

POLLING SHOWS STRONG SUPPORT FOR RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION BILL PROTECTIONS

26 November 2021

The *Religious Discrimination Bill 2021* introduced to Parliament yesterday by the Prime Minister will complete a nearly five-decade long process to protect fundamental human rights in Australia.

Recent private polling* demonstrates widespread support for the Bill's protections with more than **2 out of 3 Australians believing that Australian laws should uphold and protect the universal human right to hold and practice religious beliefs.**

"Protection of religious freedom is important to many Australians," said Vanessa Cheng of the Australian Association of Christian Schools, "this Bill fills the gap in Commonwealth human rights law and deserves bipartisan support."

The polling also showed strong support for faith based schools, with **79% of Australians supporting the right of religious schools to employ teachers and other staff who support the values and beliefs of the school**, if those values and beliefs are clearly stated. This support was across the political spectrum.

"In a tolerant, multi-faith society, the protections for religious schools to employ staff who can reflect and teach their values and beliefs is an essential element of religious freedom" said Mark Spencer of Christian Schools Australia, "regardless of whether they are Jewish, Muslim, Catholic or Christian schools."

Over 80% of Australians also supported the rights of parents to choose a school that reflects their values and beliefs.

"Parents are choosing faith based schools in increasing numbers because they like the values and beliefs our schools teach," said Mrs Cheng.

"This independent polling clearly demonstrates the community support for this Bill," Mr Spencer noted.

The Australian Association of Christian schools and Christian Schools Australia call upon MPs and Senators to listen to the concerns of our community and ensure the rapid passage of this Bill before the Federal election.

ENDS

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* Independent national polling of a weighted representative sample of 1515 Australians undertaken from 19 October 2021.

National poll on voters attitudes to Christian Schools:

SAFEGUARDING THEIR VALUES AND BELIEFS

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?

Political Affiliation	Greens	Labor Party	Liberal Party	Nationals	One Nation	Other (Please specify)	Prefer not to say	Totals
No	34.4	22.6	10.5	21.6	23.5	20.6	25.8	20.7
Yes	65.6	77.4	89.5	78.4	76.5	79.4	74.2	79.3
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Do you believe that Australian laws should uphold and protect the universal human right to hold and practice religious beliefs?

Political Affiliation	Greens	Labor Party	Liberal Party	Nationals	One Nation	Other (Please specify)	Prefer not to say	Totals
No	11.1	14.3	8.4	27	19.1	6.3	9.3	11.7
Unsure	21.1	20.9	16.7	18.9	17.6	22.2	28.6	20.5
Yes	67.8	64.7	74.9	54.1	63.2	71.4	62.1	68.8
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Do you support the right of parents to choose a school that reflects their strongly held values and beliefs?

Political Affiliation	Greens	Labor Party	Liberal Party	Nationals	One Nation	Other (Please specify)	Prefer not to say	Totals
No	7.8	9.1	6.2	18.9	11.8	9.5	6	8.1
Unsure	14.4	11.7	7	5.4	10.3	14.3	16.5	11.1
Yes	77.8	79.2	86.8	75.7	77.9	76.2	77.5	80.9
Totals	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

- National research commissioned by CSA and AACS
- Polling completed 15 - 21 of October 2021
- National weighted sample of 1515
- Completed by Compass Polling using online panels

The research was conducted by Compass Polling, who questioned a sample of Australians who are representative of the Australian population on key demographics, as per the 2016 Census.

