

## Brief comments received

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800	In my opinion experiences gained from our community learning SRE education Hindu scripture changes the children , future generations with faith. Trust avoiding bad behaviours. Understanding the feelings of other people, reduce the anger, know their life must help others. Avoid making sins and tutoring the people, appreciate the value of education beliefs and faith make them do good deeds to others. All the people, say Indians and srilankans always support the their children to learn sre Hindu scripture and not only that whole community love principles of Hindu scripture
801	Scripture in Schools otherwise known as SRE should be encouraged. Apart from the spiritual value of SRE, it gives a framework in which young Australians are able to deal with the challenges of life. The Christian values of love God and love your neighbour are the foundation on which western society has been successfully built . A similar argument can be put for Faith based schools.
802	I give to organisations that have components that gives the opportunity for people to grow spiritually because I see that as an area in which government finds it difficult to engage themselves. I live in NSW so I give financially to provide materials for kids in schools to explore faith with their parents permission. I also volunteer as an SRE teacher in my local school along with thousands of SRE teachers across NSW. I give to Scripture Union Australia camps and field workers and chaplains because I see faith as an aspect that can provide a missing element in many kids lives.Government provides many other valuable services for vulnerable kids but my experience has been that faith adds another dimension that aids wellbeing and resilience when kids need it most. I also believe that faith organisations have have values of equality and compassion and help for the needy have more to offer their clients than those without. For this reason I think that organisations that have a faith basis and align with these values have a valuable part ton play in our communities and that making donations to them tax deductible is a way of attracting more funding, so enhancing the work they do. I personally add to my gifts what I am saving in tax so would give less if they were not tax deductible. It would have the effect of reducing my donations.
803	“Reforms” to the DGR system is unnecessary and uncalled for. Leave the faith community alone
804	SRE is a missional activity Just like missional activities in developing countries in need. We are able to claim tax deductability for overseas mission donations. SRE deserves the same acknowledgement. ACC volunteer SRE
805	A recent draft report recommends removing Deductable Gift Recipient status from religious charities like Scripture Union NSW. If this is implemented it will significantly impact the well being of students who enjoy the the benefits. Religious Education in government schools. It has proven (and well-researched) wellbeing benefits for promoting social cohesion. This means you would be removing help from faith communities that represent a huge

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	<p>proportion of the people who are working towards community cohesiveness that you say you want. Please do not increase the burden on organisations that help you achieve the goal you say you have. Apparently scripture teachers in Australia represent one of our nation’s largest weekly group of volunteers. The census report that 60% of the total population identify themselves as part of a religion. Surely that statistic alone shows that the majority of people would want the current levels of this work be maintained.</p>
806	<p>Dear Commissioners, I am concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. I am quite concerned that to achieve this you are taking away DGR status from almost exclusively religious charities – which will have a huge impact on important initiatives such as school building funds and religious education in government schools. Australia is the most multicultural nation on earth, and approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on an ideology that religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that one of the best ways to promote social cohesion is through religious education in schools – putting extra pressure on this education, and its teachers, is not a quality decision for Australia, and will have long term ramifications. The Religious Education teachers in Australia represent the largest weekly group of volunteers in our nation. In a report where on the one hand, you are articulating the government’s goal to double giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030, on the other hand you are removing privileges and help from faith communities that represent a huge proportion of the people who will help you, and are helping you right now, achieve that goal. This is not a wise decision. On top of that, school building funds are to have their DGR status removed, because back in the 1950s when DGR status was established, no government support was given by other means and now it is. This is not a good enough reason – unless the government is going to actually front up and supply ALL the capital expenditure needs of these schools (which I’m sure they won’t) why would you then seek to penalise both the schools AND the private citizens who are donating to these schools and funding education? Faith-based education is the fastest growing sector of education in Australia – which tells us that this is what our communities want and are actively using. So why make it harder for this to happen and be successful? In short, you are penalising both the fastest growing sector of education – which is predominantly privately funded by citizens – and are also putting undue pressure on the largest weekly group of volunteers in Australia, and risking a lower level of social cohesion as a result. I think we, and you, can do a lot better than this. In light of everything I have stated above, I completely reject your [presumption that these initiatives are of little “community-wide benefit” and would encourage you, even if you don’t have a religious belief yourself, to understand that your report is discriminatory and minimising in its ideology – and that this will damage Australia as a result.</p>
807	<p>Dear Commissioners, Thanks for your review and the opportunity to respond. Scripture Union runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools for thousands of students weekly. Crusaders and Youthworks train children through camps and other holiday activities. Vital parts of their programs. So two proposed reforms concern me. Recommending expanding DGR to cover more initiatives, such as mental health and animal welfare, is welcome. But to achieve this, you propose removing DGR status from religious charities. This will significantly impact the health and well-being of students engaged in religious education, lunchtime and vacation groups. Australia is a multicultural nation. About 60% of Australians identify with a religion. The highest proportion of Programs (activities/services that charities run) are in respect of religion (23%) compared to 17% for education and 16% for human services. Yet, some recommendations appear 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. Religious Education teachers in Australia represent our nation's largest weekly group of volunteers. While you note the Government’s goal to double giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030, you then propose the Government remove support from faith communities that represent a huge proportion of the people who will help governments (and are already helping</p>

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	<p>governments) achieve that goal. This is unwise. You also propose removing DGR status from school building funds. Faith-based education is Australia's fastest-growing education sector: this is what many families 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 – significantly privately funded by citizens – and putting undue pressure on the largest weekly group of volunteers in Australia who support non-government schooling, risking a lower level of social cohesion as a result. That does not seem warranted by the assertions in the draft report. The annual dollar amounts you estimate 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 expansion of philanthropy by reforms you propose is welcome, it should not be at the expense of programs that already contribute greatly to the fabric of our communities. Most of your recommendations are admirable. As an actuary and a donor, I strongly concur that charities must address information asymmetries through greater disclosures. However, this needs to be balanced with the capacity of individual charities to prepare such information – one size will not fit all. Requiring reporting by Program could address this, and also your concern about potential private benefit to donors. I wish you well for your remaining deliberations.</p>
808	<p>My faith is a key motivator for my philanthropic giving, and appropriate tax deductibility for faith associated organisations is important to me. I believe they provide incredible benefits to the community (that are often not recognised enough), promoting stronger communities through education and community services. Special Religious Education is important to maintain in NSW as no other part of the curriculum really speaks to the spiritual, yet many Australians and recent arrivals are people of faith.</p>
809	<p>Coming from a non Christian family when I was young,the only real contact with the bible was thru Scripture at school.It wasn,t until I became a believer at around 21 years old I realised how important these visits are to children of school age,maybe not straight away but sometimes later in life.</p>
810	<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 have volunteered at and contributed to the SU ministry programs. 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. 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</p>

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	<p>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 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. Thank you. Yours sincerely</p>
811	<p>I believe Christian principles were the basis of our Commonwealth. I have just read how our early Christian Governor, Lachlan Macquarie, reformed the convict culture to an inclusive and compassionate society. I enjoyed Scripture at Sunday School and at Public School. It has given me a happy basis for my life, of love and forgiveness. There are other Christian outreach organisations which also bring the Christian message into peoples' lives. I think our children should be given a chance to consider these values for themselves. Society will be a better place as a result.</p>
812	<p>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>
813	<p>dear sir / madam i am in support of special religious education in schools for at least rounding the education of our children if not for the truths taught. tax deductions for its provision is an advantage to me also.</p>
814	<p>Maintaining DGR status for SRE and school building funds is paramount to Australian society and the Government needs to recognise and value the contribution faith communities have and continue to make to Australian society. Faith communities have consistently setup and supported the development of schools, care and other support facilities for community. It is incredibly disappointing that the government would target this area in its approach and progress its anti-faith ideology under the guise of tax policy.</p>

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815	<p>I have read the draft report and it's proposals to the DGR system and I wish to voice my great concern I am a Christian and volunteer teacher of Religious Instruction(SRE) in the NSW state primary school system and have been for over 40 years. I am passionate about providing children with information about the Christian faith upon which much of our society and culture has its foundation. Children are taught the value of caring and respecting others and of the service of others in our communities no matter their background or beliefs. In addition Religious Instruction in schools has proven and has well researched well-being benefits and is vital for social cohesion I have personally witnessed this with many of the children and their families with whom I have had contact over the years The state public schools in which I have taught have always been supportive and encouraging of the participation of my presence in the school and Religious Instruction generally Also volunteer teachers in Religious Instruction in schools forms the largest weekly volunteer labour force in Australia I therefore ask that the Australian Government maintain their support for the DGR status for Religious Instruction (SRE) in state schools</p>
816	<p>I believe that the Christian churches do so much good work in the community, it would stifle the outreach they make in our State. They need to continue being exempt from paying Tax.</p>
817	<p>I have been involved in sre teaching for over 15 years and am currently working within the St Andrews NSW area. I have seen how the sre teacher has formed positive bonds with the children of various ages and has built a genuine relationship with the school and community. I have no doubt that in a case of trauma or tragedy the community would reach out to the sre teacher. The kids are benefitting from these lessons and to cut or interfere with funding or tax deductions would simply make things harder for the faithful sre teachers of all denominations. Ultimately the kids would be the losers. Please leave things alone/</p>
818	<p>Dear Commissioners, I am dismayed and concerned that your draft report of Nov 2023 recommended withdrawal of DGR status from charities associated with religious education in public schools as well as private school building funds. In so doing, you run counter to the general community 's support of SRE in public schools and the option of private school education . Many people of faith are SRE volunteers because of the positive impact they can contribute towards the greater good of the general community. There are even families of neutral faith persuasions who send their children to SRE, faith community schools.. These private schools complement the public system by taking up some of the responsibility of educating our next generation of Australians. Please do not disregard those of us who choose to send our children to private schools or SRE in public schools. Withdrawal of our DGR status sends the message that the contributions made by faith communities are not appreciated. (I fear for Salvos and Vinnies now). Thanks for your consideration.</p>
819	<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</p>

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	<p>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>
820	<p>To whom it may concern, I wish to add my voice in favour of retaining the tax concessions for faith based schools and religion in Schools. These initiatives promote choice within the community and relieve the state system of much quality education which would cost many times more than the current system which includes volunteers and philanthropy to provide. Many parents are choosing faith based education over state based education at great personal expense. Please support their opportunity to choose.</p>
821	<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.</p>
822	<p>Dear Commissioners, I am totally mystified as to how you can come to the conclusion that initiatives by faith groups volunteering in schools to assist the spiritual wellbeing of students is of 'little community benefit' and therefore should not have DGR status. Are you unaware of the facts that teaching kids about faith is massively important? 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. For example, just look at youth suicide statistics. Youth with a faith base are less likely to commit suicide. 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. 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</p>

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	<p>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 SRE and people of faith provide for the greater good of Australian society.</p>
823	<p>Donations to religious organisations strengthen and connect our children and communities within the freedoms and structures of our democratic country. Religious organisations are largely dependent on volunteers, who care about children and families, and who themselves benefit from giving their life's experiences and expertise. Donations to religious organisations which offer community involvement primarily benefits the myriad recipients (refer p.192 of the Productivity Commission's draft report, re "risk of nexus").</p>
824	<p>Dear Commissioners, I write concerned that your proposed changes will not have the effect of increasing philanthropic giving in Australia. 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. For example, you may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, benefiting 2,000 students weekly. These groups contribute to the greater good of Australian society. 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 also include 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 general community. 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 a significant proportion of 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 we 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.</p>

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	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.
825	Dear Commissioners, I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms proposed to the DGR system. It is commendable that this is being considered to expand initiatives, but this reform will result in religious charities losing their DGR status, 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. Doing this will damage this ministry dramatically, as the majority of teachers in SRE programs are volunteers, you will remove 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 strongly suggest, that you reconsider the damages this proposition can have to the community at large, and rethink this proposal as well as take into consideration the views of the community, such as myself, who are on a weekly basis involved in SRE teaching ministry and who sees the benefits of these programs first hand.
826	In NSW the subject Special Religious Education (SRE) (formerly Scripture) has been taught in state schools since 1880, originally by visiting clergy and in more recent decades by trained teachers (paid or voluntary). Why SRE? Because students, as well as having access to various subjects (eg languages, science, maths etc) need to have an opportunity to hear about the faith which can provide them strength to face the many challenges of life. In primary schools the SRE Teachers are mostly voluntary trained people while, in secondary schools, these teachers are paid by organisations funded by local churches and interested individuals who, because of DGR, receive tax deductibility. If DGR STATUS IS WITHDRAWN, MANY SUPPORTERS WOULD FEEL OBLIGED TO REDUCE OR CEASE THEIR SUPPORT. The proposal to cease DGR status for SRE may diminish the very significant opportunity for young people to learn how a religious faith can equip them for living in the 21st Century.
827	Dear Commissioners, I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. I think it is good that you are looking at expanding the system to cover more initiatives such as animal welfare, but I am quite concerned that to achieve this you are taking away DGR status from almost exclusively religious charities – which will have a huge impact on important initiatives such as school building funds and religious education in government schools. Australia is the most multicultural nation on earth, and approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on an ideology that religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that one of the best ways to promote social cohesion is through religious education in schools – putting extra pressure on this education, and its teachers, is not a quality decision for Australia, and will have long term ramifications. The Religious Education teachers in Australia represent the largest weekly group of volunteers in our nation. In a report where on the one hand, you are articulating the government’s goal to double giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030, on the other hand you are removing privileges and help from faith communities that represent a huge proportion of the people who will help you, and are helping you right now, achieve that goal. This is not a wise decision. On top of that, school building funds are to have their DGR status removed, because back in the 1950s when DGR status was established, no government support was given by other means and now it is. This is not a good enough reason – unless the government is



