
MEDIA RELEASE

1 March 2024

Why Is the Queensland Government Targeting Hard Working Families?

The Queensland Government's proposed *Anti-Discrimination Bill 2024* targets hard working families seeking to choose a school that reflects their values and beliefs by introducing legal uncertainty and opening schools up to activist litigation according to Mark Spencer, Director of Public Policy for Christian Schools Australia and Vanessa Cheng, Executive Officer of Australian Association of Christian Schools.

'The Bill would remove the certainty and clarity that allows Christian and other religious schools to employ staff who share their beliefs', Mr Spencer said, 'substituting a complex legal test that is unclear and untested in its application'.

A recent survey with responses from over 8,500 parents in more than 100 Christian schools showed how important values and beliefs are in their choice of schooling.

'Christian schools are the fastest growing schools across the nation, and our research shows that parents are overwhelmingly looking for a school that teach traditional Christian values and beliefs', Mr Spencer said.

'How can we continue to meet the needs of hard working Queensland parents, when this Bill will make it more difficult to employ staff who can teach the faith and be genuine Christian role models to students within our communities?' said Mrs Cheng.

The Bill continues to provide clear guidance that using 'membership of a particular political party as a criterion for a position as an adviser to a political party or a worker in the office of a member of Parliament' is lawful, but removes equivalent clarity for 'employing persons of a particular religion to teach in a school established for students of the particular religion'.

'If it is acceptable for a political party or member of Parliament to be able to choose staff who share their political belief, how can those members of Parliament justify not applying the same test to religious schools seeking to employ staff who share their religious belief?' said Mr Spencer.

'If school choice is important, if the rights of hard working families with both parents working to be able to invest in their children's education are important, the Government needs to urgently amend this bill and provide clarity and certainty to our sector,' Mr Spencer said.

'Queensland parents deserve a fair go, they should not be faced with higher school fees to fund their school defending unnecessary legal claims,' said Mrs Cheng.

ENDS

For all media enquiries:

Vanessa Cheng, Australian Association of Christian Schools, 0416 244 372

Mark Spencer, Christian Schools Australia, 0419 419 224

Who We Are

Christian Schools Australia (CSA) and Australian Association of Christian Schools (AACS) are national bodies that support and represent schools for whom religious formation is an integral part of the education process.

In combination, CSA, and AACS schools educate more than 110,000 students across more than 250 locations nationally. We **have 29 member schools educating over 19,000 students in Queensland.**

Our schools operate as independent, locally governed, religious organisations. Some are closely aligned with one or more Christian churches in their communities, while others have their heritage in a group of parents coming together to start a school.