

PETITION TO THE AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT

In Support of the National School Chaplaincy Program (NSCP)

To the Honourable the President and Members of the Senate in Parliament assembled:

Noting the following:

- The National School Chaplaincy Program, built on the excellent history of school chaplaincy in Australia, was introduced by the former Coalition Government in 2007/08 with a commitment of \$165 million for its first three years. It was endorsed by Prime Minister Rudd who said “they (Chaplains) actually are providing the glue which keeps school communities rolling”.
- The program offers pastoral care and spiritual guidance to all. Chaplains necessarily have religious beliefs which underpin their work. These beliefs are representative of the school communities the chaplains work in and they do not hinder chaplains from working with those of other beliefs or none. It operates in 1915 schools and enjoys strong support among principals, schools and in the community generally.
- The Rudd Government (as at November 2009) has refused to confirm its ongoing support and funding for the program, despite the program's social benefits, sound administration and strong community support.

We, the undersigned petitioners, pray that the Rudd Government continue providing funding for the National School Chaplaincy Program in its current form.

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