



For all things give thanks.

1 THESS 5:18

**STATEMENT BY BISHOP BRIAN MASCORD
NSW TEACHERS FEDERATION POSITION ON SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

It is extremely disappointing that the *NSW Teachers Federation* is advocating to remove Special Religious Education (SRE) from schools, in contradiction to numerous worldwide studies that overwhelmingly affirm the positive impact that religious education has on the well-being of young people.

It is difficult to comprehend why the federation would wish to jettison the positive developmental, educational and cultural impacts that SRE has on young people—a view that was confirmed by the NSW Government's *Independent Review of SRE* released in 2017.

Given the evidence, and the even higher quality of SRE in NSW since the implementation of the findings of the *Independent Review*, any reasonable person would expect that this parental choice should be celebrated in a multicultural and multifaith society such as ours.

I stand in solidarity with key leaders from across Christian denominations, and members of *All Faiths SRE*, in strongly opposing the federation's position. It is equally concerning that the federation do not appear to be interested in working alongside SRE providers from all major faiths and the Department of Education's *Consultative Committee*—a body which they are also a member, giving them the opportunity to contribute to making SRE consistently better. Instead, they have adopted a strategy to announce their position via the media in the first week back at school for 2019. I would not be surprised if there were many members of the federation—themselves parents with children attending schools—who would desire to know why the leaders of the federation wish to remove parental choice for formation in the faith of their family, or in Special Education in Ethics.

Most Rev Brian G Mascord DD
BISHOP OF WOLLONGONG
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MOST REV BRIAN G MASCORD DD
BISHOP OF WOLLONGONG

Xavier Centre, 38 Harbour Street (PO BOX 1239), Wollongong NSW 2500 Australia
T +61 2 4222 2402 • F +61 2 4222 2419 • bishop@dow.org.au • dow.org.au