide religious education in government schools" have their DGR status withdrawn. In my years as both as a former Primary school teacher in the Public System I was given the opportunity to co-lead a lunch-time group with a couple of other teachers so children who were eager to belong to a group were able to learn more about faith and trust. For many years, when I later taught Special Religious Education in two local public schools on a voluntary basis, I was grateful to receive the required training modules through Scripture Union. In a time where many of our young teenagers are looking for good role models, I'm well aware of the training opportunities offered through Scripture Union camps. Students today need chances to have such positive, wholesome, community building activities available to them as they mature into responsible young adults. Do not deny this opportunity to our young people today as that is robbing them of positive role-modelling, strength of character, friendship skills, honour and respect for one another. Please give due honour to those who have served in the past to provide such opportunities for more students to appreciate their individual gifts and abilities and value each person for who they are. Donations given by those who know how important it is to sponsor children who would otherwise never get to experience a camp or appreciate who or what they may become, is a vital ministry to future young leaders. The timing of this proposal of change to DGR status being removed at the end of 2023 is both negligent and underhanded as it has not been delivered to those who deserve a voice in this decision or allow for sufficient time to submit an objection. Scripture Union has sown into many lives over decades and we are all well aware of how difficult it is since COVID has caused many to be less generous with money towards well-deserved charities in general. I ask that this be given a larger opportunity for the public to be informed of the ramifications this will have on our young people from this year if needy teens are not given opportunities through camps and school groups to experience healthy relationships and personal growth. I want to see volunteers within faith communities to continue being recognised within the DGR system. Kind regards Mrs Kym Vitanza (Retired, Scripture in Schools voluntary teacher over many years, Private school Secondary Support Teacher, ISCF teacher /Primary school teacher.)</p>
727	RI and SRE are a significant part of holistic education in QLD and NSW State Schools. I believe removing DGR will diminish the ability to support such as training of instructors and curriculum accreditation and decrease the quality of programs that support student wellbeing.
728	I have personally experienced significant benefits as a result of SRE / learning in schools which has encouraged the wellbeing of students and local communities. These sustainability of these services would be significantly negatively impacted if the tax deductibility was removed, and would be disastrous for our community.
729	This looks like anti-faith ideology dressed up as tax policy.

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730	Tax deductibility on gifts to organisations that provide SRE in schools should be maintained because of the huge benefits of SRE to students. Learning the principles of faith gives students clarity, purpose and self-confidence as they grow through school.
731	I am concerned that the recommendation to remove the DGR status from religious materials in special religious education and from independent school building funds is an attack on religious freedoms within Australia. I wish to be able to continue to give to these causes in a tax deductible way considering the huge value both of these programs convey to Australia as a nation. SRE represents a great opportunity for teachers to have relief from face to face teaching at a time when they are busier than ever. Independent schools are essential to our education system given they educate around 30% of students, the vast majority of whom are at low fee schools. Who will educate these students if not for the independent sector? The government certainly isn't building enough schools for every student in the nation.
732	Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, benefiting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union NSW's ministry programs and in turn contribute to the greater good of Australian society. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is commendable that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, reducing red tape, and simplifying the current system. However, 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 Special Religious Education (SRE) and lunchtime groups. Australia is one of the most multicultural nations on earth, and over 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on a misguided ideology that suggests religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that religious education in schools is one of the best ways to promote social cohesion. Both religious and non-religious parents choose to place their children in SRE. Putting extra pressure on religious education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications for our society. The SRE 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 philanthropic 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 education sector – 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. I think you and I can do a lot better than this. Considering 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. We urge you to reconsider the suggested changes, recognising the significant role that Scripture Union NSW, SRE and people of faith provide for the greater good of Australian society.
733	Special Religious Education is an important aspect of development for understanding the diverse people groups across Australia. Depriving educators of the ability to provide these crucial services to our youth will be severely detrimental to their ability to understand and respect religious and cultural differences in their fellow classmates. It will damage a foundational time where our youth learn to coexist with people of different backgrounds, values

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	and opinions. It will limit their own ability to understand the importance of forming their own opinions about the world and their place in it. DGR status is an absolute prerequisite to providing this important education adequately, as this is conducted by volunteers who are donating their own time and money to assist in the education of our youth, and they need to be enabled by the DGR status to continue this important service to the community.
734	<p>Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, benefiting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union NSW’s ministry programs and in turn contribute to the greater good of Australian society. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is commendable that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, reducing red tape, and simplifying the current system. However, 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 Special Religious Education (SRE) and lunchtime groups. Australia is one of the most multicultural nations on earth, and over 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on a misguided ideology that suggests religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that religious education in schools is one of the best ways to promote social cohesion. Both religious and non-religious parents choose to place their children in SRE. Putting extra pressure on religious education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications for our society. The SRE 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 philanthropic 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 education sector – 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. I think you and I can do a lot better than this. Considering 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. We urge you to reconsider the suggested changes, recognising the significant role that Scripture Union NSW, SRE and people of faith provide for the greater good of Australian society.</p>
735	I believe that the support and guidance that comes from hearing Jesus is paramount to well being of our country. SRE is one way and for many children the only way they hear this. The removal of Deductible Gift Recipient status will greatly hinder SRE.
736	<p>Dear Commissioners, I understand that you may be removing Deductible Gift Recipient status from religious charities. I am a committed Christian who financially supports such charities. One of these is Scripture Union NSW which does a great job in schools throughout NSW by training and supporting student leaders to run lunchtime student groups as well as engage in Special Religious Education. Their engagement assists schools achieve better obedience, learning outcomes and adherence to school and society authority, all of which contribute to the greater good of Australian society. In other words, community wide benefits. Therefore, removing DGR status from religious charities would be detrimental for schools and the wider society. so please reverse your stance on this matter.</p>

