



Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations

1 William Street Brisbane 4000
PO Box 15033 City East
Queensland 4002 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3719 7110
Email: education@ministerial.qld.gov.au
Email: industrialrelations@ministerial.qld.gov.au

16 OCT 2019

Mr Neil Laurie
Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Email: tableoffice@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to Petition 3145–19 tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 17 September 2019 regarding a review into the provision of religious instruction in Queensland state schools.

The Palaszczuk Government recognises that Queensland state schools embrace a multitude of cultural, religious and non-religious beliefs and encourage students to grow and develop as a person — in beliefs, values and attitudes.

Chapter 5 of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* (EGPA) requires state schools to allow for the provision of religious instruction for up to one hour each week during school hours, if they are approached by any faith group seeking to provide religious instruction to students of that faith at the school.

In October 2004, religious instruction was reviewed in the consultation paper titled 'Education Laws for the Future', preceding the enactment of the EGPA. More recently, the Honourable Anastacia Palaszczuk MP, Premier and Minister for Trade, and I have been clear that there is currently no plan to review the religious instruction provisions of the EGPA.

Religious instruction is not compulsory and parents continue to have a choice about whether or not their child participates.

I can advise your petitioners that through the Australian Curriculum, in particular History and Civics and Citizenship subjects, and the General Capability of Intercultural Understanding, students in Prep to Year 10 have the opportunity to study how religion has shaped history and people's identities, and also to learn to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of others.

In addition, Queensland schools may offer the subjects of *Study of Religion* and *Religion and Ethics* in Years 11 and 12. These subjects offer students the opportunity to explore a range of faiths. I am advised that in *Study of Religion*, students develop their understanding of the role religion plays in the causes and processes of change that have shaped today's world. *Religion and Ethics* aims to help students understand the influence that values, belief systems or religious traditions have on their own and other people's behaviour.

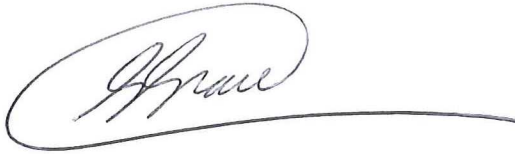
Schools may also offer the subject Philosophy and Reason, in which students investigate philosophical ideas that have shaped and continue to influence contemporary society, including what it means to be human, how we understand the role of reason in our individual and collective lives, and how we think about and care for each other and the world around us. Philosophy of religion is one of the topics students explore in this subject.

The Department of Education will continue to listen to the views of all stakeholders, and will work closely with state schools to establish and implement religious instruction and other instruction to ensure it is consistent with legislative and policy provisions.

Pursuant to Standing Order 32, it would be appreciated if you could table this response to the petition on the next sitting day.

I would like to thank the petitioners for raising this matter and I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grace', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

GRACE GRACE MP
Minister for Education and
Minister for Industrial Relations

Our ref: 19/510238

Your ref: A490608