



The Secular Party of Australia
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Media Release

Secular Party Slams Gillard

The Secular Party of Australia has called on Prime Minister Gillard to immediately and fully withdraw her election offer to fund the National School Chaplaincy Program to the tune of \$222 million.

Dr. John Perkins, party President, said that this was a cheap election promise made to pander to the Christian vote at the expense of the rights of the child.

He said that a submission from the Australian Psychological Society raised grave concerns about the program and until a full review of the program had been conducted there seemed no point in further funding it.

Perkins went on to say that the funding of the program is a clear breach of the separation of church and state, that the program had been hijacked by evangelical Christians and further, that the chaplains were supporting students in a manner outside their qualifications and experience, that often resulted in boundary violations.

"The program needs to be cancelled and replaced with an appropriate system that allows schools to employ professional counsellors, psychologists and social workers. It is not fair on the children in our schools to be subjected to inappropriate advice from people who are trained in theology and not recognised mental health-care practices."

The Secular Party of Australia was set up to counter the effects of the religious lobby.

The party is fielding thirty one candidates across Australia in the Federal Election. Only the Secular Party stands in the way of the growing influence of religion in Australian politics.

Perkins finished by saying that "Rather than fostering sectarianism, Australia needs politics based on the universal values of compassion, freedom, honesty and justice."

Further Information:

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