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737	Giving financially to SRE in schools is of great importance. The children benefit from thinking about the world and how they relate to the world and everyone in it. Many people volunteer their time to go into schools so that children can think, discuss, learn and be inspired to serve one another and consider others in their decisions. It is a cause worth supporting.
738	Religious education If the principal and leadership are comfortable with charities that provide religious education operating in their schools, then it is likely because they are comfortable with the messages those charities espouse being heard by students (given parental approval). This is simply another form of education or knowledge transfer. Given most religious education discusses the value of other people, as opposed to self-centredness, then why as a society why would we seek to limit this and thereby promote an atheistic "think about yourself" view. Please do not discount the value of religious education opportunities, whether or not children believe a particular message or not, giving them a potential exposure to it gives them richer educational opportunities. The quantum needs to be examined too. The amount of money given to support religious education in public schools is unlikely to be much, which would suggest the move is more ideological in nature. School building funds Finally, as a supporter of a building fund at my local public school, I don't see what is wrong with parents helping to fund some building works. We parents recently funded some playground works that costed about \$150,000, and the whole community gets to use this during holiday periods. My experience at the Parents and Citizens Association made clear that when giving was tax deductible, giving was much higher. I do have a problem with private schools building incredible facilities (\$80 million plus) while public schools struggle, and I would suggest a reasonable limit be placed on the funds, such that no school can accept more than say \$1 million or so in total tax deductible contributions per year for building funds (perhaps indexed to student numbers, so a school of say 200 must accept less and a school of 3000 can perhaps accept more).
739	Because there are community wide benefits that faith communities bring including wellbeing benefits & social cohesion, i would like to see DGR status maintained for special religious education in government schools, I would also like to see volunteers within the faith communities recognised within the DGR system.
740	Dear Commissioners, I am writing out of concern for some of the proposed changes to the DGR system of contributions, particularly those related to the status of religious groups in schools. I am writing as a former teacher in the NSW Department of Education and Training, who was also involved over many years with Scripture Union through Inter School Christian Fellowship groups and Scripture Union Leadership Conferences which helped prepare Students for leadership roles in ISCF groups within their schools. Both ISCF groups and Leadership Conferences played important roles in the lives and personal development of participating students. Should DGR status be withdrawn from groups such as SU, then many students would be denied the opportunities given to previous generations of students, and the public education system would be the poorer for it. My belief is that withdrawal of DGR funding for groups such as SU would be counter productive to what is trying to be achieved. I would thus urge those involved in this review to exercise caution before making any decision which might affect organisations and programs which promote the personal development of students and promote the leadership potential of students in their respective schools.
741	Providing tax deductibility for my denotations to SRE is a major factor in me been able to give to this charity. The value this provides to the school and society in general is immense. My children greatly value the role of SRE in the school and it goes well beyond religion.

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742	This is a poorly thought out proposal. Very many people are employed on the back of the donations given with this tax deductible status. They contribute significant and important work to our society. I would suspect that without the tax advantage a large amount of the money contributed in this way would not be able to be sustained. The flow on consequences would be very far reaching in what is no longer able to be achieved, particularly in public schooling.
743	Tax deductability for supporting SRE in public schools should be retained. SRE provides access to information about belief systems that is not readily available to many students. The primary beneficiaries of SRE are students who are not part of a religious community ('religious' students already have access to this knowledge). Some understanding of religion, and in particular,Christianity, is essential to fully appreciate the basis for Australian laws and customs. SRE is the primary delivery mechanism of this knowledge and should be supported. SRE programs in government schools have proven student wellbeing benefits and contribute positively to the school community, at zero cost to the school. The number of SRE teachers invited to be part of schools, especially high schools, is evidence of their value. As such, SRE provides a benefit to the whole community, but it is funded by a very small minority (who receive no personal benefit). Maintaining DGR status is a small way the wider community can contribute to the benefit received. DGR status supports the generosity of donors.
744	I think scripture is a very important way for kids to learn about different faiths. Especially kids who haven't had an opportunity to learn about God from another source. Scripture helps the students make a decision if they want a faith or not and which God that is in. Keeping payments tax deductible will help people be able to support scripture teachers in their jobs in this expensive time we live in.
745	Giving should be allowed for churches and scripture should be allowed to be taught to kids in schools respectfully
746	Through SRE, I have been directly impacted, and continue to witness the lives of children and young adults around me, find a greater purpose for their lives through the work of school scripture teaching. Because of this, I would love to continue supporting this cause for the sake of future generations of students to also experience God.
747	I moved from Singapore and my family has been so happy with the faith communities and programmes. It was heartwarming to see the work of faith here and I thank you for keeping and celebrating this wonderful aspect of Australia life - faith is a gift and a life-giving part of our community here.
748	The Commission's proposal to revoke the DGR status for the support of the practice of religion based on principle one is misguided being counter to Australian history and therefore contrary to the public good. Since Australian settlement, it has been accepted that religious observance generates net community-wide benefits. This is testified to in Governor Philips's commissioning which instructed him to make provision for the proper observance of religion because of the community benefits that happened through the promotion of virtue and the discouragement of vice. This benefit is given tangible expression in the impact of the 1959 Billy Graham crusade. ABS data demonstrates that there was a drop in the trend of rising alcohol consumption, extra-marital births, and crime rates (Piggin, Stuart. 1996. Evangelical Christianity in Australia: Spirit, Word and World,169-170). This is hard evidence of the positive impact of religious education in society. To argue that the benefits of religious practice are personal and therefore do not amount to 'widespread community benefit' is flawed. Firstly, it is contrary to the commissions's note that religion is important to 'many' people which implicitly shows it is widespread. Any notion that religious practice merely benefits a small subset of the community fails to conceive to consider that

