AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

MEDIA RELEASE

NT Government Must Restore Balance in Discrimination Laws

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The Australian Association of Christian Schools (AACS) has welcomed the commitment made by Northern Territory Attorney-General Marie-Claire Boothby during Estimates yesterday to restore legal protections that allow religious schools to employ staff based on their faith.

AACS Executive Officer, Vanessa Cheng, said the move was an important step toward ensuring that religious freedom is properly recognised alongside other rights in the Territory's discrimination laws.

"We commend Attorney-General Boothby for acknowledging the need to restore these important protections for our schools," Ms Cheng said.

"While we have not yet seen the draft Bill, we look forward to reviewing the Bill and engaging in further consultation to ensure it restores balanced protections to enable Christian and other religious schools to employ staff who genuinely support their beliefs and mission."

Ms Cheng rejected the suggestion that such provisions amount to unfair discrimination.

"These changes are about supporting diversity in education and respecting the positive contribution faith-based schools make to the Northern Territory."

"Parents choose religious schools because they want their children educated in line with their shared faith beliefs and values. That choice must be respected and protected."

AACS supports the NT Government's direction and looks forward to working constructively as the reforms progress.

"A pluralistic society should safeguard the ability of schools with a clear faith foundation to operate according to their convictions. We welcome this effort to restore legal clarity and certainty for religious schools," Ms Cheng concluded.

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