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Polling Results Point to Need for Religious Freedom Commissioner

Polling results published in The Australian today point to the urgent need for a Religious Freedom Commissioner within the Australian Human Rights Commission to help educate Australians on this vital freedom.

The article, [*Most Australians oppose faith-based hiring for religious schools*](#), suggests on the basis of polling undertaken on behalf of the Centre for Independent Studies, that ‘More than half of Australians oppose giving religious schools and organisations the right to discriminate on the basis of faith when appointing staff’. In contrast, independent polling undertaken for Christian schools has consistently shown very strong support for employment on the basis of faith within religious schools.

More than 77% of Australians, said ‘Yes’ When asked, “Do you support the right of a religious school to employ teachers and other staff who support the values and beliefs of the school, if those values and beliefs are clearly stated?”. There was majority support from across the political spectrum, with support growing to nearly 90% of parents with a child in a faith-based school.

‘It is vital that we establish a Religious Discrimination Commissioner who can educate the public about the importance of religious freedom and the needs of faith based organisations’, said Mark Spencer, Director of Public Policy for Christian Schools Australia.

‘People will naturally oppose discrimination, as do we, but when presented with a clear question they understand that it is just common sense for religious schools to employ staff who share their beliefs’.

‘The results today point to why we need a Religious Discrimination Commissioner to help Australians understand that religious schools appointing staff who share their beliefs is not discrimination and is, in fact, the exercising of a fundamental human right’, he said.

‘Christian schools are different’, Mr Spencer said, ‘and that difference largely comes from the staff who share our beliefs and are committed to sharing their faith with students’.

‘Regardless of any polling, Australians are increasingly attracted to our schools, voting with their wallets to support schools where faith and belief is the foundation of what they do’.

ENDS

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About Christian Schools Australia

Christian Schools Australia (CSA) is the largest association of Christian schools in the country and has member schools educating around 75,000 students and employing more than 11,000 staff at more than 180 locations across Australia. CSA member schools provide high quality education within an authentic Christian learning community.