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	<p>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>
828	<p>Hi there, I have been teaching SRE in schools for over 30 years, having looked at this bill and its outcomes I can only see negatives associated with these ideas. SRE in schools has a very positive impact on the children, how they see themselves, how they treat others and the overall cohesion of the school community.</p>
829	<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>

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830	<p>I am deeply concerned about the proposed reform plan which forms part of the Productivity Commission’s draft recommendations to the Government to remove the Tax Deductible Giving (DRG) Status. If the government legislates to remove tax deductibility, it will have a profound impact on the ability of low fee, faith-based schools to raise much needed funds. Currently the DRG makes school fees affordable for most families. It will also drastically affect the fundraising of vital SRE (scripture in schools). Research shows very clearly that Religious Education provides strong community-wide benefits because it helps diffuse racial and religious tensions. It enables instructions 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. Perhaps everyone who was part of forming this report has no connection to a religion? However, according to the ABS statistics, 60% of the Australian population does and Australia is the most multicultural community on earth. Social cohesion is therefore hugely important in Australia and religious education is well researched to continue to build a community-wide benefit. In addition, if these recommended changes were to be accepted, it is estimated that up to 5,000 charities across Australia will no longer be able to offer their donors tax deductible giving in key areas. I am reaching out to you to sincerely and carefully consider this matter and make the decision with honesty and integrity to retain the DGR Status as you have in your hands the power to make a difference to so many peoples’ lives. Thank you.</p>
831	<p>Dear Commissioners I write concerning the DRG system applying to Government Schools in New South Wales. Scripture Union in NSW is a recipient of the DRG system and this is of considerable benefit to the organization that provides programmes for 2000 students weekly. I attended Government Schools for my primary and secondary education and I personally benefited from the programs provided by Scripture Union. I am concerned that the draft report foreshadows changes to the DRG system which on one hand will improve the system , but on the other, will affect the viability of the Special Religious Education program and the lunchtime groups. There is evidence that religious education in schools is effective in enhancing social cohesion. I do not think that reducing the funding as proposed is a desirable way to enhancing the well being of students and teachers in Government Schools. I hope that my recommendation of not adopting these changes to the Deductible Gift Recipient system will be upheld.</p>
832	<p>It is the right of every child to have teaching in spiritual things. If we take away the tax deduction on religious supplies for SRE teachers it will bring a big burden to bear on them and perhaps take away the rights of children to learn spiritually.</p>
833	<p>Dear Commissioners, You may be aware that Scripture Union NSW organizes lunchtime groups in Government Schools Such groups impact 2,000 students weekly and are a vital part of Scripture Union’s ministry. For this reason I am deeply troubled by the Government Productivity Commission's recent draft report, especially some of the recommendations it makes for reforms to the DGR system. In particular I am troubled by the recommendation to remove DGR status from religious charities such as Scripture Union NSW. I believe that in an anomic and even chaotic social environment this change would deleteriously affect the health and well-being of current and future students engaged in religious education and lunchtime groups. Although Australia is a multicultural nation -- and should welcome diversity --- approximately 60% of Australians identify with some religious tradition that offers stable meaning, understanding, and possibilities for tolerance within a fractured world. The draft report, however, seems to presume that religious understandings -- whether or not they are specifically Christian -- provide no community-wide benefit. One of the best ways to promote social cohesion is through tolerant religious education in schools -- something we are currently greatly in need of. The Religious Education teachers in Australia represent our nation's largest weekly group of volunteers. In a report that, on the one hand, articulates the government’s goal to</p>

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	<p>double giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030, you are, on the other hand, 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 shortsighted. As well, school building funds are to have their DGR status removed. Faith-based education is Australia's fastest-growing education sector – this is what our communities want -- and are actively using. So why make it harder for this to happen and be successful? The draft report penalises both the fastest-growing sector of education – predominantly privately funded by citizens – and puts undue pressure on the largest weekly group of volunteers in Australia, risking a lower level of social cohesion as a result. Extremism can develop anywhere, but currently supported institutions can be vehicles for social solidarity and tolerance. “Community-wide benefit” is just what many of these current initiatives provide, and I would ask to to consider how removal of DGR status will allow ideological extremisms to flourish. Your sincerely, Sue Kleinig.</p>
834	<p>I would like to see the DGR status maintain special religious education in public schools</p>
835	<p>I’m so worried about what these suggested reforms will mean for Australia – and hope there is room within this process not just to comment on their outworking, but to change what they are proposed to be. Research shows very clearly that Religious Education provides strong community-wide benefits 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. I’m sure you will probably say at this point that your report is not trying to remove religious education – but by removing DGR status, you will. You are placing undue financial pressure on a system that actually represents Australia’s largest weekly volunteer group. I don’t understand why this wasn’t taken into account in your report, when you articulate that the government wants to double giving (finances and volunteering) by 2030. Your reforms, and this goal, seem to be at odds. Perhaps everyone who was part of forming this report has no connection to a religion? 60% of the population in Australia does, and Australia is the most multicultural community on earth. Social cohesion is therefore hugely important in Australia – and religious education is well-researched to build this. This IS a community-wide benefit – and yet religion in your report appears to be treated otherwise. I am also concerned about the pressure your reforms will place on school building funds. Faith-based education is the fastest growing sector of education – it is what Australians are increasingly turning to. Funding for these schools is mainly through fees and donations – so why are you therefore making it harder for them to provide quality education, just because the government provides a bit more support for them through other means than in 1950s? I think the government SHOULD provide more support – not be taking it away. DGR mechanisms enable the people of Australia to donate and fund some of our education system themselves. If these schools go under, or have to provide lower quality facilities, then then Australia will pay a heavy price. It seems to me that because they have the word ‘religion’ associated with it, that other contrary particular voices have been elevated, and these initiatives have been labelled as not ‘community-wide benefit’. This is an error. Your report shows that overall donations have increased, but that they are coming from a smaller pool of people. Together with cost of living pressures, I read this to mean that the average income person in Australia is not giving as much anymore. If people have the option to give somewhere either with or without DGR status, I think the average Australian would ultimately lean towards choosing those with. So – you are making it harder for these volunteers to do their valuable work, and for schools to provide the best education facilities they can for the next generation.</p>
836	<p>I value SRE in schools. I have taught SRE in public schools and have seen the value to the individual and the society when children have been taught the values that underlie the decisions that they make. I respect the rights of parents to teach those values and principles and to ensure that in a school</p>

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	<p>setting their child receives added training to reinforce in a structured way those principles. And society benefits from residents who have those principles instilled. To enable that to continue I believe SRE teachers needs to be trained and resourced and to do that they need organizations designed for just that. So to disallow tax deductible status to those organizations would cripple their work and hinder the very goals of SRE, So I ask that this proposed change to tax deductible status be removed .</p>
837	<p>I believe the youth of today do need some basic guidance in the form of Religious Education. Good moral education that is possibly not taught at home.</p>
838	<p>I think charities that have DGR status for school building funds or to provide religious education in government schools should be allowed to continue with their DGR status. This give children in poor areas equal access. I think it is always those who are poor that will suffer from this change.</p>
839	<p>Dear commissioners, I want to voice my concern about the draft report and reforms to the DGR system by quoting others who say it better than I can- '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. I’m sure you will probably say at this point that your report is not trying to remove religious education – but by removing DGR status, you will. You are placing undue financial pressure on a system that actually represents Australia’s largest weekly volunteer group. I don’t understand why this wasn’t taken into account in your report, when you articulate that the government wants to double giving (finances and volunteering) by 2030. Your reforms, and this goal, seem to be at odds. Perhaps everyone who was part of forming this report has no connection to a religion? 60% of the population in Australia does, and Australia is the most multicultural community on earth. Social cohesion is therefore hugely important in Australia – and religious education is well-researched to build this. This IS a community-wide benefit – and yet religion in your report appears to be treated otherwise. I am also concerned about the pressure your reforms will place on school building funds. Faith-based education is the fastest growing sector of education – it is what Australians are increasingly turning to. Funding for these schools is mainly through fees and donations – so why are you therefore making it harder for them to provide quality education, just because the government provides a bit more support for them through other means than in 1950s? I think the government SHOULD provide more support – not be taking it away. DGR mechanisms enable the people of Australia to donate and fund some of our education system themselves. If these schools go under, or have to provide lower quality facilities, then then Australia will pay a heavy price. It seems to me that because they have the word ‘religion’ associated with it, that other contrary particular voices have been elevated, and these initiatives have been labelled as not ‘community-wide benefit’. This is an error. Your report shows that overall donations have increased, but that they are coming from a smaller pool of people. Together with cost of living pressures, I read this to mean that the average income person in Australia is not giving as much anymore. If people have the option to give somewhere either with or without DGR status, I think the average Australian would ultimately lean towards choosing those with. Thanks for taking the time to consider these concern</p>
840	<p>I am concerned about the impact of the proposed Deductible Gift Recipients (DGR) reforms on Australian society. The draft report of the Productivity Commission recognises the invaluable contribution of philanthropy in Australia and signals the government’s goal to double philanthropic giving by 2030. However, the only DGRs the report recommends removing are for SRE in public schools and private school building funds, which are both activities that I regularly support through my giving. This looks like anti-faith ideology. Removal of DGR status from Religious Education also places undue financial pressure on a system that represents one of Australia’s largest weekly volunteer groups. The proposed reforms appear to be at odds with the</p>

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	<p>government’s goal to double giving (finances and volunteering) by 2030. The removal of private school building funds from DGR status appears to be discriminatory and will significantly affect school building programs. Research clearly shows that religious education provides strong community-wide benefits because it helps diffuse racial and religious tensions. Around 60% of Australia’s population has connection to a religion, and Australia is one of the most multicultural communities on earth. Social cohesion is therefore hugely important in Australia and yet the Productivity Commission report treats it otherwise. I expect that the average Australian leans towards choosing charities that are tax-deductible and so the proposed reforms discriminate against those charities and will make it that much harder for existing volunteers to do their work. Removing the existing carve-outs will also expose small religious charities to the burden of full reporting to the ACNC. It also exposes all such bodies to the risk of the ACNC removing their governing bodies and replacing them with its own choice of board members. This is a massive over-reach on the part of government. I would ask that you reconsider these reforms as a matter of urgency.</p>
841	<p>The suggested reforms to remove DGR statuses from religious charities, school building funds and special religious education in government schools is misdirected and appears specifically targeted at people of faith and the organisations they support. People of faith such as myself are tax payers as well, and should be fairly represented by our government. If the Government is objectively claiming these changes be made to improve productivity then please consider: 1. Many secular people use faith-based schools and charities. I know personally secular people whom have relied on faith-based schools to escape bullying at a previous public school or for grievance counselling after bereavement. Without this as an option, they would need to turn to an overwhelmed public system or drop out of school. DGRs are important so faith-based schools and charities can afford to grow as their demand grows. 2. Faith-based schools are often relied on by government to take-on complex cases. I know of students that have exhausted all avenues of public schooling due to their situations, and been directed to a faith-based school as a last resort. Without this option, they would have dropped out of school and been at risk of abuse, drugs or crime. People of faith are willing to take on these complex cases and persevere out of our beliefs. 3. Faith-based services supported by DGRs are a government-private partnership – currently donors and the government share the costs. If DGRs are removed and the organisation is no longer sustainable on donors alone, the service will close and an equivalent public service will have to be 100% funded by the government. 4. If a service is charitable, it should not matter whether it is faith-based or not. As Australian citizens’ we pledge to be non-discriminatory and fair to all whom share this land. Removing DGRs on faith-based association says the wrong message to over 60% of Australians that claim to have a faith – which includes indigenous Australians and migrants – the various groups we are trying to welcome. 5. SRE is used by many faiths including Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Jewish faiths. It is important for promoting diversity and inclusion. Similar to indigenous beliefs, it needs to come from the people of faith themselves so it is taught accurately and with sincerity. Several migrants I’ve met have told me, “I’m glad I can learn about other faiths in Australia without fear of persecution”. Non-believing and faith-based people benefit from religious charities, school building funds and special religious education in government schools. Removal of DGRs will make these services less affordable and ultimately less available. This will make the government less productive as it needs to contribute more resources to fill the gap made by removing these DGRs.</p>
842	<p>I am so strongly in favour for our children to learn our Christian beliefs, we are so much in need of this in our world today. I enjoy the faces of the children as we discuss the stories of our lessons.</p>

