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Media Release

Truth revealed – Australians want faith values taught in schools

Listen to some reports and you'd be forgiven for thinking that Australians were a completely secular bunch that have turned their backs on religion and Christian values, but the opposite is true according to new independent research released today.

The McCrindle Research *'Survey of values, education and faith in Australia'*, conducted using best practice methods, found that almost 99 per cent of people believe it is important to teach values to Australian school students.

Importantly, despite the fact that a large percentage of those surveyed did not identify with any religion or spiritual belief, 84 per cent believe that Christian heritage has been influential in shaping the values that we teach children, with almost 60 per cent believing this was "very" or "somewhat" influential.

The research also showed that parents overwhelmingly want the choice of faith-based values education, with only 16 per cent of those surveyed opposed to giving parents a choice.

Spokesperson for Christian Special Religious Education (SRE) in New South Wales, Murray Norman, says the survey figures represent majority Australian thinking and "endorse the importance of spirituality and programs like SRE within education."

"The overwhelming majority of parents want the choice of faith-based values to be taught to children, which is exactly what SRE does," he said.

Importantly, he revealed that when given the choice, most parents choose SRE, with current figures showing 71 per cent of parents of primary school children in the state opting into the program.

"We are aware of a minority voice that seeks to remove any form of spirituality and faith from schools, and remove the choice parents currently have, but that's out of step with the values and wishes of Australian parents."

He explained that SRE supports the Australian Government's values for Australian schooling, and said, "it is clear that Australians recognise the Christian and faith foundation of these values."

Around 430,000 students attend SRE classes across NSW. The NSW Department of Education framework says, "spiritual wellbeing relates to our sense of meaning and purpose."

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*Research conducted by McCrindle Research, and commissioned by The Inter-Church Commission on Religious Education in Schools (NSW) Inc.