



AUSTRALIAN  
ASSOCIATION  
OF CHRISTIAN  
SCHOOLS



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## MEDIA RELEASE

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23 May 2024 – For Immediate Release

# Fifth Packed Town Hall Event Sends Powerful Message to Albanese Government

Over 1,000 teachers, parents and students gathered from across Victoria last night at Waverley Christian College in an unprecedented show of support for the future of faith in Christian schools.

Shadow Attorney-General, Senator Michaelia Cash and Shadow Education Minister, Senator Sarah Henderson attended the event and addressed the huge crowd. No Government MPs or Senators were able to attend last night's event, and only one Government MP (Tania Lawrence, the Member for Hasluck) has attended any of the events to date.

The town hall event was the fifth in a series of sold out events also held in Brisbane, Sydney, Perth and Launceston. The 'Faith In Our Future' events have been organised by three Christian school associations in response to the recent controversial recommendations released by the Australian Law Reform Commission.

If accepted by the Government, they would prevent Christian schools from employing only Christian teachers and staff who share and can teach the same values and beliefs of the school. Parents, teachers, staff and students shared their stories about the life-changing impact of teachers and staff who believe and live their Christian faith.

Joseph Sesay, a migrant from West Africa, shared about the profound impact of his Christian teacher, Mrs Bill. He said, "She taught me that love is true, joy can be restored and peace can be obtained."

Caitlyn Stephens, a recent graduate who has now returned to work at her Christian school, said "I hope that my story today can help be a voice in our community because the difference faith makes in the lives of students is second-to-none."

CSA Director of Public Policy Mark Spencer said "These are stories of hope - something that is desperately needed by our young people today. Why would the government want to restrict something that is benefitting the nation? Why restrict the heart of our schools when it gives so much life?"

Attendees travelled more than three hours each way to show their support, with buses bringing people from all over the state including Wodonga, Ballarat, Shepparton and Bairnsdale. ACS Executive Director Alistair Macpherson said that "The commitment shown by so many to be here tonight is a reflection on the concern in our communities for the future of Christian schools."

AACS Executive Officer Vanessa Cheng said that “These are more than events - this is a movement. More than 11,000 have joined this campaign and our message to the Prime Minister is simple - please let Christian schools continue to be Christian schools”.

A final town hall event is scheduled for Adelaide on 12 June.

ENDS

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## About the Associations:

**Australian Association of Christian Schools (AACS)** represents over a hundred independent Christian schools in every state and territory across Australia, ranging from very small to large; urban to regional, rural and remote. The majority of member schools are non-denominational with a protestant heritage and are governed by parent associations with over 44,000 students enrolled from a wide variety of socio-economic, cultural and religious backgrounds.

**Associated Christian Schools (ACS)** represents over 45 independent Christian Schools throughout Queensland. With over 30,000 students attending member schools, this represents approximately 20% of the independent school students in Queensland. Whilst each of our member schools are independently governed, they choose to collaborate together through ACS, for the purpose of delivering high quality Christian education for the common good.

**Christian Schools Australia (CSA)** is the largest association of Christian schools in the country and has member schools educating over 86,000 students and employing more than 13,500 staff at more than 200 locations across Australia. CSA member schools provide caring and compassionate education within an authentic Christian learning community.