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843	<p>My faith in Jesus Christ drives my philanthropy. Because of God’s immense love and grace lavished on me my natural response is generosity in time and money to others. While not always easy, I aim to serve others through volunteerism and financial generosity to charities and faith-based organisations. Tax deductibility (DGR status) for my financial contributions is a key enabler for my charitable giving habits. It encourages me to be generous as I know my government supports my generosity. I greatly value the contribution Special Religious Education (SRE) makes to young lives and to Australian society. In a world of growing youth anxiety and complexity SRE plays a critical role in supporting and grounding youth with purpose and meaning. I urge the Government to maintain DGR status for SRE and school building funds. I want the Government to recognise and value the contribution faith communities make to Australian society, and to encourage broader societal generosity in volunteerism and financial charity.</p>
844	<p>It is important that gifts to the work of religious education in our schools should be tax deductible This work is vital in our society that young people be given clear teaching as a foundation for there lives and the good of society</p>
845	<p>To Whom It May Concern I want to share my thoughts about Scripture in Schools. For many many years scripture has been taught in schools, for me personally the person who taught scripture never forced his views down our throat. He simply shared various scriptures, gave us activity on that scrioture and we simply answered what we thought. I truly believe scripture in schools has a place and yes it has a positive approach and kids love it. The question I love to ask is this; What does Philanthropic got to offer kids for the future? With scripture most kids get excited because scripture makes them think about lots of things. Please keep our scripture in classes. I suggest you get people to spend time in scripture classes and see the real benefits of scripture. Greg</p>
846	<p>Dear Commissioners, I am highly concerned by the draft report and proposed reforms to the DGR system. I appreciate It is good that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, such as animal welfare. I understand that to achieve this, you are removing DGR status from religious charities. In NSW, we are seeing a major exodus of school students from the Public System towards independent schools, especially those with religious basis. At least one major contribution to this exodus is community concerns about the values being expressed within government-controlled schools. This division in our society should be a major contemporary concern to us all. Your recommendations will further reinforce this present drift and impact groups like Scripture Union that mitigate social divide and significantly contribute to the health and well-being of current and future students engaged in religious education and lunchtime groups in public schools. I remind you that Scripture Union NSW runs voluntary lunchtime groups in pubic schools, impacting 2,000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Union’s ministry programs. Australia is the most multicultural nation; approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. You state 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. Negative outcomes, from implementation, will occur. 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 summary, you are penalising the fastest-growing sector of education –</p>

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	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 completely reject your presumption that these initiatives are of little “community-wide benefit”. The report overall is discriminatory and minimising in its ideology. Further damage to Multicultural Australia will result.
847	Re: Information request 10.2 - Accessing professional advice on philanthropy By far, the largest source of professional advice on philanthropy is fundraisers. This advice is typically provided face-to-face in public places or door-to-door. Some advice is also delivered via the telephone. Compared with other advice, it is very poor quality and low value-for-money. 1) It is not solicited. 2) It does not take into account individual preferences. 3) The costs are not at all transparent, with hidden fees and commissions. 4) The advice is always the same - sign up to the regular giving program with the charity paying for the advice. 5) The advisor has little or no training or expertise. It is possible to access better professional advice that addresses all these issues. I have received such advice from a Public Ancillary Fund, where the advisor recommended several charities to support based on a one hour consultation. While it was free, I had to donate \$20,000 to access this service. This puts it beyond reach of most people. Government should consider how to encourage the large fundraising workforce to professionalise and act in donors' interests. For example, it would be better for donors if multiple charities were promoted by a fundraiser, as there is a greater chance of one aligning with their values. However, regulations prevent them from giving advice to support more than one charity as they have to be registered to a single charity.
848	Faith schools are very important for faith families and others in our communities. They should be supported by the government not be targeted with a risk of losing their funding resources. The government has many other ways to better manage the economy and create more revenue. Please stop attacking our schools! Education is vitally important for our future generations and our country!
849	I wish to object to the Commission’s proposal/recommendation that “charities that have DGR status for school building funds or to provide religious education in government schools” have their DGR status withdrawn. To make a change such as this, ignoring the longstanding history of providing societal benefit, and without reference to the broader tax ‘environment’ of Australia, seems, at best, mean-spirited, or perhaps ill-informed or ideologically-driven as to the utility of government support of a large number of not-for-profit organisations working in this space. In particular, removal of DGR status for organisations that provide special religious education in government schools potentially will alienate many volunteers who, with the support of various NGOs of a range of faith backgrounds, have sought to provide religious education for students who might otherwise have little understanding of particular religions and be unable to make informed choices relating to faith matters. It is objectionable that such proposed changes - which also relate directly to individual and organisational tax matters - are being made apparently without reference to any broader government tax reform agenda (which, for the moment, seems to be off the agenda, apart from tinkering with individual income tax rates). Please stop fiddling at the margins, and recommend that the government direct its energies at reform of the tax system, overall, without unnecessarily penalising the work of not-for-profits and their volunteer workers without reference to the ‘big picture’.
850	There is ample evidence that SRE (Special Religious Education) in schools: 1. Delivers key psychological benefits to students. Surveys show that Public Schools which have SRE have more harmony among their student population which is appreciated by students parents and school staff. 2. Promotes thick multiculturalism and social acceptance. A key tenet of most religions is to love and respect others, including people of all race and religions. 3. Reduces the risk of student radicalisation. In addition, there is evidence that people of faith are 25% more likely than their secular counterparts to

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	<p>donate money and 23% more likely to volunteer time. Churches rely on this extra DGR funding to provide training materials and teaching aids for SRE teachers as well as providing some out of pocket expenses for some SRE workers. This enables the production and delivery of top quality lessons and related teaching materials which are then made available to SRE teachers. It also ensures that government standards relating to Safe Ministry and various relevant parliamentary acts to be properly communicated to SRE workers.</p>
851	<p>Being an SRE teacher is not a profitable career, and we already see such a high turnover of SRE teachers as it provides no sustainable income for people. The DGR encourages our donors to donate to our cause and the removal of DGR status will potentially see contributions decrease significantly which would in turn make it difficult to continue SRE within schools. The endorsement of DGR status is crucial for not-for-profit organisations that are not government funded and who rely heavily on these donations to get any kind of income to help support their workers and provide resources for their organisation. Special Religious Education (SRE) which falls under this category has for centuries helped alongside its broader community by being an advocate that builds smaller communities in the larger community of different nationalities and backgrounds who are welcomed and serve under a common treaty. As a SRE Coordinator myself at one high school and a volunteer SRE teacher at another high school, I see the constant struggle of promoting SRE in schools, and in my role as a Primary Christian SRE liaison, I also see firsthand the difficulties in getting SRE teachers to volunteer their time to something that's not financially stable for them or their families. Working within the Merrylands district which is one of the Top 20 crime rates in Australia has highlighted the need for young people in this area to have supportive and encouraging influences which is what Christian SRE within schools provides for its students. We constantly have real-life testimonies from students who attend Christian SRE and take what they have learned back to their non-believing homes and communities. Their faith, beliefs, and values have a positive impact on the way they treat and respect others, the way they positively encourage their peers and the way they live in their community in general so to state that the DGR status that supports special religious education does not serve as a community-wide benefit is total ignorance and is an inaccurate statement in itself. Even with various debates about having Special Religious Education (SRE) taking its place in our schools and faith communities, SRE has had a long abundant shoulder-to-shoulder relationship with the NSW Department of Education whose history dates back to the early 19th century and still has not folded! SRE has been in Australia since 1820 and in NSW since 1880 and has positively served the community for over two centuries. The removal of DGR status will disable religious education which already has its existing challenges and will see a negative impact not only within the schools but also within communities where a positive influence is needed.</p>
852	<p>Dear Commissioners, I am very concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. I acknowledge the it is good to include environmental issues, including animal welfare. However, it seems that in order to achieve this, you are removing DGR status from religious charities and faith based groups such as Scripture Union NSW. This action will significantly impact the health and well-being of current and future students who engage in religious education and lunchtime groups. As a school child, and especially in high school, I really valued the input of my SRE teachers and also the SU programs. Their camps, full of fun activities and leadership training. Our own children also benefited from the hard work of these volunteers when they attended both State Primary and High school. Australia is a multicultural nation, with approximately 60% of Australians identifying with a religion. Research shows that one of the best ways to promote social cohesion is through religious education in schools and has community -wide benefits. I personally taught Religious Education classes as a volunteer and know first hand how much help it was to students. I was also a volunteer at our local schools, helping with reading programs and volunteering my time as a professional music teacher. Both the educational and religious classes were of</p>



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	<p>great assistance to the school staff and to the students. Religious Education Teachers in Australia represent the largest weekly group of volunteers and it would seem to me to be unwise and unfair to remove DGR from donors who support them. In the 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, to achieve that goal. Taking DGR funds from donors of faith-based schools could, in my opinion, put extra pressure on our state schools and this would not be of any benefit to either students, teachers or parents. Your report would seem to presume that those you are wanting to remove from the DGR system do not make a significant contribution to the "community-wide benefit" when in actual fact they do indeed make a very great contribution that benefits our children and young people, who should be very high on our list of priorities and well deserving of governments support.</p>
853	<p>SRE within government schools plays such a crucial role in the growth of many students and families. It's the largest weekly volunteer labour force in Australia - reducing support for this would not only be unwarranted, but unfair. Faith communities provide many benefits for their surrounding communities, thus it is crucial for DGR status to be maintained for religious education in schools.</p>
854	<p>The christian faith community I belong to supports totally the continuation and increase of DGR system. SRE at Moama Public School. It is a priviledge to support and bring faith values to students, our volunteer base is very involved: one teacher having taught her children and now granddaughter It is family Two Teachers volunteer and drive over 20klms each way, each week to bring christiansre to students. Dedication and love. Who else will tell them? if no christiansre program ? I believe teachers also benefit from the weekly time of our volunteers in their classromms with their students. So no change - increase the giving and volunteering.</p>
855	<p>Dear Commissioners, I understand that recently, the Australian Government Productivity Commission reviewed the DGR system and released a draft report in November23. I am very concerned by the 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 would like to voice my concern and opposition to this reform, as I appreciate Special Religious Education within government schools run by Scripture Union NSW. Their lunchtime groups benefit 2,000 students weekly, and are a vital part of Scripture Union NSW's ministry programs that contribute to the greater good of Australian society. A large weekly volunteer labour force is required for this, and they need the government to maintain or increase their support for this, not reduce it. And therefore, I ask that the DGR status be maintained for Special Religious Education (SRE) in government schools. And also, I would like to see volunteers within the faith communities be recognised within the DGR system. I believe the community greatly benefits from faith communities, as I believe they bring wellbeing and social cohesion, especially as Australia is one of the most multicultural nations on earth in which over 60% of Australians identify with a religion. It is said that research shows religious education in Schools is one of the best ways to promote social cohesion. And that both religious and non-religious parents choose to place their children in SRE. And yet, your draft report seems to not yet take this into careful consideration. I fear putting extra pressure on religious education and its teachers will have long-term ramifications for the wellbeing of our society. In your report, you have articulated the government's goal to double philanthropic giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030. Removing their DGR status would be counter to achieving that goal, as you would be removing privileges and help from faith communities that represent a large number of people who will help you. Also, I have read that faith-based education is Australia's fastest-growing education sector -that tells us it is what our communities want and are actively choosing.</p>

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	Removing the DGR status from school building funds would make it harder for this to happen and be successful. In light of the above, I ask that you reconsider the suggested changes, and recognise the significant role that Scripture Union NSW, SRE and people of faith provide for the greater good of our Australian society. Many thanks for your time and considration. Yours sincerely
856	I would like to make my views known on the withdrawal of tax deduction for contributing to the Scripture in Schools. I would like to point out that this is a valuable resource for for children of all ages that helps to instil social values and morals into many children throughout the school system. I would point out that in our culture there is a distinct lack of morals and self discipline and a spiralling out of control teenage behavioural problem in many areas, not to mention also the level of childhood crime is also spiralling. To remove or to downgrade a system that in some ways may help this situation seems reckless and driven by wrong ideology.
857	Education is an important part of growth in development. That is why SRE lessons give a choice and a chance to learn. It is a way of allowing the spiritual growth in the persons life to develop on what we are teaching. The lessons bring historical facts of the past that can be learnt from. The lessons are fun with music, games and activity book work, which helps develop Reading and writing skills.. It brings team work as there are times when they learn to help each other during the lessons. Time to ask questions on what is been taught. To help give a better understanding If they do not understand WHY DO I DO THIS? I do this because it is a passion and love for teaching and to help bring an understanding to whom we are teaching on what we are teaching
858	I would like to comment on DGR status being removed and hence funding cut if not withdrawn altogether. I have read the Education and Public Instruction Act 1987 no. 62 Part 3 section 11. If funding is cut where will the resources for time allowed for religious persuasion come from? My second question is what will be funded instead if DGR status is removed.
859	Its extraordinary that the government is targeting Christian charities who so heavily rely on volunteers, with the idea to remove their Dog status. Clearly this is an ideologically based attack, and not in the interests of scripture union and the other groups who will be affected. Religious Education in government schools is such an important initiative, and again and again it has been proved that it's overwhelmingly what parents of NSW kids want. It has proven (and well-researched) wellbeing benefits and is vital for promoting social cohesion. Please maintain DRG status for religious education in government schools.
860	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