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	<p>religious communities are diffuse and inclusive across geography, class, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality, and therefore the promotion of religious practice amounts to the widespread nature of the community benefit which they provide. Further, religious communities have rates of volunteerism and charitable giving well above the general population indicating that their promotion is for the good of philanthropy as it increases the giving base. The commission's failure to see the net community-wide benefit of supporting religious practice through means such as the DSG owes more to their failure to look than a lack of evidence for it.</p>
749	<p>I write to encourage you to let SRE teachers and teaching to remain in government public schools. In the community I live in SRE teaching in Westport PS - Port Macquarie has been received most favourably with children, even children volunteer attending SU club program after school hours, up to twenty events each year. Why seek to bring to an end, a positive SRE program, that has been working well.</p>
750	<p>Dear Commissioners, The Scripture Union NSW brings to children in Government Schools, Christian values that are central to Australian institutions and society in general. These values can only enhance the strength of Australian culture and should be given every encouragement. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is commendable that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, reducing red tape, and simplifying the current system. However, 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 Special Religious Education (SRE) and lunchtime groups. Australia is one of the most multicultural nations on earth, and over 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on a misguided ideology that suggests religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that religious education in schools is one of the best ways to promote social cohesion. Both religious and non-religious parents choose to place their children in SRE. Putting extra pressure on religious education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications for our society. The SRE 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 philanthropic 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>
751	<p>Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, benefiting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union NSW's ministry programs and in turn contribute to the greater good of Australian society. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is commendable that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, reducing red tape, and simplifying the current system. However, 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 Special Religious Education (SRE) and lunchtime groups. Australia is one of the most multicultural nations on earth, and over 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on a misguided ideology that suggests religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that religious education in schools is one of the best ways to promote social cohesion. Both religious and non-religious parents choose to place their children in SRE. Putting extra pressure on religious education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications for our society. The SRE 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 philanthropic giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030, on the other hand, you are removing privileges and help from</p>

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	<p>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 education sector – 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. I think you and I can do a lot better than this. Considering 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. We urge you to reconsider the suggested changes, recognising the significant role that Scripture Union NSW, SRE and people of faith provide for the greater good of Australian society.</p>
752	<p>Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, benefiting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union NSW’s ministry programs and in turn contribute to the greater good of Australian society. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is commendable that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, reducing red tape, and simplifying the current system. However, 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 Special Religious Education (SRE) and lunchtime groups. Australia is one of the most multicultural nations on earth, and over 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on a misguided ideology that suggests religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that religious education in schools is one of the best ways to promote social cohesion. Both religious and non-religious parents choose to place their children in SRE. Putting extra pressure on religious education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications for our society. The SRE 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 philanthropic 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 education sector – 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. I think you and I can do a lot better than this. Considering 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. We urge you to reconsider the suggested changes, recognising the significant role that Scripture Union NSW, SRE and people of faith provide for the greater good of Australian society.</p>
753	<p>Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, benefiting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union NSW’s ministry programs and in turn contribute to the greater good of Australian society. I am concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is commendable that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, reducing</p>

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	<p>red tape, and simplifying the current system. However, 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 lunchtime groups. I have participated in lunch time groups in schools both as a volunteer and as a paid school chaplain for over 10 years. These lunch time groups provided a safe place for students of many different backgrounds to explore ideas around spirituality, deepen friendships, and connect with community volunteers - all of which have been shown to increase wellbeing in scientific studies. Having seen first hand the positive impact of these groups in both primary and high school settings, I disagree that these initiatives are of little “community-wide benefit” and would urge you to reconsider the suggested changes, recognising the significant role that Scripture Union NSW and people of faith provide for the greater good of Australian society and the wellbeing of Australian school students.</p>
754	<p>Dear Commissioners, I am writing to express my concern over the proposed changes to the DGR system and how it discriminates against people of faith in Australia by making it harder to continue Special Religious Education in schools and withdrawing support from faith-based education. It seems that this draft, like many of the government initiatives lately, communicate a lack of respect for the many Australian citizens who do have religious beliefs and undermines expression of religion in this country. This is true without even considering the many social and educational benefits contributed by SRE and faith based educational institutions. I would strongly urge you to listen to the many voices of Australia and reconsider this draft proposal. Kind Regards, Sandy Austrin-Miner</p>
755	<p>I appreciate the opportunity to comment on motivations for philanthropic giving in Australia. The Special Religious Education within the Government schools is valuable and I appeal to the government to increase its support. This will give future generations of Australians a diverse source of information to shape their lives in their society. I ask that the DGR status to be maintained for Special Religious Education in Government funded schools. This will motivate philanthropic giving.</p>
756	<p>Thank you for this opportunity to comment. I have taught SRE for some years in public schools and also support religious lunchtime groups that Scripture Union enable across many schools. Well know Australian Psychologist Dr Michael Carr - Gregg addressed a parent body some years ago and one comment remains with me. His observations were that children and teenagers with some sort of faith based background do better in life, and in school. It was a general principle well accepted among his peers. In this day and age of anxiety, depression and confusion I believe it is imperative that we do all we can to maintain the strong and positive influence of religion, and to continue to support the DGR system that enables people to support it financially. Today’s Australian children need all the positive influences that they can possibly get through their developing years. Offering faith based instruction and lunchtime groups through organisations like Scripture Union is a vital way of supporting children. Many like us give regular and significant financial support largely enabled by the DGR . I am greatly in favour of it remaining. Dr Michael Carr -Gregg’s comment is simple but far reaching. Thank you.</p>
757	<p>Please keep the DGR status for Special Religious Education in government schools. Thanks.</p>
758	<p>Dear Commissioners, Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, benefiting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union's programs in NSW and in turn contribute to the greater good of Australian society within this state. I am quite concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. You are to be commended for your consideration of how to expand the system so that it covers more initiatives, reduces red tape, and simplifies the current system. However, in your attempt to achieve this, you are removing DGR status from religious</p>

