



June 13, 2018

Media Release

SRE comes of age, enjoys massive support

The peak body representing special religious education (SRE) in New South Wales schools says it has been overwhelmed by support from parents and school communities following a recent independent survey that shows parents want the choice of faith-based values education in schools.

Christian SRE spokesperson Murray Norman said providers have worked hard to bring a greater degree of professionalism and accountability to the program over many years and he is heartened by the research.

“Often the only voices we hear are the negative ones, because they shout the loudest, but they also do not represent the vast majority.

“Based on this research we know that Christian heritage is a primary source of values and that parents want the choice of faith-based values education. We also know that when given that choice, the overwhelming majority – 71 per cent – choose SRE.”

Mr Norman said NSW parents currently opt-in and that every student in SRE is there with their parents’ consent, although he acknowledges comments from NSW Labor recently that they are looking to change the opt-in forms.

“We are always open to improving the system and have had talks to that end with both the Government and Opposition.”

However he said the overriding fact is that SRE is widely supported and beneficial.

“There will always be an extreme minority with an agenda to stop parents from having a choice, and many of those people don’t even have school age children.

“But even education guidelines recognise the importance of spirituality in education, and SRE offers this.”

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