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	<p>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>
861	<p>As a member of a faith community I am very concerned by the negative and long-term impact that the proposed changes to the Deductible Gift Recipient system (DGRS) will have on young people attending Government schools. Without tax-deductibility faith-based organisations will struggle to provide programs in these primary and secondary schools. It is well known that there is a mental health crisis occurring in young people, with feelings of isolation and loneliness, depression, hopelessness and suicide on the rise. There is strong evidence, based on large long-term and worldwide studies, that links faith to better physical and mental health outcomes. Connection with a faith community provides many strategies for young people that help them cope with life's stressors as well as promoting positive emotions and a sense of purpose. (see theGuardian.com <a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/dec/03/beyond-beliefs-religious-faith-happier-healthier-life">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/dec/03/beyond-beliefs-religious-faith-happier-healthier-life</a>). Faith-based programs in schools also provide young people with additional valuable relationships with adults they can trust and look to as role models. The additional benefit of these programs is that they are available to young people whose families are not yet connected to a faith community. Thus, without such programs they would not have access to the positive impacts outlined above. Therefore I urge the reviewers of the DGRS to maintain tax-deductibility for religious education in Government schools.</p>
862	<p>Dear Commissioners, The suggestion that the the DRG should be removed will leave the government having to pick up the entire bill for moral and mental well being in our schools. Now this is shared with those who are able and desire to contribute to these attributes through spiritual instruction at a reduced cost to the government due to a partial tax offset. 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</p>

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	<p>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>
863	<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. Thank you, Daniel Pidgeon</p>
864	<p>I believe that philanthropy is highly desirable in all countries, including Australia. All current ways of promoting philanthropy should be continued and no actions should be discarded or downgraded. Tax deductible donations are a very effective way of contributing to excellent community outcomes, particularly when motivated volunteers are contributing.</p>
865	<p>Dear Commissioners, I am greatly disappointed by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. While some of the reforms are beneficial, I am opposed to the removal of DGR status from religious charities like Scripture Union NSW, which will negatively impact the health and well-being of current and future students engaged in religious education and lunchtime groups. These groups are voluntary and outside school hours, for example,</p>

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	<p>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. In our multicultural nation, approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on your thinking 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. I am very concerned how removing the DGR status of organisations who provide this support of schools and their teachers and students is not a good decision for Australia and will have long-term impacts. 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 seems counterproductive. 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. Another counterproductive outcome. Indeed, 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 the above comments, I firmly 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. Sincerely, Lynne Church</p>
866	<p>The right for ISCF and Supa Club must be preserved to counter the wholesale Woke material being fed to our children. There must be a balance in what is taught to our children. Both these rely on public giving to exist.</p>
867	<p>We live in a democratic country however I feel that is under threat. Under the Religious Discrimination (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2021 and Human Rights Legislation Amendment Bill 2021, the bill: 'Prohibits discrimination based on education' etc. Taking out religious education in schools or not allowing people to donate is discrimination against Christianity in a very subtle form. It is great that the parents of Australia can choose between a variety of schools. Taking out Christian schools or changing how they operate is a form of control and dictatorship. In the Human Rights Act - 'Human rights are a set of principles concerned with equality and fairness. They recognise our freedom to make choices about our lives and to develop our potential as human beings.' If you take out the option for people to donate money, you are taking away their choices.</p>
868	<p>Our nation was built on the Christian message. It has formed the backbone of our society and social cohesion. Between schools and churches, the Christian message has created a moral and just democracy and only those who seek to divide and erode our morals and societal cohesion would wish for Christianity to cease to be taught in places of learning. With a sorely understaffed teaching force, the scripture teachers who volunteer their time help make up a large part of the education staff. To loose this would greatly weaken our education standards on top of our already slumping education standards and societal standards on the world stage.</p>
869	<p>Dear Sir/Madam, I write to express my strong endorsement for school Special Religious Education. I have been a secondary school teacher in the NSW Education system for 33 years, and during that time I've seen many changes, mostly concerning. As society experiences increasing problems due to many factors, these problems are reflected in a school system which is in crisis. There has never been a greater need for Special Religious Education in our schools. The values imparted and championing of faith based communities, as well as the call to service which SRE provides students, is unique. Over the</p>

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	<p>years I have known hundreds of volunteers who faithfully give of their time and expertise to deliver SRE instruction in our schools. They do this out of purely altruistic motives and a desire to invest in the next generation. In y opinion they are heroes, each one, and deserve respect and support. Please maintain DGR status for Special Religious Education in government schools and recognise SRE volunteer teachers within the DGR system: they are unsung heroes and they have earned this. Yours sincerely</p>
870	<p>I consider that a negative change to maintaining DGR status for SRE and school building funds, would be ill informed and shortsighted. As a giver and supporter of SRE I have seen the significant and positive changes in my own family and more broadly amongst your people, who years later as young adults have shared that experience. I am committed to SRE though my own faith and the tax deductibility also influences my giving decisions, with so many worthy Christian causes competing for funds. I strongly urge you to not progress any negative change to SRE status.</p>
871	<p>Please do not remove tax deductions that allow scripture teachers to work in our schools. so needed to support those kids struggling with emotion and spiritual issues.</p>
872	<p>Dear Commissioners, Please consider the immense contribution that faith based teaching has on the community at large, regardless of individual beliefs. 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 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>
873	<p>I am dismayed that there be a recommendation to withdraw tax deductions for gifts to SRE teaching in Public Schools. I not only give financially but have been a SRE teacher for many years. If this DGR is withdrawn it will seriously effect the future of this valuable teaching and opportunity for children to</p>

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	explore a faith. SRE makes a difference to young lives and I would like the Government to recognise and value the contribution faith communities make to Australian Society
874	Please retain DGR status for Scripture Union (SU). It is important to do everything we can to keep such organisations buoyant in our country. They have decades of evidence to contributing to the social cohesion of this country. Thanks
875	<p>I am writing to oppose the recommendations in the Productivity Commission Draft Report relating to the removal of tax deductibility for contributions made to religious charities in support of Special Religious Education in schools. I do so on the basis of the considerable body of research evidence which indicates the value to the community of promoting religious (and specifically Christian) faith in terms of both economic cost benefit and contribution to community health and well-being. Any comprehensive and unbiased review of the evidence derived from the positive and wellness psychological literature will reveal that those with religious faith exhibit the following characteristics in comparison to the general population: 1. Lower rates of illicit drug use 2. Lower rates of domestic violence 3. Lower rates of suicide 4. Lower rates of mental illness 5. Lower rates of divorce and family breakdown 6. Lower rates of incarceration 7. Lower rates of anti-social behaviour Apart from what other benefits such findings might represent for individuals personally in the community other than Christians, the immediate economic benefits are obvious given the costs that each of these represent to government budgets on an increasing basis. 8. Higher amounts of time given to charity work 9. Higher rates of financial charity giving – national and international 10. Higher rates of community volunteering e.g. St Johns Ambulance, Red Cross, Vinnies, etc 11. Higher rates of caring for the disadvantaged e.g. a. Homeless food &amp; shelter b. English as a Second Language classes c. War and service veterans. These activities represent positive savings to government budgets as well as substantial contributions to the welfare, wellness and productivity of the community as a whole. Therefore, in light of these data and the evidence that most faith beliefs of any kind are developed before a person has left adolescence, encouraging religious belief from early childhood has major long-term productivity benefits to government in both economic and societal terms. I write this as a psychologist with 50 years of work in my profession. I worked with the NSW Government for 18 years; had my own consultancy; taught at three universities in Sydney up to professorial level; published over 150 government reports; over 130 peer reviewed journal articles; constructed 15 psychological tests; ran my own home business; published academic one book and haven spoken at numerous national and international conferences. My life changed as an adolescent due to what I learnt from individuals who taught me the Scriptures at school since I had no other way of knowing anything about God. I went from an aimless discontent to a person with an identity and a purpose bigger than myself, which has inspired and energised me ever since. If the Productivity Commission want an example of the productive potential of providing tax deductibility support for religious instruction in schools, then I am one.</p>
876	<p>I support the continuation of DGR status for SRE. As an SRE teacher in a public high-school, I have seen first-hand the overwhelming benefits of complimenting a student’s education with faith-based material; for both students who are from a faith-based family or culture, and students who are not. - SRE lessons are full of thoughtful questions, critical thinking and healthy discussion, which are desired skills for every student. - SRE promotes diversity and multiculturalism; it’s essential for students to be taught and exposed to different people and ideas, so that schools and students can grow in their capacity to accept others. - My new 2024 year-seven SRE class is currently ~30 students, and has historically grown throughout term 1. This shows that SRE is still a priority for many parents and students. DGR status will enable this work to continue for more students in more schools. Thank you for the opportunity to make a comment about this vital part of public education.</p>

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877	I am most concerned about the plans to cease the tax deductibility for Special Religious Education in schools. I have been a supporter of the Anglican Youthworks program which supports SRE in NSW schools for many years. I have also taught SRE in schools for 30 years and have on many occasions seen the impact a faith-based lesson can have on children. The effect of discontinuing the tax deductibility would have a massive impact on organisations like Anglican Youthworks and other organisations seeking to support SRE.
878	I love giving to SRE as learning about faith and developing spiritual aspect improves the wellbeing of students, and has positive flow on effects to families and the school community as well. There is great value of tax deductibility in these contributions as it means a higher likelihood of spiritual teachers that can dedicate themselves to the same group of students for the whole year.
879	Eveey child need to know Jesus. They need to find their purpose in following Jesus and using their gifts to serve others. As a direct response to Jesus' example of servant leadership, Christian schools have a strong culture of mission and service the community. Which ever country has taken bible out of the schools are in deep trouble and crime rates have gone up. Humanity is dying. Love of Jesus everyone needs to know or else we are all doomed. Christian schools educate students to be concerned about the welfare of others and about using their gifts to serve others.
880	I would like to share that it is my Christian faith that drives all my philanthropic giving and time given to communities. I am a person who wants to share the love of Jesus Christ with others, including by financially supporting communities and organisations that support community cohesion and faith. In light of this I value the DGR status for your financial contributions to several organisations, including one that support Special Religious Education in schools (SRE). SRE made an impact on me as a child, and I want to continue its help in the community to young Australian lives. I have taught SRE and know many others who have also. Why you so value the contribution SRE makes to young lives and to Australian society. I support maintaining DGR status for SRE and school building funds, and I want the Government to recognise and value the contribution faith communities make to Australian society.
881	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.



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882	Greetings, I write to request the government to maintain DGR status for SRE and school building funds. I would like the Government to recognise and value the contribution faith communities make to Australian society in many ways. It does not make sense 'to analyse motivations for philanthropic giving in Australia and identify opportunities to grow it further', and simultaneously remove the DGR status from SRE and school building fund donations. Maintaining the DGR status for SRE and school building funds demonstrates a non-discriminatory approach from the government and fairness to all philanthropic agencies. SRE programs do more than just share stories and valuable life guidance from the Bible. The teachers are additional people to connect with and support the young students in their overall education.
883	Please be aware of the importance of training our young people spiritually as well as academically. It's important that this kind of education continues and without the appropriate funding it would be impossible. Changing tax legislation would have a profound effect on the ability to be able to teach our young people appropriately.
884	I feel that the Special Religious Education within government schools has been integral in student development, and enriched not only a child's education but their experience and understanding of the world around them. The SRE system has the largest weekly volunteer labour force in Australia and I am of the opinion support of this should be maintain or even increased. DGR status ought to be maintained for Special Religious Education in government schools.
885	Dear Commissioner You may know that Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime group in Government Schools, benefiting 2000 students weekly. These groups are a vital part of Scripture Unions 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 well-being of current and future students engaged in Special Religious Education (SRE) and lunchtime groups. Australia is one of the most multinational nations on earth, and over 60%of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to bu based on misguided ideology the suggests that 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 no religious choose to place their children in SRE. Putting extra pressure on religious education and it's teachers is not a quality decision for Australia and will have long-term ramifications for our society. The SRE teachers in Australia represent our nations largest group of volunteers. In a report where, on the one hand, you are 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 of the people who will help you, and are helping you right now, achieve that goal. This not a wise decision. Ken Churchward
886	I enjoy supporting SRE & appreciate the DGR status so I can give them more. RSE teaches Christianity - the fruits being love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness and self control. SRE teachers mentor young people with love and care, what could be more important in this day with so much mental health.