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	<p>charities like Scripture Union NSW, and this in turn will significantly impact the health and wellbeing of current and future school students who are, and will be, engaged in Special Religious Education (SRE) and lunchtime groups. Australia is one of the most multicultural nations on earth. Over 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on a misguided ideology that suggests religion has no community-wide benefit. Research shows that religious education in schools is one of the best ways to promote social cohesion. Children who attend SRE in school come from both religious and non-religious families. I believe that putting extra pressure on religious education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications for our society. The SRE teachers in Australia represent our nation's largest weekly group of volunteers, and yet a decision to remove DGR status from religious charities will severely decrease the number of volunteers nationally. This is not a wise decision because it stands in direct opposition to the government's goal to double philanthropic giving, (financial and volunteering), by 2030. You are removing privileges and assistance from faith communities - communities that represent a huge proportion of the people who will help you, and are helping you right now, achieve the above-mentioned goal.</p>
759	<p>Dear Commissioners, It has been brought to my attention that there are current changes being proposed to the DGR status of some religious bodies, particularly those connected to Special Religious Education in state schools, and school building funds. While I appreciate that reforms need to be considered and ongoing changes can bring advancement, does the proposed removal of the DGR really aid our education system and our society in general? Many of these organisations and groups have supported our schools and wider communities for decades. Many people labouring under today's socio-economic and mental health struggles, find support and comfort in these very organisations that rely on their ability to raise funds, largely through donation. The removal of their DGR status would impinge upon that ability to fund themselves sufficiently. This small status, provided by the government, would maintain the viability of these bodies which contribute to our societal well being. Thank you for your consideration regarding these matters.</p>
760	<p>Our family has been involved in running a kids SUPA club at a very disadvantaged local primary school since 2022. We run activities 3-5pm each week, then have a 2 course dinner for the families. Meals are donated by local church groups as 'in kind' support. Resources including an enclosed trailer, sports gear, craft materials, and other consumables were/are purchased with funds donated under the GDR scheme. The low socioeconomic school is very appreciative but will suffer significantly if the program ends due to decreased donations if SU loses its GDR status.</p>
761	<p>SRE has a cause I am passionate about. The benefits of the wellbeing of students and local communities is well seen. The value of tax deductibility in these financial contributions is priceless and is the main motivation for my donating to this cause. SRE has benefitted the community around their area of reach and is a great way for financial support that is tax deductible for me. Win-win for everyone.</p>
762	<p>I am extremely concerned about the Productivity Commission Draft Report which recommends the removal of tax deductions for donations made to religious charities in support of SRE. Spiritual health is equally as important as mental, physical and emotional health. SRE is an excellent program in public schools which contributes to the spiritual health and balanced growth and development of children and teens. The removal of tax deductions for SRE donations would cripple the program. It appears also that SRE (and private schools building funds) are the ONLY DGR that the report is considering removing. Is this not discriminatory? I am strongly against this proposal. Thank you for considering my concern. Robyn Baillie, retired school teacher and current SRE teacher (2012 - current)</p>

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763	With the world in turmoil, and poor mental health becoming a 'standard complaint' why can't the Government provide some tax-relief help to the entities out there that are espousing love, and peace, rather than hate, and division that is commonly seen in non-Christian communities? I call on the Govt. to give tax-relief in the way of tax deductibility for Religious Education and Private School Building Funds.
764	SRE provides invaluable community-wide support for non-religious and religious people alike, encouraging learning of new cultures & viewpoints and building up & caring for those in our local communities. My faith is the main driver behind volunteering time, finances and other resources, and the tax deductibility of such financial contributions supports community care and outreach programs. I support maintaining the DGR status of SRE programs in schools.
765	I have first hand experience seeing how providing faith based support in schools can have positive impacts to students (even if they don't have faith!)
766	Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, benefiting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union NSW's ministry programs and in turn contribute to the greater good of Australian society. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is commendable that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, reducing red tape, and simplifying the current system. However, 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 Special Religious Education (SRE) and lunchtime groups. Australia is one of the most multicultural nations on earth, and over 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on a misguided ideology that suggests religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that religious education in schools is one of the best ways to promote social cohesion. Both religious and non-religious parents choose to place their children in SRE. Putting extra pressure on religious education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications for our society. The SRE 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 philanthropic 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 education sector – 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. I think you and I can do a lot better than this. Considering 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. We urge you to reconsider the suggested changes, recognising the significant role that Scripture Union NSW, SRE and people of faith provide for the greater good of Australian society.
767	I wish to comment on the proposed changes to the Deductible Gift Recipient system. This would have so many negative effects on things that are good and are needed in a country that very much needs these beneficial things. It would be taking away the ability for Scripture Union NSW to run lunchtime groups in Government Schools, benefiting 2,000 students weekly what a huge loss this would be. I can't help but be concerned by the draft report and

