

EDUCATION AND TRAINING — SCHOOL CHAPLAINS

245. Hon Wilson Tucker to the Minister for Education and Training:

- (1) I refer to an article published in *The Sunday Times* on the 15 August 2021, titled ‘Should we still keep the faith?’. The article quotes the Minister as saying ‘there is no State Government requirement for school chaplains to be of faith’. However, I note that each of the three approved providers of chaplains for public schools states explicitly on their websites that chaplains must be ‘of faith’, therefore I ask:
  - (a) does the Minister agree that these requirements create a de facto policy of public school chaplains being ‘of faith’; and
  - (b) what steps will the Minister take to correct this inconsistency between Government policy and the policy of the providers the Department engages?
- (2) I refer to correspondence from the Rationalist Society of Australia (RSA) to the Department of Education, dated 20 March 2021 and 6 April 2021, in which the RSA raises their concerns over the *prima facie* religious conviction discrimination of the Department in the current policy of approved chaplain providers, and I ask, has the Department received this correspondence, and when can the RSA expect a response?
- (3) Will the Government review its policy, and the policy of approved chaplain providers, to allow people ‘of no faith’ to apply for chaplain roles in public schools:
  - (a) if no to (3), why not?

**Hon Sue Ellery replied:**

- (1)–(3) There is no State Government requirement that school chaplains be of faith.

Schools in Western Australia have the option to purchase chaplaincy services from an alternative provider and undertake an independent procurement where the buyer’s guide does not apply.

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