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887	<p>There is nothing more important than Christian education and teaching to our children. All denominations see declining numbers in our Sunday Schools along with less influence in the average household. Therefore, the urgent need to be able to enter all our schools is paramount to have strong politicians to support Christian values being presented to our children.</p>
888	<p>Dear Commissioners, I am writing to object to the proposed removal of DGR status from Scripture Union and other religious education providers in a recent draft report. Religious education has been an integral part of the education of thousands of students across the nation in both government and non-government schools, and forms a vital part of their development as a whole. Removing DGR status from Scripture Union and similar religious education providers will severely impact the ability to deliver quality religious education and the opportunity students have to engage with spiritual and religious teaching. This proposal is short-sighted and out of touch with community sentiment in our multicultural country of Australia where 60% of people identify with a religion. Religious education teaches moral standards which promote social cohesion and acceptable behaviour, as well as enabling students to explore religious teaching. It is far from having little 'community wide benefit', as your report seems to assume. Faith based education is often provided by suitably qualified and trained volunteers. Removing DGR status will impact this team of people whom the government is seeking to encourage in the task of volunteering, which seems to be quite contradictory in its essence. Removing DGR status from faith based providers such as Scripture Union is discriminatory and will have a negative impact on our community as a whole. I urge you to seriously reconsider this proposal. Your sincerely, Phillip M. Pratt</p>
889	<p>I am motivated to give to SRE and Christian charities because I believe they make a very beneficial and positive impact on our society. I was especially blessed to have SRE in school growing up and would love this to continue, with government support. I was born in Sydney and was blessed and privileged to grow up in Australia. I greatly appreciate the blessing that Christians have made in my life and to our community in the many areas of our society, schools, charities that they volunteer in. I see many Christians volunteer to give up their time to help those in need, including First Nations people and to guide the next generation to also sacrifice to help and bless those around them. I think it has been a wonderful blessing to have the Australian government support the efforts of Christian volunteers and charities to allow for tax deductible donations. Please continue to do this, so that future generations of Australians are blessed in this wonderful country!</p>
890	<p>I currently teach SRE in the NSW Public Schools in Orange. I would please ask you to reconsider taxing churches or individual donations to SRE. The money donated to SRE goes to provide the Teachers Manuel's and student work books. In the primary school SRE is fully voluntary work so no money goes to pay for any of the teachers or committee worker, all the other money they require comes out their own pocket and the church provides training space's free to us as well as tea and coffee ect. In the High schools the SRE teachers are payed to teach the students but their materials are provided by SRE free of charge. SRE provides a half hour time slot of teaching Children about the Christian faith. Most children benefit from this as it helps their overall well being spiritually and helps them identify with other's of the same faith at school. The teachers who remain on class while we teach SRE receive a half hour lesson plan time which they greatly value each week free of charge to the school. In my experience the children mostly love coming to SRE and they appreciate their activity books and love completing them each week at the end of their lesson. So I would ask you to please take all these things into consideration as you look into taxing SRE donations and ask that SRE will be kept tax free, thank you.</p>

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891	I am concerned about the removal of DGR status for SRE and school building funds because I have heard so many stories about the benefits of faith programs in public schools from people who have gone through them. They provide a place to explore faith in a safe environment. DGR status plays a large role in making it possible for many contributors and I hope that this will remain the case for a long time!
892	As a person of faith, I see it as my duty to donate my time and energy to that which will better the lives of others. As such I have donated to SRE for a long time. I have seen first hand the impact it makes in real people's lives. The other day I spoke to Dave who was heavily impacted by sre as a high schooler. His family are all alcoholics and he said he was almost certainly set to go down that path. He told me that due to sre he saw a better way and is of great value to his community. Implementing this new policy would make more barriers for people like Dave, and in the long run is likely to cost the community more. Just one person like Dave without the impact of seeing a better way would mean more potential alcohol fuelled violence and a greater cost on our society
893	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.
894	I am in favour of retaining DGR status for religious charities supporting SRE. I have taught SRE in a primary school for five years and seen the tremendous impact it has on students, the school and school families. It broadens the experience of students, expands the reach of the school in partnership with

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	local churches and indirectly enriches families. I also donate to charities supporting SRE and value the DGR status afforded to these charities. In short, the student experience is enhanced by retaining DGR status for religious charities supporting SRE.
895	I have been a supporter of SRE and chaplaincy workers in our schools for many years. I see their role as critical for the school system which is struggling with troubled teens who are not coping with our changing world, and need support to make sense of it. The school system in the mean time has limited resources to support these "future Australians", with school counsellors being thin on the ground, and struggling with the demands on their time. The SRE and chaplaincy workers provide additional resources for school principals to draw on to manage this growing problem. As many of these workers are either volunteers, or poorly paid, the financial support of the agencies that fund and support them is vital. Without the DGR assistance currently in place, many of these agencies will not be able to continue at all, or will be forced to reduce their staff numbers. This will impact on the level of care currently being provided. This support is a cheap way for the government to provide support for our troubled teens.
896	To whom it may concern. You may be aware that Scripture Union runs lunchtime groups in schools across NSW, benefitting over 2000 students each week. These groups are an important part of Scripture Unions work and contribute positively to the schools and wider society. While it is encouraging that the that you are considering expanding the system, achieving this by removing the DGR status from religious groups like Scripture Union is a great concern to me. It will significantly impact the health and wellbeing of current and future students who attend Special Religious Education and lunchtime groups in schools. 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. 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. Thank you for your consideration.
897	SRE in schools is so important. Without a faith it's hard to get by in life and overcome challenges.
898	I am informed that a productivity commission's draft report recommends removal of tax deductions made to religious charities in support of SRE. While there are other concerns in the report, I wish to underline how significant it is, that tax deductibility be retained with respect to SRE. In excess of 2,000 volunteers share in the work of SRE, one simple proof (among others) of its significance. Surely our young must have every opportunity to be informed of the faith that underlies our culture, the core purpose of Christian SRE.
899	My philanthropic giving is primarily motivated by my Christian faith. As a Christian, I seek to give to others from what God has graciously given to me, and so I generously give to charities and not-for profits. This is both in money given, and also time in volunteering to serve. Tax deductibility status is highly beneficial to this giving, as it helps encourage me to give more to lower taxable income and then give more from my tax return. One of the areas I value giving in is SRE, which is one of the most important aspects of schooling. It is vital to increasing students mental health and diversity within a school, and growing well-rounded adults who deeply care for others. To this end, I highly support maintaining tax-deductible status for SRE and school

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	building funds. The Government should recognise the important contribution of faith communities to Australian society and schools, and maintaining tax-deductible status for SRE is a crucial step towards this.
900	I am writing to express my opposition to the draft report and reforms to the DGR system with regard to Special Religious education. It is wonderful that you are considering expanding the system to cover more initiatives, however, SRE makes a valuable contribution to the health and wellbeing of students. I believe a majority of principals view it as a valuable asset to the tone of their school. Your report seems to that suggests religion is of no community-wide benefit yet Australia is one of the most multicultural nations on earth, and over 60% of Australians identify with a religion In addition, SRE teachers in Australia represent our nation’s largest weekly group of volunteers and your report suggests the government’s goal is to double philanthropic giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030, so I dont understand why you plan to remove benefits from faith communities that represent a huge proportion of the people. It seems illogical. My objection stands. If this is an appeal for money savings for the government it seems to be picking on small fry, with little return. I find it a cynical move. Yours sincerely,
901	Good morning, I understand the Commission is considering removing Religious Education and School buildings from Deductible Gift Recipients. I believe that Religious education is schools is essential to give some grounding to what are the foundation principles of our society derived from Christian teaching. There are many studies & books that show faith communities are a great asset in society. SRE is delivered by a huge number of volunteers, with the only expense being resources & subject matter development (in consultation with Dept of Ed). Please leave these things as DPRs - the benefits are worth it
902	Apart from religious based arguments, private schools continue to offer excellent education. Without tax free status charities will be forced to close. Agree or disagree with religion, these entities do great good and are needed.
903	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 –

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	<p>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>
904	<p>Dear Commissioners, Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups in Government Schools, benefiting many students weekly. These groups contribute to the greater good of Australian society and help to build a base of stable, engaged, and healthy citizens. In my reading of the draft report and reforms to the DGR system I believe that you will achieve the opposite of what you're aiming at. While aiming at expanding the system you will significantly dent volunteering and charitable giving by excluding SRE organisations in government schools. This in turn will impact the health and wellbeing of students of faith right throughout government schools. The claim that SRE has no community-wide benefit is false. By any number of measures committed religious followers exhibit the lowest rates of many issues that impact our society (e.g. domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse). 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 remove the ability of faith communities to effectively engage their people. A group of people who volunteer at higher rates than anyone else in our society. This seems to me to be sawing off the branch you are sitting on. Please do not go ahead with these changes as they are an unwise decision that will lead to the opposite outcome at which they are aiming.</p>
905	<p>True generosity seeks the good of others without thought of recompense. This is a basic maxim of charities that provide religious education in schools. Offering incentives to the larger community through tax relief enables citizens to freely support such activities that they consider to be a public good.</p>
906	<p>Hello, I am writing in support of Special Religious Education and the government support it receives in the form of tax deductions, I believe it is vital for schools to continue this important work for our society and the children involved and that it does make a difference. Without these tax cuts it would stop this work in many cases or make it more difficult to continue. I believe we need to value the contribution faith based communities make to our society and support every way we can. Kathryn Moore</p>
907	<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. Regards from a valued member of society Reverend John Delezio
908	Please do not forsake us! I pray that you do the right thing for the right people,don't forget that when you're sworn into office, that you swear on the Holy Bible and that most people turn to their spiritual side when things are at their darkest...
909	As an SRE teacher in a NSW government high school, just yesterday one of my students came to me distressed because her mother had died from cancer two weeks previously. I was able to give her the comfort of being reunited in the afterlife that only a faith perspective could bring. Special Religious Education within government schools is important for the well-being of Australian youth, and I ask you to maintain or increase your support for this, not reduce it. It is essential that the DGR status is maintained for Special Religious Education in government schools. Volunteers from faith communities deserve to be recognised within the DGR system. Thank you.
910	The intent of philanthropic funding should be for the benefit of people in our community, regardless of race, creed, religious beliefs or culture. Withdrawing philanthropic funding from organisations that have been reliant on such funding can be a devastating outcome and severely impact the services which that organisation provides to the community. Scripture Union NSW is one such organisation that will be severely impacted by the withdrawal of philanthropic funding, in many areas of support that they provide to the community such as resources and cover for SRE classes in schools; the many Beach Missions and Inland Missions run by the organisation supporting a great diversity of people in our communities, Chaplaincy services in many urban and rural locations, and the development of many other resources to reach and support people with training content and staff, program materials, and devotional materials for their daily life. Our communities will be much worse off with the loss of these services based on the removal of such funding.
911	I am writing with concern that the withdrawal of the DGR will have a huge impact on the support network offered to people who need access to mental health support through a faith based system. The government cannot care for everyone and needs the assistance of groups such as would be provided through these networks. But these networks cannot function on volunteers alone.
912	Faith is the essence of life and so the drive for living a life beyond one self including our reach into the community around us an beyond. Giving financially is an important expression of our reach into the community. Tax incentives to give demonstrate support by our government representing our communities . Removing tax incentives ,especially targeting faith based organisations, will in my opinion distract and dampen incentive from the very people who are most likely to give, that is those driven by faith.
913	I totally reject the government's plan to remove the deductible gift recipient status from faith based schools and organisations but don't expect anything else from this government. Their priorities are all wrong and children especially, need something to believe in and give them hope for the future. If there was more belief in loving god and your neighbour, honouring your mother and father, not stealing and killing, there may be a lot less juvenile crime.
914	The provision (free) of religious education in government schools by organisations such as Scripture Union continues to serve a useful purpose in Australian society as it supports learning about our heritage and provides students with a worldview framework within which to negotiate life and

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	<p>contribute to society. Removing the option of making tax deductible donations to support this work will be detrimental to the development of young Australians informed and able to contribute to a better Australia. If tax deductibility for donations to support such work is removed, then instead of being able to support this work to the tune of, say, \$150, with a cost to me after tax deduction of just \$100, my ability to support this work and thus save government money having to be committed to it will be reduced to roughly two thirds of its present value. That leaves a hole to be filled from government coffers, at cost to some other worthwhile expenditure.</p>
915	<p>In regards to Special Religious Education in schools (commonly known as Scripture) I think tax deduct ability is warranted to encourage support because: 1) at least in NSW, it is a legal requirement for these teachers to be paid in High Schools. 2) it builds the child’s resilience to have hope in a divine power which they can call upon anytime. (I believe Jesus &amp; his Godhead is the one &amp; we are accepted us as we are &amp; assists us in developing his virtues) 3) Non peace making material of any religion is dis-allowed in the curriculum.</p>
916	<p>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. dear commission I want to comment on this page 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.</p>
917	<p>Religious organisations have done much good to Australian society over many years and continue to be a blessing to many in society, especially the disadvantaged and struggling. The Australian Productivity Commission recommendation to remove tax deductible gift recipient from these organisations is therefore bad policy for Australia. Similarly faith based schools provide a well sought after alternative to public education for many Australians. These schools not only take pressure off the public system, but they also help form well grounded future citizens. While some faith based schools receive generous recurrent funding, the amount of government funding for capital projects is very small. Therefore much of the capital fund raising is dependant on private donations. To encourage these donations, the government should reject the Australian Productivity Commission recommendation to remove tax deductible gift recipient status to school building funds.</p>
918	<p>Dear Commissioners, I write to express my concern at the draft report reviewing the DGR system in it's recommendation to withdraw recipient status from Special Religious Education providers like Scripture Union NSW. Such a move would greatly reduce their capacity to provide support and instruction to many school students in government schools. Parents like myself really value the input this education provides to our children's development... and sadly not all homes provide the stability and guidance that young people need. The societal benefits of instilling the values like having love for others, personal sacrifice, respect for others and respect of self that these SRE frameworks provide to young people are surely worth supporting into the future. I appeal to the Commission to please continue keeping these organisations able to do the important work that they do, while they are supported by their thousands of volunteers. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Best regards</p>
919	<p>Dear Commissioners, I write to urge you to maintain a DGR status for SRE in government schools. SRE educators provide the largest weekly volunteer force in Australia and whilst you acknowledge the role faith plays in peoples lives you do not see a case for additional support. I propose that the value</p>