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	<p>reforms to the DGR system and the impact it will have on religious charities like Scripture Union NSW and the flow on effect on the health and wellbeing of current and future students engaged in Special Religious Education (SRE) and lunchtime groups. I believe it is so important that they remain. So many children will not get to hear about religion/faith anywhere else, it is essential and should be available to all children and the choice given to parents who wish for their children to hear the good news that is taught by these wonderful volunteers who are willing to give of their own time for the good of our children. What a huge group of volunteers we have in Australia willing to give up their time, I admire their commitment and am forever grateful to them. In a report where, on the one hand, you are articulating the government's goal to double philanthropic 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. I urge you to reconsider this for the sake of our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. Thank you!</p>
768	<p>Factually schools with sre have benefits in schools. Check the stats. The number of adults who've commented on the benefits sre was to them in schools both primary and high schools. Changed their lives. The number of children who feel comfortable to disclose to sre teachers of difficult situations. So teachers and schools with community can work to help children and families. Christian churches and other religions also help parents in need, food, physical, spiritual ly, emotionally to support children and parents. So the community as a whole. It's a way we can give more to those in need. It must be beneficial financially to community or the government wouldn't get rid of it. Not happy Jan! I've been donating financially for years and have seen the benefits over 30 years. The benefits to public schools is Deminishing, let us help those in need. Please stop punishing public schools. They need it the most. Extensive numbers of volunteers devote so much. The government continues to make it harder and more costly for teachers of scriptures. Please stop. I've been teaching scripture over 50 years. Leave the good alone. Stick to the original agreement, the nsw church handed over the public education they started, this cost them so much. Tax deductibility means we can have more resources to pay for resources for children, training teachers and communities. Please please don't change it. Public schools can't get teachers wonder why? Sre helps communities support schools.</p>
769	<p>To The Productivity Commission, The faith communities (including our family) contribute both in financial giving and in volunteering of our time for the benefit of the mental and physical health and wellbeing of society as a whole. To withdraw the DGR system, means to reduce or eliminate assistance to charities which are non-profit organizations, and they are involved in giving money, goods or time and effort to those who need it without expecting something in return. The act of charity goes beyond helping others; it also benefits the donor's well-being as giving and helping others can also increase feelings of happiness, satisfaction, and overall well-being. When we are doing something for someone else it puts a smile on everyone's face. If we put some kindness back into the world it can help us feel a little better in ourselves and make the world a better place. For social cohesion, the SRE teachers are volunteers in Government Schools to benefit the young people of Australia's future generation. As SRE teachers we promote spiritual wellbeing for successful learning and nurture the students' sense of meaning and purpose and promote positive connections with faith and community whilst respecting the right of others to differ. Without the resources this purpose cannot be achieved. Please continue to support the faith-based schools as they are providing community-wide benefits for families including our family. Thank you for taking the time to read this submission and ask that you would consider not withdrawing the DGR (deductible gift recipient) system. Yours Sincerely</p>
770	<p>I understand the PC is recommending discontinuing DGR status to religious organisations for educational building funds. I regard this recommendation as diametrically opposed to the purpose of the reference which is to seek ways to increase philanthropy. My wife and I have over the years given</p>

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	substantial donations to The Crusader Union of Australia, a Christian organisation the provides outdoor experience camps for thousands of school students each year. These camps provide very significant emotional, physical and moral character building experiences and so play a part in overcoming the loneliness and mental health challenges faced by much of Australia's young people. Without their current DGR status much of the funding for the camp facilities would not have been donated greatly reducing the children's opportunities.
771	Dear Commissioners, DGR status gave me the motivation to make tax deductible gifts to Special Religious Education (SRE) which I have appreciated. I am surprised at the number of those whom I support financially that have contacted me with their concerns. SRE has been integral in my life, at school, working and now in retirement. I am very thankful for Spiritual wellbeing SRE gave me at school and continues to give young people, which is important for society and the nation. SRE and lunchtime groups provide young people a space to raise issues that they are facing. I believe it is important that DGR status is continued for SRE and school building funds. Continued DGR status would indicate the Government's recognition and appreciation of the contribution faith communities make to Australian society. Thank you.
772	I am writing in support of Scripture in Schools and the work that organisations such as Youthworks perform. I believe that scripture gives young people a compass for navigating the difficult years of childhood. Children learn to care for each other and accept each others differences, which aids in assuring a harmonious multicultural society. Children also learn the importance of looking beyond ourselves and what it means to care for those less fortunate than ourselves. Youthworks is an organisation that runs the Year 13 and Leaders in Training Programs, which I have witnessed on numerous occasions produce thoughtful, confident, leaders with a focus on equality, fairness and a desire to improve the world around them.
773	Productivity commission Report If the current Productivity Commission Report on Philanthropy is passed the work of SRE in public schools will be crippled. I teach Protestant SRE at Manly West Public School and have been doing so for 13 years. I, like the thousands of other SRE teachers do so voluntarily. We rely on our churches to collect donations for the work of SRE in schools to provide training, curriculum and student books. If the tax deduction is removed from the donations to religious institutions, it will be very difficult for SRE to continue to be taught. Most of the donors are older citizens, who want to assist SRE, but as they are on fixed incomes rely on the tax deduction they currently receive. If the deduction is taken away donations will dry up and SRE teaching and classes will suffer.
774	Dear Commissioners, I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. In removing DGR status from religious charities you are in effect putting pressure on volunteer based Christian Activities such as SRE Special Religious Education in public schools as well as lunchtime Christian groups along with other religious groups to be able to continue, if it comes in it could significantly impact the health and wellbeing of current and future students engaged in Special Religious Education (SRE) and lunchtime groups. Your report seems to be based on a misguided ideology that suggests religion is of no community-wide benefit. Though over the many years I have been involved in SRE within the public school system at many schools I have found it to be one of the best ways to promote social cohesion. Both religious and non-religious parents choose to place their children in SRE. Putting extra pressure on religious education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications for our society. The SRE 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 philanthropic 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

