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# The Hon Peter Garrett AM MP

Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth

MC11-008994

The Right Rev'd J D Harrower OAM  
Bishop of Tasmania  
Anglican Diocese of Tasmania  
GPO Box 748  
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16 AUG 2011

Dear Bishop Harrower

Thank you for your letter of 26 July 2011 to the Prime Minister, the Hon Julia Gillard MP, concerning the National School Chaplaincy Program. As this program is within my portfolio responsibilities of School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, your correspondence was referred to me for consideration.

The National School Chaplaincy Program is one of the many successful initiatives that have been effective in supporting schools to provide for the wellbeing of school students. As you point out, the Australian Government is proceeding in its defence of the case that is currently before the High Court of Australia in the belief that the Program is consistent with the provisions of the Australian Constitution.

As you are aware, the Government confirmed our commitment to the National School Chaplaincy Program in the recent 2011–2012 Federal Budget, by allocating further funding of \$222 million for the Program. This will support up to an additional 1000 schools from 2012 and enable all schools currently funded under the Program to be extended to 2014. The additional 1000 places include schools in disadvantaged, rural and remote communities.

In line with the above announcement, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations is working to consolidate public input from the Program review which commenced in 2009, considering how the Program can best support schools in the future. The public consultation phase of this review closed on 18 March 2011. The outcome of the consultations will be released later in the year and made available at the Program website at [www.deewr.gov.au/schoolchaplaincy](http://www.deewr.gov.au/schoolchaplaincy).

Thank you for your support and taking time to write to the Prime Minister.

Yours sincerely

**Peter Garrett**