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	<p>that faith plays is invaluable and is difficult to quantify in terms of changed lives who will become people want to positively contribute to society. Religious charities such as Scripture Union NSW will not be able to survive without DGR status, currently benefitting some 2000 students weekly. Many people from a faith background are motivated to give philanthropically and this will be eroded if SRE is not supported in government schools.</p>
920	<p>Special Religious Education provides the following key benefits to public education: 1) Includes an effective values education that empowers student decision making, fosters student action and assigns real student responsibility. 2) Strengthens the multicultural fabric of Australian schools. 3) Creates a safe place for students to explore deeper questions of faith and belief, including Building Trust, Care, Safety, Respect and Belonging. 4) Provides important psychological benefits to students' wellbeing.<sup>2</sup> Further, studies from around the world link positive health and wellbeing outcomes with: A belief in a higher spiritual being Public and private prayer • Meditation • Concepts of giving and generosity</p>
921	<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 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. Kind Regards</p>
922	<p>I support maintaining DGR status for SRE. Please take a look at the statistics and recognise the value faith communities make to Australian society. We may not be able to continue without your help.</p>

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923	<p>Dear Policy Makers - I'd like to show my support for continuing the tax deductibility of philanthropic contributions and the DGR status of SRE programs in schools. The expression of faith is an important freedom in our community and one which strives to help shape the world view and ethos of our society in a positive way. Part of that expression is how we enable people place their money behind the things they believe in. SRE programs across the country provide a hopeful and uplifting alternative to young people on a daily basis. Therefore, I would love to see the ability for any Australian, if they choose, to provide their support for SRE and building programs through tax deductible donations continue. Your support would show the ongoing recognition and support of the positive impact SRE programs have on young people both now and into the future. Regards, Tim</p>
924	<p>To the Productivity Commission, Thank you for preparing your report which analyses our motivations for philanthropic giving. I respect the expertise and time that has gone into making it. I am also deeply concerned about some of the implications of this report. While refusing to engage in exaggeration, I am deeply concerned that some of its recommendations will create a crippling social cost among current and future generations of Australians. This is my concern from a legal perspective (especially as law was part of my education). With my work it was not feasible for me to read the entire draft report, but I have read and understand that the Commission is not seeking to amend the Charities Act (p. 192). However, Draft Recommendation 6.1 in particular, would have a very deep impact upon Youthworks and all of our churches that use a Religious Instruction in Government Schools tax deductible fund for a portion of their offertories (pp. 196-197). While the report notes that less than 5,000 charities are in the DGR status-withdrawn group (p. 204), that is still a significant number of charities that do a significant amount of social good. From the perspective of my work, this is why I am deeply concerned. At one of the schools where I volunteer to teach SRE, most of the children come from families who have recently migrated to Australia. In particular, I think of one family (whose consent I have to share this story). Our class included their son (in year 1) and their daughter who benefits from special education (in year 2). During last year I had a brief but nice conversation with their dad when I was walking back to my car. Then in term 4, I got to know their dad better. He grew up as part of an indigenous community in New Zealand. Sadly, it was a community where addiction to methamphetamines was common – this dad remembers being instructed as a child to copy the Excel code to make the drug. In coming to Australia, he is glad that he is coming to an end with an addiction to drugs – and he is thankful for how SRE and our church have provided social support. If Draft Recommendation 6.1 is passed, true stories like are less likely to happen because it would cripple the support that Youthworks provides to SRE volunteers across NSW (not to mention similar organisations in NSW and other states). Finally, I will comment with a personal reflection on how Youthworks in its present form is so helpful to me. With my background as a public servant who previously worked for the ATO, working as a kids and youth minister now is very different. Youthworks has provided training for me and church volunteers, they have facilitated regular regional training meetings and they have been running conference centres for youth camps for years. You can imagine why I am deeply concerned that Draft Recommendation 6.1 would cripple these things if it is passed.</p>
925	<p>I have given money to support SRE because I believe the children of our country need to know about the history of Christianity and the good work of Christian people and the whole basis of our society and its laws. How else will Australian kids know about the foundation values of our society?</p>
926	<p>DGR status should be maintained. We are still a Christian country, There should be no change.</p>
927	<p>Dear Commission, I am concerned that you are recommending the removal of DGR status from religious charities, thus quashing the ability for many religious charities to operate. I would like to note that Religious Education teachers (under the SRE program), the largest weekly group of volunteers</p>

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	<p>nationwide, will be placed under immense financial pressure due to such recommendations. Moreover, many other religious charities, in which a plethora of multicultural and religious Australians depend and rely on for mental, emotional, social and other support, will be limited in their ability to provide for Australians due to such recommendations. For the sake of us who have experienced the immense support of religious charities, I ask you to please consider my worry regarding this proposal. Thank you.</p>
928	<p>Dear Commissioners, I am reliably informed that the draft report of the productivity commission recommends that faith based organisations such as Scripture Union and school building funds for faith based schools should have their tax concessions withdrawn. The rationale seems to be that faith based activities do not have community benefit. I would like to point out to you that this is completely contrary to research findings, where faith based education and faith based activities such as Scripture Union's well known lunch time groups in schools have been shown to improve outcomes, particularly social cohesion. I definitely believe that the proposal is a step against the national interest, and particularly against the children of Australia. I would further point out that the present growth in faith based education clearly shows that parents want that kind of education for their children.</p>
929	<p>My wife and I are both teachers, mid-30s with a child and hopefully more to come. We seek to be generous where we can. We recognise that impact that charities and organisations that receive tax- deductions have on societies both here and overseas. Many financial advisors and growingly, influencers, recommend a very modest .5-1% giving allowance within budgets. I think this is extremely low, and believe there is great advantage in including tax-deductible giving being expanded, rather than retracted. As a teacher, I have seen the impact of SRE within schools. The study that I have completed for my masters of Education show that teachers will bring a worldview into classrooms, and that the curriculum that is being taught is not neutral when delivered by individuals. I argue that Special Religious Education is an important component of schools, as it provides students with historical, religious and ethical lessons that have root in deep convictions. These lessons teach morality that is not covered in curriculum, moral lessons that if not taught will impact our society for the worse.</p>
930	<p>I have personally donated 10's of thousands of dollars to charity. Religious and other groups of non-for-profit status, who can recive time and money as donations, are an important part of the world. The tax deductible status of monetary donations are valuable and essential. These groups aren't out to make a profit, they are for the betterment of the community, and the donations made should be treated as tax deductible for this reason.</p>
931	<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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932	I support the commission's drive to increase philanthropic contributions in Australia but am disappointed that the recommendation is to remove the DGR status of SRE and school building funds. I believe faith based organisations make a major contribution to the community - in providing much needed resources and support. I believe SRE has contributed to the wellbeing of countless number of students over many years , providing them with ethical, moral and spiritual choice at a time when they need it. The current mental health of a generation of young people is in decline and is indicative more than ever that society needs the moral and spiritual compass to provide these young people with options and another worldview, thus giving them choices and hope as they experience increasing hopelessness. We need to maintain the supports for young people and give them choice, not withdraw choices and support. I urge that this recommendation be reversed!
933	As a parent of primary children, the proposal to remove the tax deductibility of contributions to SRE funding is very disappointing. Our kids attend a school which has a very high scripture attendance (about 40 out of 60 kids in my daughter's year 3). The classes are always staffed whereas the ethics classes often do not have volunteers and the kids sit there doing colouring. The SRE classes promote the behaviours and attitudes that I wish my children to be educated in. Please do not remove the tax deductibility.
934	Dear Commissioners, For many years I have contributed to the Scripture Union of NSW because I believe in its purpose to influence school students in the right direction. There are too many pressures on our young people to take up gambling, vaping and illicit drug use in their school years. I understand changes are proposed to the Deductible Gift Recipient system that will For For many years I have contributed to the Scripture Union of NSW because I believe in its purpose to influence school students in the right direction..There are too many pressures on our young people to take up gambling, vaping and illicit drug use in their school years. I understand changes are proposed to the DGR system that will result in loss of support for Religious Education and the lunchtime groups such as Inter Schools Christian Fellowship. I personally know a number of people whose life direction was influenced by membership of such groups and resulted in a life of service to others. I would strongly support DGR status to be continued in government schools. Recognition should be given to the many volunteers who give their services through Scripture Union for the benefit of Australian young people.
935	I want to say that school SRE receives donations for volunteers who use their valuable time investing in the growth and wellbeing of our youth. Changing the status of such giving to not be deemed tax free would likely reduce giving and has a negative flow on impact on the wellbeing of our youth. Money given to SRE is truly philanthropic in my opinion, as there is nothing anyone donating would expect to receive back, other than reports on what the volunteers are doing. I think it is less seen, as no one is blowing their trumpet in the SRE space, but supports young people to think about big questions and deal with the challenges of life better in my opinion. Seminars on mindfulness etc do not have the impact that SRE does.
936	I have been a scripture teacher at Mittagong primary school for over 20 years. I find it a privilege to be given the opportunity to enter schools and speak to children about God's love for them. I truly believe that it helps to give them hope and comfort in an ever changing world. Students look forward to seeing us and learning scripture through song, dance and activities. We also show them love, kindness and acceptance. To close the doors on Scripture for children would surely leave them deprived of the knowledge and love of God.

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937	Please increase support for this, not reduce it. Please maintain DGR status for Special Religious Education in government schools. There are community-wide benefits that faith communities bring, including wellbeing benefits and social cohesion. I work in a public school and my SRE Organization pays for me to support the school in learning support and many other functions. This is all provided free of charge to the school.
938	These organisations play an important role in society. If the dgr status is revoked these social benefits will be lost, and the government will have to fill the void. Not for profit organisations are important and should be protected. They enhance the cultural and other diversity and encourage this. If this is lost integral threads of our societal fabric will be at risk and potentially lost.
939	I am concerned that tax deductions would be removed on those people donating to the teaching of SRE in schools. My Christian faith drives my giving habits (money and time), and the value of tax deductibility (DGR status) for your financial contributions. As a teacher of SRE and a parent whose children have greatly benefited from SRE value the contribution SRE makes to young lives and to Australian society. I want to maintain my giving to SRE so for this to happen I need the DGR status for SRE to remain. I want the Government to recognise and value the contribution faith communities make to Australian society. The fruit produced is one of upright moral standing of kindness and care of other people.
940	SRE in schools has been vital for my children. It helped affirm their faith even in a secular setting. We believe in the primary school system, hence enrolled our children to the local school. Having SRE was such a privilege. Religious education is an integral part of any culture. By enabling this in schools, I feel Australia is showing its a country that embraces all people of all nations with all their diverse languages, beliefs and traditions! My child goes to a Christian High school, which has very affordable fees. Which I now understand is because of ways they can raise funds , where donor contribution is tax deductible. My child, who had speech delays when younger, was socially awkward and needed some care and nurturing when starting High School. We could not imagine him going to a public school with over 300 students in a year! Cannot understand how such decisions will work towards the overall wellbeing of the society?
941	Please do not remove tax deductible status on gifts towards valuable services and projects provided by Christian Educators. To do so will likely result in their eradication, which will be detrimental to the lives of our children and overall community.
942	SRE is critically important in the growth and development of young kids, not only from a religious standpoint. Christianity is about love, selflessness, generosity, peace and connecting with others and God, which are very important even in the lives of people who are not Christians.
943	I have a strong appreciation for Special Religious Education within government schools and the largest weekly volunteer labour force in Australia that enables this to happen. I request that you maintain or increase your support for this, NOT reduce it! I request that the DGR status be maintained for Special Religious Education in government schools. I request that volunteers within the faith communities are recognised within the DGR system. There are huge community-wide benefits that faith communities bring, including wellbeing benefits and social cohesion.
944	I am greatly concerned that funding for SRE in schools will be removed. SRE delivers key psychological benefits to students. It promotes thick multiculturalism and social acceptance. SRE also reduces the risk of student radicalisation. Please could this decision be reconsidered. Warm regards Jennifer Tauro

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945	It is essential that christian education is allowed and supported in schools. Quite apart for the benefit and the encouragement it gives to individual students, it also forms part of our heritage. It stresses morality and love for our fellow human beings, and is often a comfort for those who feel left out. Christian education must be encouraged and not vilified.
946	Dear Commissioners, I personally have benefitted so much from the prescence of ISCF at my school. I've seen it impact many students, providing a safe and welcoming place to have deep, meaningful talks, destress, and form strong bonds with others. This is particularly vital in the stressful later years of highschool, and a great benefit to the community. Scripture Union NSW runs lunchtime groups such as ISCF 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. 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. 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 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. Please 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.
947	The government should msintain its support for SRE in government schools as it is the largest weekly volunteer movement in Australia. This surely shows how highly valued it is in the community. DGR status should be maintained for religious education in government schools. The work of volunteers from faith communities within the DGT system should continue to be recognised. Religious education in schools has undeniable socoal and personal benefits.
948	The example and teaching of Jesus was and is to put others first and look after their welfare before your own (to the extent that Jesus gave his own life & defeated death so that we might live). I am a teacher in a NSW public school but I take a day to voluntarily share this teaching to 2 SRC classes because I truly believe that we are losing those loving and philanthropic values from our society the more we depart through time from the headship of Christ and the teachings of Christianity. The evidence is there. There is plenty of support there for SRC and if there weren't, then there should be, even if it's just because history has shown that thriving societies are those based on Christianity. Those raised in Christ are amongst those in our society who aim to