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	<p>decision. Considering 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. I urge you to reconsider the suggested changes, recognising the significant role that SRE volunteers and people of faith provide for the greater good of Australian society.</p>
775	<p>Dear Commissioners, You may know that organisations like Scripture Union run lunchtime groups in Government Schools for many thousands of students weekly. Organisations like Crusaders and Youthworks train children through camps and other holiday activities. These activities are a vital part of their ministry programs. I am highly concerned by the draft report and some proposed reforms to the DGR system. It is good that you are recommending expanding the system to cover more initiatives, such as animal welfare. Still, to achieve this, you are removing DGR status from religious charities, which will significantly impact the health and well-being of current and future students engaged in religious education and lunchtime groups. Australia is a multicultural nation; approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on an assertion 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 propose the government remove support from faith communities that represent a huge proportion of the people who will help governments, and are helping governments 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 propose 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. That does not seem sensible or warranted by the assertions in the draft report. The annual dollar amounts you estimate in your report that the expansion of DGR status to other institutions is small compared to the overall social welfare budget of the nation, let alone total government spending. While an expansion of philanthropy by some of the reforms you propose is welcome, it should not be at the expense of programs that already contributes greatly to the fabric of our communities.</p>
776	<p>My Christian faith drives my charitable giving in terms of the organisations/causes I support, and the amount I donate (tithing). I also volunteer for a non-profit so I understand the need for donor support.</p>
777	<p>Dear Commissioners, I am writing to express my sincere appreciation for the invaluable role that Special Religious Education (SRE) plays within our government school system. It is truly remarkable that this initiative is supported by what is arguably the largest weekly volunteer labor force in the country. This not only underscores the community's commitment to providing religious education. but also highlights the significant contribution of these volunteers towards our children's development and moral education. I strongly advocate for the government to not only maintain but also potentially increase its support for SRE. The dedication of these volunteers is instrumental in delivering education that complements the broader curriculum, providing students with a well-rounded perspective that includes moral and spiritual growth. Furthermore, I urge the government to</p>

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	<p>maintain the Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status for SRE in government schools. This status is crucial for the continued support and sustainability of these programs, allowing them to receive essential funding and contributions that directly benefit our children's education. In addition, recognising volunteers within the faith communities through the DGR system would not only validate their invaluable contribution but also encourage more individuals to participate in such commendable community service. Their work goes beyond education; it fosters social cohesion, promotes well-being, and builds a sense of community that is indispensable in today's society. The benefits that faith communities bring to our society are manifold, extending well beyond the confines of religious instruction. They contribute significantly to the social fabric of our nation, promoting well-being, fostering social cohesion, and providing support networks that are particularly beneficial in times of need. Just to provide some anecdotal evidence of the value of this work, I became a Christian as an adult, with much of my learning as a child from SRE, although hazy, providing a lot of helpful context that helped me piece it together. I would say my faith now grounds so much of my life, and SRE played an invaluable role in my coming to faith. Removing this would be robbing many children of the same opportunities. In conclusion, I hope the government will continue to recognise and support the crucial role that SRE and its volunteers play in our education system and wider community. The positive impacts of their work are far-reaching, contributing significantly to the holistic development of our children and the strength of our community bonds. Thank you for considering my views on this matter. I look forward to your support in ensuring the continued success and recognition of Special Religious Education and its dedicated volunteers. Kind regards, Justin</p>
778	<p>When I heard this on the radio it really upset me. Why would the government want to do this? Our country needs this, so many people benefit from it, I probably have benefited from it without even knowing. All I can say is, that we need philanthropic people and organisations in our country. Don't add tax to it. Stop trying to take money from everywhere possible.</p>
779	<p>I am very concerned by the proposed changes to the tax status of philanthropy to SRE which will undoubtedly hinder the ability of churches and people of faith to provide young people with the enormous and proven benefits of this aspect of their development. In my role as an Anglican Minister (at St Thomas' North Sydney) I regularly meet adults and young people who have come into the community of the church because they first encountered the Christian faith and its teaching through SRE. These people have been so grateful for the opportunity to consider these matters of psychological, intellectual and spiritual well being in a safe and voluntary environment. The loss of this will inhibit such people from this benefit in the future. And indeed many others who do not then find themselves in a faith community in adulthood but who nevertheless appreciate even now the broadening of their education in this way. It is a very significant backward step for the healthy fabric of our community in Australia for this change and will cause much upset to people of faith across the nation.</p>
780	<p>Hello! Just wanted to express my view that SRE should retain there ability to receive tax deductible donations. This is a Critical service that has impacted and benefited my life significantly and something that I know volunteer in as a result of the positive impact on my life. Thank you for considering my submission.</p>
781	<p>We would like the tax deduction to remain and the Christian school should still allow to benefit.</p>
782	<p>Dear Commissioners, I am concerned that the draft DGR report proposes a reform to take away DGR status from religious charities – which would negatively impact important initiatives such as school building funds and religious education in government schools. faith communities contribute to social cohesion and society as a whole through financial giving and volunteering of their time. To put extra pressure on this supportive part of our</p>

