

## NT Chief Minister's Commitment to Protect Religious Schools Welcomed

**12 February 2025**

The Australian Association of Christian Schools (AACCS) warmly welcomed today's announcement by the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory, the Hon. Lia Finocchiaro, to address the controversial changes made by the previous Labor Government to the *Anti-Discrimination Act* which imposed undue restrictions upon religious schools to prioritise staff of the same-faith staff along with limitations on free speech.

The CLP's commitment to restore protections for faith-based schools and safeguard freedom of speech and religion is a significant and much-needed step forward for the Territory and its communities.

Vanessa Cheng, Executive Officer of the AACCS, expressed her appreciation for the Chief Minister's leadership on this critical issue. "We are incredibly grateful to the Chief Minister for placing the protection of religious schools and freedom of speech on the legislative agenda for 2025. These amendments to the Act are much need to ensure that all Territorians, including faith communities, can continue to speak and live according to their values and beliefs," said Ms. Cheng.

Ms. Cheng continued, "We are pleased that the Chief Minister is acting on her election commitment to repeal the harmful amendments made by the previous government. At the time, the changes sparked significant backlash from faith communities across the Northern Territory. This announcement is a significant win for all who value their freedom and the rights of parents to make decisions about the education of their children."

AACCS believes that the amendments will provide Christian schools with the certainty and security they need to operate effectively, ensuring that students receive an education that aligns with their faith and values, while continuing to contribute to the broader educational landscape of the Territory.

"We look forward to working closely with the Northern Territory Government to ensure that these amendments reflect the principles of fairness, respect, and the fundamental rights of all Territorians, particularly in the areas of education and religious freedom," Ms. Cheng concluded.

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