



**SENATOR THE HON SCOTT RYAN  
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**National School Chaplaincy Programme to go ahead**

The Australian Government will invite State and Territory Governments to participate in the National School Chaplaincy Programme.

In the Federal Budget on May 13, 2014, the Coalition Government honoured its election commitment to continue to support school chaplains over the next four years through the \$243.8 million National School Chaplaincy Programme.

In June, the High Court of Australia ruled that payments made by the Commonwealth to schools under the existing National School Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program were invalid. This limited the ability of the Commonwealth to administer and directly fund school chaplains.

Accordingly, I will write to State and Territory Education Ministers in the near future inviting them to participate in the new National School Chaplaincy Programme by administering funding provided by the Commonwealth.

If States and Territories accept the offer from the Commonwealth, the following conditions will apply:

- Participation by schools and students is voluntary;
- All schools in a jurisdiction must be invited to apply for funding for a school chaplain;
- Chaplains may be from any faith;
- Chaplains are not permitted to proselytise and must respect, accept and be sensitive to other people's views, values and beliefs; and
- Chaplains must comply with State and Territory laws and policies in relation to child protection matters and meet minimum qualification requirements.

Participating schools will be eligible to receive up to \$20,000 in financial assistance per annum (\$24,000 for schools in remote areas). The total cost of the revised programme over the forward estimates is \$243.8 million.

The key change to the programme following the High Court decision is an administrative one – the National School Chaplaincy Programme will be funded by the Commonwealth but delivered by the States and Territories.

“The Government believes that school chaplains make a valuable contribution to the wellbeing of students and school communities,” Senator Ryan said.

“I encourage State and Territory Governments to accept the invitation of the Commonwealth to participate in the National School Chaplaincy Programme and give all schools the chance to apply for funding for a school chaplain.”

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