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	<p>be loving and generous to others as a way of life. Think Salvation Army, but most of us give quietly but generously as called to. To attack SRC and Christianity in our society will contribute to the further detriment of our society. SRC is not imposed on anyone, and in my experience, it is surprisingly mostly full of children from non-Christian families.</p>
949	<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.</p>
950	<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. I urge you to reconsider.</p>

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951	<p>If Martin Luther King Jr were to stand up in Australia and give his famous "I have dream speech", fewer Australians would understand it's imagery as Biblical knowledge drops in the wider community. KEEP SRE in schools! A similar comment could be made concerning much of English Literature - Shakespeare; John Donne or TS Eliot; without some Bible knowledge the imagery is a mystery. KEEP SRE in schools!</p>
952	<p>Dear Commissioners, As you may be aware, 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 personally have friends who have benefitted greatly from such groups across government high schools and adored SRE myself in school. 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, with over 60% of Australians identifying 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. 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. Additionally, 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. 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>
953	<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</p>



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	<p>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>
954	<p>Goodness anything that removes Scripture teaching from public schools is to be opposed. We do not get enough, well founded teaching at present.</p>
955	<p>I was impacted incredibly by the work of SRE when I was in Primary school many years ago. It gave me an opportunity to take something, that was very much a part of my home life, and enjoy this with peers at school. It is such a beneficial thing to have in our schools and should be supported by our government.</p>
956	<p>Dear Sir/Madam I have recently heard that the government is considering abolishing the deductible gift recipients for SRE in schools. I am strongly against this motion. I give every year to fund SRE in schools and I have seen from experience that this money is used to train SRE teachers - particularly in the Anglican faith. Abolishing this would make me rethink whether I would give some of my money to this cause. Please reconsider and allow SRE to continue to receive DGRs. Jenny Webster Sutherland</p>
957	<p>I believe cutting the tax deductions for religious charities would have a detrimental impact on the work of SRE in public schools because the SRE program provides students with the opportunity to be able to be a active member of society through Providing a space which Delivers key psychological benefits to students. Promotes thick multiculturalism and social acceptance. Reduces the risk of student radicalisation.</p>
958	<p>Please don’t remove or reduce the tax deduction of donations to churches and schools. Without this my daughter’s school will likely need to increase fees and leave me no choice but to enrol her in a public school as I am not employed and don’t have capacity to work</p>
959	<p>My faith in Jesus encourages me to give and volunteer my time. Tax deductibility allows me to give more to faith organizations and allows for greater and wider impact. The thought to not give DGR status for organizations that provide religious education in government schools is discriminatory against faith communities. SRE has been shown to provide many benefits such as a large number of volunteers (over 10000), social cohesion, psychological benefits, multiculturalism and reduces radicalization. It is also been shown that people from faith communities give 25% more than those who don’t have a faith and volunteer 23% more compared to those who don’t have a faith. Please keep the DGR status for SRE, especially if you desire to promote volunteerism and philanthropy.</p>

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960	<p>Dear Commissioners, As a member of the Wyong District Christian Education Association we work hard to raise funds to pay an SRE teacher two days per week and a chaplain 10 hours per week at Wyong High School. The chaplain also works 15 hours at a local feeder primary school, supported by our group and this year we will provide funds for a SRE teacher at Hopetown school for kids with their own special needs. I can't tell you how vital this work is, not just for the students but for staff also. It is so valued by the school community making a difference to students who love the time they get with these committed caring teachers/ chaplains. Scripture Union is our umbrella group that we rely on to ensure we are following department guidelines. They support and encourage us so that we make wise decisions where our funds are best used. The thousands of dollars we raise each year will not be available if you change the DGR status therefore impacting our community's involvement in our local schools. 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. Yours sincerely, Christine Knight</p>
961	<p>I would like to indicate my opposition to the removal of tax-deductibility status for SRE in public schools and school building funds. I taught SRE in public school for many years and saw how it contributed to the life of the children and got them to think about the big issues of life and encouraged them to think critically and analytically. It encouraged them to see the value of community and the inherent worth every person has, being created by a good God. To see children affirmed and encouraged was a real delight. To see them growing in an understanding of the importance of loving and caring for one another was a real joy. The resources that go towards a wise and carefully written curriculum is to a large extent enabled by the tax-deductible donations. I have given through this fund for many years, and it is the main fund I give to. If it was removed, I would not automatically give my money to another fund. This is because my Christian faith influences my giving habits. I therefore strongly support maintaining DGR status for SRE and school building funds, and I hope the Government recognises and values the contribution faith communities make to Australian society.</p>
962	<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>
963	<p>Brief comments: 1. The desire to increase philanthropic giving is a good one. 2. However the report, and the assumptions underlying it, fall down in my opinion in several areas: a. It appears the only DGRs the draft report recommends removing are for SRE in public schools and private school building funds. This seems to be religious discrimination being dressed up as tax policy. Why is there no similar suggested treatment of SEE funds? b. It appears to me that the report implies that if giving options are closed down in some areas, an individual would re-direct their giving to other areas. This is incorrect. Speaking personally I only give to areas that are of interest and concern to me – my willingness to give is driven by the activity itself. I will not give to areas that do not interest or concern me. My Christian faith drives my giving – of both money and time. The removal of DGR status will not mean I instead then give to other areas. c. The evidence shows us that people of faith are 25% more likely than their secular counterparts to donate money and 23% more likely to volunteer time (cf the report from the Hoover Institution - Religious Faith and Charitable Giving   Hoover Institution Religious Faith and Charitable Giving). Why would the Commission be seeking to reduce this in a report that seeks to consider ways to increase the? d. The report seems to suggest that levels of philanthropic giving in Australia are low, in comparison to other countries. It should be noted however that countries such as the USA allow donations to churches to be treated as tax deductible, whereas in Australia this is not the case. If such donations were counted in the total of philanthropic giving, I suggest the total would be much higher. Perhaps the report should be recommending tax incentives for more types of giving, not fewer. e. One of the aims of the review is to improve efficiency in giving to maximise returns for Australian communities. The report seems to assume that religion provides no community benefits. However this ignores the very real contribution that SRE makes to Australian communities – in young lives and Australian society more broadly. Evidence tells us that SRE delivers critical psychological benefits to students; promotes multicultural and social acceptance, and reduces the risk of student radicalization (cf the study by Gross and Rutland - Executive Summary.pdf (sydneycatholic.org)). This is what we need in Australia. Removing DGR status will lead to reduced giving to, and therefore investment in, our young people. 3. I believe the Government should continue to recognize and value the contribution faith communities make to Australian society. 4. If the Government is keen to increase giving, surely there should be more opportunities made for giving, rather than taking away existing opportunities.</p>
964	<p>I'm not a millionaire nor a person with a lot of money, but I am a strong believer in giving to support worthwhile causes, groups and projects. Having worked in the non profit world for 15 years producing quality SRE Curriculum materials I am well aware that it's not possible to maintain such quality and keeping up to date with technology and the ever changing educational expectations without the input of money and this can only happen through the incredible financial support of others. Having tax deductibility for such giving allows me, and others, to give more and I personally know the damaging impact it would have to not have the resources needed to provide quality resources and to assist volunteers and to fund paid SRE teachers. These</p>

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	<p>committed people are definitely not in it for the money, but rather there to invest in the lives of young people to make this world a better place to live in. As one who has spent the majority of my teaching career in the public education arena, I do respect that parents should be permitted to have choice when it comes to selecting where to send their children to school. I do acknowledge that the government already gives funding to non government schools, but so to do their parents (on top of also contributing through their taxes to all schools). Without the tax deductibility, that assists parents to contribute to their school of choice, the funding to such schools would diminish and quite possibly mean that these non government schools would cease to exist and the public sector would crumble with the influx of students and the need to build more infrastructure. Please keep the DGR for SRE and school buildings. We need both and they need assistance to keep the limited cash flowing to support them.</p>
965	<p>I would like to make a comment in support of keeping donations to Special Religious Education ( SRE) in schools tax deductible. My husband and I regularly donate to both Secular and Christian organisations. The fact that a lot of these organisations have DGR status is very helpful as it enables us to give more . We recognise the benefit that SRE has in schools today supporting Christian values such as compassion for all people, giving and receiving forgiveness, hope for the future, standing up for justice and showing love to others. We hope the government recognises and values the contribution faith communities make to Australian society.</p>
966	<p>It would be a shame for the government to discontinue its support for helping children access the best possible religious education (by cancelling the tax deduction offered to charities supporting such).</p>
967	<p>I am deeply concerned re the proposal regarding philanthropic giving.in a democratic society such as is our wonderful country Australia. My deepest sadness is that our right to give towards building funds which enhance the learning environment of faith-based schools is being unfairly targeted. many families choose faith-based education as they are extremely concerned about their children learning values in accordance with their faith. it seems wrong to deny income earners with the right to spend their hard-earned money in a way in which they choose as is fair and reasonable and untargeted within the framework of democracy.</p>
968	<p>I am of the opinion that the current system aids so many that it should not be changed.</p>
969	<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>
970	<p>SRE teachers represent the largest year round labour force in Australia so it seems extraordinary that the Productivity Commission would seek to penalise this group of which I am a proud member. This will place severe limitations upon the resources that enable SRE instruction. SRE promotes healthy multiculturalism, social acceptance and reduces the risk of radicalisation because the education is base within the Department of Education instead of an unregulated environment. Yours sincerely Pat Chivers</p>
971	<p>I oppose the proposal to withdraw tax deductibility for "charities that have DGR status for school building funds or to provide religious education in government schools". Our society is dependent upon and predicated upon both secular and religious bodies contributing to the resources available to public schools. A distinction should not be drawn between secular and religious endeavours. Religious bodies contribute greatly in non proselytising ways and provide significant social benefit.</p>
972	<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.</p>

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973	The SRE support is very important in our schools, it has an enormous value in young people's faith journey as they grow and mature. As volunteer SRE teacher I have encountered many children willing to learn more about the scripture, growing spiritually, which contributes significantly to their improved mental health and behaviour issues.
974	I would like to comment about the proposed removal of tax deductions for religious charities in support of SRE. As a professing and practicing Christian, it is important to care for those in need & so our family gives to many charities, and we all volunteer time each week. DGR status allows us to give more each year than we would be able to without it. Please don't remove it for SRE. Secondly, SRE is an important part of Australian society. It gives busy families an opportunity to have their children learn about God. Knowing that the God of the universe cares for them & is there for them, gives meaning to life and helps mental health. Churches in Sydney are very multicultural, & Bible believing Christians value people from every background, nation & language, therefore SRE promotes multiculturalism & social acceptance. Our society in Australia today has many values that come from our Christian heritage things such as honesty, everyone is valued & equal, fair justice (not corruption), and many more. SRE is a significant part of passing this down to the next generation. Thirdly, my son goes to a low fee paying Christian school, which has benefitted from the school building fund for recent (modest) facilities. Without tax deduction for these building funds, people's ability to give to them would be diminished, and the burden on state/federal funding would be increased. Finally, the draft report recommending that the ONLY DGR to be removed are for SRE in public schools & private school building funds seems unfair and very shortsighted. Christian faith communities contribute enormously our society in many various way & keeping the DGR status for SRE & building funds with benefit the governments hip pocket as well as society in general.
975	Dear Sir / Madam, I am very concerned about the draft reforms to the DGR system, particularly in relation to Christian schools and Religious education in public schools. The removing of tax deductibility from these schools and programs will have a devastating effect. Christian religious education should continue to be taught in our public schools. We are continually seeing an increase in violence, in apathetic attitudes and disrespect of authority in our communities; particularly from our youth. Do we really think that the increasing departure from teaching young people absolute truths and foundational principles in school (grounded in faith reaching) is not a root cause? By removing tax deductible status from Religious Education, the Government is effectively decreasing the funds that flow into the program by donations. This will impact the quality of the curriculum, in turn handicapping its effectiveness. I urge you to rethink the DGR draft policy. The "Future Foundations for giving" draft report from the Productivity Commission states that the Government aims to double giving and volunteering from private citizens by 2030, yet these DGR reform measures remove tax deductibility privileges from faith based communities. Surely, Christians already make up the majority of those who volunteer and donate. It seems counter productive to target these communities with DGR reforms. My family personally benefited from the generosity of our local Christian school in form of a scholarship. I doubt this would have been possible if tax deductibility status had been removed from the school. As a young widow trying to put our lives back together after the death of my husband, I was incredibly grateful for this opportunity. Although I could not give financially at the time, I was pleased to "give back" by joining the P&C and giving time to other school activities. Please reconsider this step which will have such a devastating effect on many of those who already serve as volunteers and give generously. Regards, Anna Welsh
976	I have been a supporter of SRE for many years, I do so as a Christian but more importantly I believe that many of the problems we see reported on our news bulletins are as a result of children in their formative years not being instilled with good values that underpin not only Christian but the majority of

