

Media Release



10 August 2021

Don't Let The 'Donkey's' Define You

With households around Australia completing the Australian Census tonight it is vital that people of faith ensure that they are heard and counted.

'As the only 'optional' question in the Census people of faith could be forgiven for thinking that the ABS is only half heartedly collecting data on religion', said Mark Spencer, Director of Public Policy for Christian Schools Australia.

'The placement of 'No Religion' as the very prominent first option in 2016 saw an increase of around 50% in Australian's ticking that box,' he said, 'the 'Donkey Vote' seems to have combined with a very active campaign that may have confused many Australians'.

'We are encouraging our school communities to simply follow the ABS definition and take the time to answer the question accurately'.

The ABS [definition](#) is as follows -

"Religion is a belief or way of life that people follow. It can include attending places of worship, or ceremonies. Often, it can mean the core values a person aligns themselves to, even if they don't actively participate in services or pray."

According to the ABS, only if the person identifies with no religion at all, should they select the 'No religion' response.

'It is vital that the Census does not underestimate those who hold a religious belief', Mr Spencer said.

'With many Christians having to select "Other" and write in their denomination or indicate "Christian" it would be very easy for mistakes to be made or for the question to be left uncompleted.'

'It is almost guaranteed that the Census will underestimate the level of belief in Australia,' Mr Spencer commented, 'we just want to ensure that the data is as accurate as it can be, and that people of faith are not further excluded'.

ENDS

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About Christian Schools Australia

Christian Schools Australia is the largest association of Christian schools in the country and has member schools educating over 70,000 students and employing nearly 10,000 staff at 170 locations across Australia. CSA is part of the global ACSI network of 24,000 schools educating in excess of 5.5 million students in over 108 countries world-wide.

