

## CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS PUSH FOR MACQUARIE MP SUPPORT ON RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION BILL

**27 APRIL 2020**

Local Christian schools are calling on Macquarie MP Susan Templeman to commit to supporting religious freedoms, as the Federal Election campaign gains pace.

In February, the Religious Discrimination Bill was shelved until after the May election, when five Government MPs crossed the floor in an attempt to amend the bill for protections for LGBTQI students.

Peak body, the Australian Association of Christian Schools and its members are now calling for bipartisan commitment to the unamended version of the Bill, launching a campaign that urges both Liberal and Labor MPs to support religious freedoms in Australia.

Kuyper Christian School Principal Ian Shaw says Christian schools have been completely mischaracterised in public discussion and unsupported by amendments and the drawn out process of the Bill.

“Our desire is to care for all students who enroll in our school,” Mr Shaw said.

“Simply, this Bill allows us to do what we are fundamentally here to do and that’s provide quality, Christian education.

“We need the support of our local MP to ensure the Christian education model can be viable into the future.

“Religious freedom is a human right, and our schools must be able to teach in accordance with their religious beliefs for there to be true religious freedom.”

AACS Government Relations Advisor Dylan Turner said Christian schools teach subjects according to the Australian Curriculum from a Biblical perspective, and to do this well all staff are expected to have a genuine Christian faith.

“AACS was extremely disappointed that the Religious Discrimination Bill did not progress through the Senate, despite passing the House of Representatives with near unanimous support from both major parties,” he said.

“The Bill’s passage was recommended by two parliamentary inquiries and was a key election commitment by the Morrison Government in 2019, the Christian Community feels let down by the lack of progress on the matter.”

“As the Federal Election campaign ramps up, we are calling on both parties for ongoing support to protect religious freedom in federal discrimination law.

“We are yet to hear of Labor’s commitment to this Bill post-election and are urging local MPs to stand up and voice their stance so that their constituents of faith know whether they have the support of their community representative.

“Australians should have the right to believe and worship without fear of discrimination.”

The Australian Association of Christian Schools (AACCS) represents over a hundred independent Christian schools in every state and territory across Australia, three of which are in the Macquarie electorate.

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