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	<p>faiths and class room are already overburdened with the responsibility of teaching the syllabus to take primary responsibility for developing the children's ethics. The government is not being asked to fund this service provided to schools but it is being asked not to amend the funding model which encourages those making a donation by allowing them a tax deduction .</p>
977	<p>Please don't go through with this cancellation of tax deductions for schools and scripture teachers. It will hurt these areas devastating the impact on our kids to get moral instruction into the future Thankyou</p>
978	<p>I am a teacher in a school with many different religions. I believe if religious instructions was brought back in to schools then the students would have more respect for each other. Presently, it is very difficult to teach to students who lack empathy and respect. Instead the only aspect of life they understand is self importance. All religions teach respect to one another. This needs to be brought back in to government schools and keep religious instructions in schools currently being taught. All the programs such as respectful relationships, elephant education and so forth IS NOT WORKING because they lack spirituality.</p>
979	<p>I have benefited immensely from religious education in the public school system and believe it is crucial for the building of solid foundations in children and adolescent development. This will lead to less crime, less unrest and better employment as these children grow up. Please see the value of moral education in character building at this age.</p>
980	<p>To Whom It May Concern: My wife and I have taught Special Religious Education classes for more than twenty years between us. In simple terms, the basis of the message we have taught to hundreds of children is to "do unto others as you would have done to you." A message that is the foundation upon which our civilized society is formed. These words and the concept are directly attributed to Jesus in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. It can be said that these principles can be taught in a lesson labelled Ethics, but to be delivered in concert with all the other positive and amazing examples in the life of Jesus gives a wonderful foundation for children to learn how to live their lives as contributing member of our society. By removing the tax-deductible status of contributions to SRE and other religious organizations will have a direct negative impact on youth in our country. There is already a significant rise in the rate of youth suicide across Australia, with children who feel that they are not loved and are of no value to society. If there is any chance of saving just one child by teaching that they are loved by God. Then we should be making every effort to support SRE.</p>
981	<p>I'm writing to ask that you retain the DGR status for Special Religious Education in government schools. SRE is one of the favourite parts of school for my children. It is amazing to have volunteers from the community come in and spend time and resources to do this. I want them to be as well trained and supported as possible to make sure the quality of that time is as good as possible - not penalised because they volunteer in a faith based capacity. It is an important part of a holistic education that children can learn aspects of their family and/or culture's faith in a way that is sensitive and doesn't pressure others. NSW has been very successful in achieving this to date. The argument that "well they should just learn it at home" seems very reductionistic. This assumes that all people just see faith as a 'private' thing. however for most faith communities that line is not so easily drawn, and is often one that is imposed from outside. Also parents appreciate the help to introduce children to aspects of their faith in religion, the same way we appreciate help to teach our children to read, and play sport. It is not either or. Not only so there are massive benefits for both families and moreover the wider community for retaining support for SRE. One such example is this as Australia becomes more multicultural, recognising the multiple faiths in a school environment through SRE has been proven to increase social cohesion. As such putting more financial pressure on initiative like this seems to very counter productive,</p>

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982	These services are crucial in our society, taxing them will only result in losing them.
983	Please keep tax deductibility for schools and churches and all charitable organisations .. Thank yuib
984	Hello, I, and thousands upon thousands of others give our money to support the work of SRE in our public education schools across NSW. We believe it would be extremely unwise of the NSW Govt to limit or scrap the philanthropic reasons to support SRE. Some reaaons include: 1. A significant impact on the resources that support SRE, thus reducing support for student wellbeing, including Mental Health, students self worth value, inclusiveness etc. 2. The staff that rely on the financial donations for their SRE work would be put out of work and thia would put pressure on local churches to keep financially supporting them. The SRE provides a real and practical support for students tha makes a difference to their lives by providing a moral and self value system in their lives. This helps to mitigate unhealthy choices from the students to reduce the impact on the NSW health system.
985	Dear Commissioners, I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. I think it is good that you are looking at expanding the system to cover more initiatives such as animal welfare, but I am quite concerned that to achieve this you are taking away DGR status from almost exclusively religious charities – which will have a huge impact on important initiatives such as school building funds and religious education in government schools. Australia is the most multicultural nation on earth, and approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on an ideology that religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that one of the best ways to promote social cohesion is through religious education in schools – putting extra pressure on this education, and its teachers, is not a quality decision for Australia, and will have long term ramifications. The Religious Education teachers in Australia represent the largest weekly group of volunteers in our nation. In a report where on the one hand, you are articulating the government’s goal to double giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030, on the other hand you are removing privileges and help from faith communities that represent a huge proportion of the people who will help you, and are helping you right now, achieve that goal. This is not a wise decision. On top of that, school building funds are to have their DGR status removed, because back in the 1950s when DGR status was established, no government support was given by other means and now it is. This is not a good enough reason – unless the government is going to actually front up and supply ALL the capital expenditure needs of these schools (which I’m sure they won’t) why would you then seek to penalize 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 penalizing 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 minimizing in its ideology – and that this will damage Australia as a result.
986	I believe that SRE in schools is an invaluable resource for the children and teachers who may never have heard about God before and the understanding that God loves them personally and has a purpose and plan for their lives. The bible can teach and guide them throughout their lives to become purposeful and successful adults if SRE is allowed to continue in schools. Apart from these points it provides a space for them to learn about love and forgiveness and kindness on a weekly basis.



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987	<p>Hi, I understand that the PC has recommend the removal of DGR status for "charities that provide special religious education in government schools". I'm sure this recommendation would not have been made lightly. But I write to seek that this recommendation would not be taken up. I am a Baptist Pastor in the Newcastle - Lake Macquarie region and in both LGA's the two Mayors run prayer gatherings with local ministers and other believers. Neither, to my knowledge, are Christians, but they both recognise that the work of churches and christian organisations has a very positive impact on the local communities. Both continue to seek to work with churches and christian organisations to increase that positive impact because both want to their areas to continue to become even better places to live. SRE is part of this picture and is staffed almost entirely by volunteers and relies on donations to operate. Where SRE operates school principals are consistently see the positive impact that SRE has on their school. So please do not follow through with this recommendation as it would have a negative impact not only on the ability for SRE to operate but the fabric of each school where SRE operates.</p>
988	<p>Hi, I understand that the PC has recommend the removal of DGR status for "charities that provide special religious education in government schools". I'm sure this recommendation would not have been made lightly. But I write to seek that this recommendation would not be taken up. I am a Baptist Pastor in the Newcastle - Lake Macquarie region and in both LGA's the two Mayors run prayer gatherings with local ministers and other believers. Neither, to my knowledge, are Christians, but they both recognise that the work of churches and christian organisations has a very positive impact on the local communities. Both continue to seek to work with churches and christian organisations to increase that positive impact because both want to their areas to continue to become even better places to live. SRE is part of this picture and is staffed almost entirely by volunteers and relies on donations to operate. Where SRE operates school principals are consistently see the positive impact that SRE has on their school. So please do not follow through with this recommendation as it would have a negative impact not only on the ability for SRE to operate but the fabric of each school where SRE operates.</p>
989	<p>Dear Commissioners, I am highly concerned by the draft report and reforms to the DGR system. I think it is good that you are looking at expanding the system to cover more initiatives such as animal welfare, but I am quite concerned that to achieve this you are taking away DGR status from almost exclusively religious charities – which will have a huge impact on important initiatives such as school building funds and religious education in government schools. I am part of a team of volunteers who are involved in teaching SRE in a local school, and we are giving our time voluntarily for the local community. Australia is the most multicultural nation on earth, and approximately 60% of Australians identify with a religion. Yet, your report seems to be based on an ideology that religion is of no community-wide benefit. Research shows that one of the best ways to promote social cohesion is through religious education in schools – putting extra pressure on this education, and its teachers, is not a quality decision for Australia, and will have long term ramifications. The Religious Education teachers in Australia represent the largest weekly group of volunteers in our nation. In a report where on the one hand, you are articulating the government’s goal to double giving (financial and volunteering) by 2030, on the other hand you are removing privileges and help from faith communities that represent a huge proportion of the people who will help you, and are helping you right now, achieve that goal. This is not a wise decision. On top of that, school building funds are to have their DGR status removed, because back in the 1950s when DGR status was established, no government support was given by other means and now it is. This is not a good enough reason – unless the government is going to actually front up and supply ALL the capital expenditure needs of these schools (which I’m sure they won’t) why would you then seek to penalise both the schools AND the private citizens who are donating to these schools and funding education? Faith-based education is the fastest</p>

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	growing sector of education in Australia – which tells us that this is what our communities want and are actively using. 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, it is not true that these initiatives are of little “community-wide benefit.” So I 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.
990	Charity is at the heart of faith in giving with a desire to see better outcomes in the practical world which then feeds the spiritual well-being of our people and community. To withdraw the benefit of DGR status is therefore a contradiction in wishing to see greater philanthropic giving in Australia given the historical nature of faith and giving being intertwined. Or is that the point, that the Productivity Commission sees faith based giving as something that needs to be undermined so that only the humanist mentality is allowed to survive? This does not make any rational sense at all and will disadvantage the philanthropic cause rather than enhance it as people are always most willing to give to causes that they see as greater than themselves.
991	Religious education in government schools is an important and positive activity that should continue to be supported, and to enjoy Deductible Gift Recipient status. It has been proven to have wellbeing benefits and to promote social cohesion.
992	Dear Commissioners, We know people that are in Scripture Union NSW and run lunchtime groups in Government Schools. I understand these programs impact about 2,000 students weekly. My friend tells me they 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. In the census 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. It seems that, 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. 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. To my way of thinking, this does not make sense. I therefore 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.
993	As a long-term committed Christian, it is my deep-rooted faith that drives my financial giving and community service. The tax-deductibility of contributions to religious organisations that funds beneficial community-facing services, allows my family to give generously because we can also gift

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	<p>what would normally be taken in tax. Church outreach and SRE are invaluable programs that positively impact the lives of people of all ages during an age of increased anxiety, stress and worry. Faith-based education and church work (which is primarily done by volunteers) positively impacts Australian society and provides hope and meaning to the lives of millions of Australians. According to the 2021 census, almost 50% of our country still hold to a religious faith and is thus a significant voice. Removing the DGR status for SRE and school building funding is dismissive of the broader contribution to Australian society that religious faith continues to have. The fact is, religious institutions provide more than just religious teaching, but also pastoral care, spiritual guidance, counselling and charitable giving to the most vulnerable in our community. This is all predicated on a strong faith and religious conviction that is nurtured through these various religious ministries which currently rely on tax-deductible donations.</p>
994	<p>DGR status should be continued for Religious Education providers in Schools. What is the suggested alternative for support, related to this comment? Will it provide the same or better support? Will the government take on the production of Religious Education resources and the training and co-ordination of teachers? I doubt it. These are better provided in the current arrangement. "While there are sound reasons for governments to support the provision of school infrastructure, the Commission's preliminary view is that providing tax deductions for donations is unlikely to be the best way to direct support to where it is needed most." Likewise, regarding building funds in Non-government schools, is there a promise to increase government support through other avenues?</p>
995	<p>As a member of a local church community, we have seen the results of those who teach Special Religious Education in schools both on a paid and voluntary basis. The teachers have shared the difference this has made to the children lives in a positive way. We have therefore financially supported this ministry and see the necessity of the status of DGR remaining in place so as to support these teachers as they continue to teach and achieve positive influences on the children and our future generation.</p>
996	<p>I see in your submission that school building funds would be exempt from the DGR. That to me would be a backward step as education on all levels is extremely important to this country and encouraging any funding should be a priority.</p>
997	<p>We have witnessed the impact of SRE in schools for many years. We have also seen the fundamental christian faith values removed from schools. SRE volunteers need government funding to continue teaching students christian values. We remove this funding at our peril. I would encourage DGR status to be maintained for Special Religious Education in government schools and volunteers within the faith communities recognised within the DGR system. Christian faith in our SRE lessons brings wellbeing benefits and social cohesion, which is the fabric of our civilised society.</p>
998	<p>I am dismayed at the suggestion from the Productivity Commission to remove the tax deductibility status of donations to SRE, on the basis that SRE produces little community-wide support. On the contrary I would suggest that SRE enhances students' understanding of their chosen religion, particularly when classes are conducted by adherents of that religion, and that based on evidence, it further delivers key psychological benefits to students, promotes multiculturalism and social acceptance, and reduces the risk of student radicalisation. The evidence also shows that people of faith are 25% more likely than their secular counterparts to donate money and 23% more likely to volunteer time. In light of these and other benefits, I ask that the suggestion to remove tax-deductible status be reconsidered.</p>

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999	<p>I am very concerned about the removal of DGR status for SRE. My own experience of SRE was life changing and I was very grateful for the opportunity to consider the bigger 'why' questions of life in the midst of my education. The loss of DGR status threatens the existence of the work of SRE and I believe our society would be greatly deprived of an important part of young people's education. I also think it would drive more parents out of the public school system into religious private schools. Because I came to a faith through SRE, that has meant I am much more generous with my own finances and make significant contributions to worthwhile causes. I am currently disbursing of the order of \$200,000, something that wouldn't have happened if my perspectives on life had not changed in the light of my SRE experience so many hears ago. Please do not remove the DGR status for SRE, it makes such a difference to many lives not just in their philanthropic perspectives. Thankyou for listening.</p>