

Media Release



20 October 2022

All Human Rights *ARE* Human Rights

“Australia does not get to choose ... between protecting religious freedom and providing for equality before the law. It must do both under its international obligations.”

Expert Panel on Religious Freedom, Final Report, 2018

Mathew Guy’s commitment to ‘amend the Equal Opportunity Act allow for the right of a faith-based organisation to employ a person that aligns with the religious organisation’s values’ has been welcomed by Christian school communities across Victoria.

The community across Victoria and nationally overwhelmingly support religious bodies being able to hire staff who share their beliefs, the latest national polling indicated **three-quarters of Australians** supporting this right – which is what the Opposition affirmed today.

‘Christian schools welcome any changes that provide **confidence and certainty** for our communities and avoid the ‘lawyers picnic’ that the current laws create’, said Mark Spencer, Director of Public Policy for Christian Schools Australia.

‘While activists will undoubtedly try and **twist these comments** in an attempt to create division, we hope that this will not be fuelled by some of the outrageous claims we heard recently regarding the appointment of Andrew Thorburn’ he said.

‘**Fundamental human rights are not negotiable**’, Mr Spencer said, ‘they cannot simply be ignored just because a vocal minority wants to force their expectations on the whole community’.

‘Victorians want **a fair go for all Victorians**, and this includes allowing religious bodies to employ people of their religion’.

The current laws, amended with effect from June this year, create enormous compliance burdens on faith-based schools and other religious bodies. Resources must be diverted to meet the confusing and complex requirements of the law – **a law that impacts who can be employed in churches, mosques, temples and synagogues as well as faith-based schools.**

‘We agree that new consultation to ensure that the changes genuinely balance religious freedoms and individual rights are needed’, Mr Spencer said, ‘these important issues cannot just be decided in backroom party room deals’.

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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 around 72,000 students and employing more than 10,000 staff at more than 180 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.

