



August 28, 2017

Media Release

Parents overwhelmingly support SRE

It's time for fringe groups to stop trying to override the rights and choices of the majority of NSW parents, according to the peak organisation for special religious education (SRE) in the state.

The Inter-Church Commission on Religious Education in Schools (NSW) Inc (ICCOREIS) says extreme groups made up of many who are not even parents are pushing an anti-religion agenda and spreading misinformation.

ICCOREIS spokesperson Murray Norman explained these groups ignore the fact that over 70 per cent of NSW primary school parents opt-in to SRE and the program has the support of the vast majority of schools, principals and parents.

He said the argument that students who don't opt-in should be doing other school work is a diversion, and would disadvantage most students.

"The parents of 71 per cent of students are choosing SRE for their child, and a further 25 thousand students are involved in special education in ethics (SEE) classes.

"These students will either be disadvantaged if they miss out on curriculum work being done by around only 20 per cent of students not in SRE or SEE, or the teachers will have to repeat the work at a later time for them."

Mr Norman said the support of NSW parents for SRE is massive, and pointed to a recent Facebook page developed by the organisation, which has generated over 16,500 followers from parents and supporters, and has seen over 8000 new supporters in the last three months.

"These extreme groups represent a small minority, and if you look at their supporters, many are from interstate and are not even parents of children in NSW schools, which proves they are interested in a political agenda and not what is best for students.

He said it's time to accept that the NSW parents have a right to choose to have their children learn about their nominated faith.

The NSW Department of Education's own framework states that "spiritual wellbeing relates to our sense of meaning and purpose", and independent reviews show that "SRE contributes to students' understanding of their cultural heritage and is an avenue for their spiritual care".