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	community is not a quality decision for Australia, and will have long term ramifications. Society in general is dealing with pressures such as anxiety, isolation and stress. Faith is a great stabiliser, so please avoid reforms that would reduce these faith services which promote a positive and cohesive society.
783	To the commissioners I wish to make my thoughts known in regard to the current investigation into tax deductibility for Christian organisations. I am particularly concerned that NPOs such as Scripture Union will lose their status if the regulations are changed, removing their ability to have people give a bit extra because they can claim such donations against their tax. It would seem from my reading of the draft changes that Christian organisations in particular are targeted. I feel that if this change goes through that so-called religions and cults will find a way around the changes by claiming to be charitable organisations, an example of which was the granting of tax deductibility to the scientology organisation, although it is clearly siting itself on the back of true Christian religions. Likewise I feel that some religious cults and foreign religions will also change their modus operandi to fool the system. Against this is the work done by genuine Christian organisations whose sole income is usually from donations from the members of Christian churches. These groups also provide hours of volunteer input into the likes of school scripture, one of the activities that may suffer due to the need to raise funds to provide the materials that are provided free of charge to schools and their pupils for these lessons. If your legislation is passed, will it be the thin edge of the wedge to require Christian organisations to also account for the volunteer hours used in their ministries along with other restrictions? I wonder how many of your team benefitted from school scripture when at primary and high school and whether you can see any correlation with the diminishing of Christian influence in society and the school classroom/curriculum and the worsening of the society and increase of crime in the world in which we live. I also wonder whether the mathematics have been done for justification of consideration of cutting back on Christian school funding, placing an extra burden on the tax system? I believe most children in Christian schooling have been placed there at great expense to the parents, due to this breakdown in society, the parents wanting to have an education for their children that seeks to give the children a good grounding in learning with a knowledge of God's desire for them to be model citizens.
784	I think that SRE has a positive impact on the community and is widely valued. Children learn about critical thinking, decisions they can make and the impact that they will have. Parents are grateful for their children to receive this opportunity. In NSW the curriculum is carefully scrutinised prior to acceptance by the Department of Education. I am a SRE teacher. I also give to many philanthropic causes (for homeless, domestic violence, health, education in Australia and overseas); giving up to 30% of my income away. The DRG status of the charity has a significant impact on how much I give and to whom I give. I support the ongoing DRG status of SRE. Faith communities are valuable and make a significant contribution to our broader communities.
785	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

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	<p>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. As you know funding is essential to keep pace with the changing times. These contributions make a significant impact on the future of Australia as children grow to be future citizens of the country. They need to be provided with the best facilities possible 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>
786	<p>Christian values need to be encouraged throughout Australia. Giving to Christian organisations should be promoted, not curtailed or taxed.</p>
787	<p>Private schools of which Christian schools are a sub set are better value for the government finances. This is because only a fraction of the operation costs come from the government. Public schools on the other hand require all of their funding from the government budget. If the religious schools can not operate and close the students would then need to go to public schools costing the government more money in the long run. Christians are more likely to volunteer and therefore are a real asset to their communities. Scripture is needed to give hope to young people, something that is missing in society at the moment.</p>
788	<p>I am appalled to find that the Productivity Commission has threatened to remove tax deductability for donations for Special Religious Education in Government Schools. SRE teachers are thoroughly trained and to enable training, specialised programmes have to be compiled - all these programmes cost money. By removing the tax deductability for donors it will reduce the amount donors can afford to donate. This of course will reduce the amount and affordability of the donation. The same will apply to School Building Funds. State Government Schools are already struggling to accommodate the number of students presenting and if, with the reduction of funds available for School Building funds, the number of projects needed will not proceed. and this will eventually increase the pressure on the already stressed Public School system. There is increasing demand for Faith Based Schools. It is evident that there is a campaign to eventually have SRE taken out Government Schools.</p>
789	<p>Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, benefiting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union NSW's ministry programs and in turn contribute to the greater good of Australian society. I am highly concerned by the draft report and some of the proposed reforms to the DGR system. It is commendable that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, reducing red tape, and simplifying the current system. However, 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 Special Religious Education (SRE) and lunchtime groups. Australia is one of the most multicultural nations on earth, and over 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on a misguided ideology that suggests religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that religious education in schools is one of the best ways to promote social cohesion. Both religious and non-religious parents choose to place their children in SRE. Putting extra pressure on religious education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications for our society.</p>

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	<p>The SRE 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 philanthropic 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 reject the 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 maintain such initiatives within the DGR status to avoid damage to Multicultural Australia as a result.</p>
790	<p>I am appalled to find that the Productivity Commission has threatened to remove tax deductability for donations for Special Religious Education in Government Schools. SRE teachers are thoroughly trained and to enable training, specialised programmes have to be compiled - all these programmes cost money. By removing the tax deductability for donors will reduce the amount donors can afford to donate. This of course will reduce the amount and affordability of the donation. The same will apply to School Building Funds. It is evident that there is a campaign to eventually have SRE taken out Government Schools.</p>
791	<p>I am appalled to find that the Productivity Commission has threatened to remove tax deductability for donations for Special Religious Education in Government Schools. SRE teachers are thoroughly trained and to enable training, specialised programmes have to be compiled - all these programmes cost money. By removing the tax deductability for donors will reduce the amount donors can afford to donate. This of course will reduce the amount and affordability of the donation. The same will apply to School Building Funds. It is evident that there is a campaign to eventually have SRE taken out Government Schools.</p>
792	<p>Dear Commissioner, Thankyou for your time and consideration. In our community of Narromine the Special Religious Education program in our local government schools make a significant positive impact to the many young people who participate. These volunteers who facilitate the SRE programs make up part of the largest weekly volunteer labour force in Australia. We are asking the government to maintain or increase their support for this, not reduce it. It is essential that the DGR status be maintained for Special Religious Education in government schools. I and many others in our local community want to see volunteers within the faith communities recognised within the DGR system. The community-wide benefits that faith communities bring, including wellbeing benefits and social cohesion, which for a small country town and surrounding communities like ours, sets up young people for successful futures, and unity. Thankyou for your time. Bethany Edwards.</p>
793	<p>Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, benefiting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union NSW’s ministry programs and in turn contribute to the greater good of Australian society. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is commendable that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, reducing red tape, and simplifying the current system. However, 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 Special Religious Education</p>

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	<p>(SRE) and lunchtime groups. Australia is one of the most multicultural nations on earth, and over 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on a misguided ideology that suggests religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that religious education in schools is one of the best ways to promote social cohesion. Both religious and non-religious parents choose to place their children in SRE. Putting extra pressure on religious education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications for our society. The SRE 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 philanthropic 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>
794	<p>I am nearly 80 years of age and have been giving regularly to faith based charities since my conversion to Christianity while an Infantryman in Asia in 1968. I don't count myself and my wife as kind and generous people. We are simply people who see our giving as an investment in our beautiful nation. Would I still give if your legislation were to be passed? Yes, because at my age and circumstances I don't pay tax any longer. However, it would be one more reason for becoming disappointed in the short-sightedness and careless people who are making decisions that are supposed to be the benefit of all Australians.</p>
795	<p>The DGR system in Australia allows donors the ability to provide much needed funds and resources for a high quality curriculum, & teacher training for SRE in our Schools. SRE provides a professional service to the education of our young people that is balanced and supportive. SRE teachers are volunteers - unpaid - but well trained and well presented, with curriculums that are profession and of a high standard. Tax deductibility enables donors to donate more towards this essential service to our communities and a balanced education system. It is very evident that any component in our Education system that has any relation to Faith is being eroded.</p>
796	<p>I welcome the government's goal to double philanthropic giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030. Volunteering of time and resources is the backbone of a healthy society. However, I am concerned that DGR status is planned to be removed from religious education organisations like Scripture Union NSW. I believe that a lack of spiritual input into children will significantly impact the health and well-being of current and future students. The holistic development of children is so much more than just academic goals. Children need spiritual education to be well-rounded individuals and to be able to navigate the challenges of living in the modern world. Could you please re-consider this exclusion of DGR status to religious education organisations? While I personally hold Christian beliefs (that I believe have served our country well), I also want religious education of other faiths to also be supported with DGR status, so that families have a choice. There should be no discrimination between religious affiliations. My concern is that these proposed policy changes discriminate between religious and non-religious activities in schools. Religious education makes a difference. I hear the personal stories from friends who did this work. I believe they should be supported.</p>
797	<p>My faith drives my giving habits (money and time), and value the tax deductibility (DGR status) for financial contributions. The contribution SRE makes to young lives and to Australian society I support maintaining DGR status for SRE and school building funds, and want the Government to recognise and value the contribution faith communities make to Australian society.</p>

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798	<p>Dear Commissioners, You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, benefiting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union NSW’s ministry programs and in turn contribute to the greater good of Australian society. I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. It is commendable that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, reducing red tape, and simplifying the current system. However, 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 Special Religious Education (SRE) and lunchtime groups. Australia is one of the most multicultural nations on earth, and over 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on a misguided ideology that suggests religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that religious education in schools is one of the best ways to promote social cohesion. Both religious and non-religious parents choose to place their children in SRE. Putting extra pressure on religious education and its teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications for our society. The SRE 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 philanthropic 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 education sector – 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. I think you and I can do a lot better than this. Considering 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. We urge you to reconsider the suggested changes, recognising the significant role that Scripture Union NSW, SRE and people of faith provide for the greater good of Australian society.</p>
799	<p>I write to express my SUPPORT for the DGR status of donations to both SRE and School Building Funds. I find it confusing and a somewhat suspicious that these are the only two areas be recommended by the commission for removal from DGR list, especially given the evidence for the value of these two forms of philanthropic giving. As I understand it, SRE in public schools is effective in promoting psychological wellbeing, multiculturalism and acceptance among students while decreasing radicalisation. Added to that it is significantly more likely that people of faith will contribute financially to and give their time to these activities in support of the school community. I have contributed to an SRE fund, encouraged to do so due to its DGR status. Faith communities provide great support to public schools in large numbers - nearly 10,000 lessons per week! Furthermore, I know that this service is valued in our local primary school. Given that the Draft Report recognises the invaluable contribution of philanthropy in Australia, and signals the government’s desire to double philanthropic giving by 2030, it seems both contradictory and inconceivable that these two forms of philanthropy be singled out as those that supposedly provide little community wide support. I urge the productivity commission to recommend that the DGR status for these two areas of philanthropy be maintained. Yours Sincerely</p>