20 October 2026

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP
Prime Minister

The Hon Michelle Rowland MP
Attorney-General

The Hon Jason Clare MP
Minister for Education

Dear Prime Minister, Attorney General and Minister for Education,

Re: Commitments to religious freedom and faith-based education

We write to raise concerns regarding Allegra Spender's *Sex Discrimination and Fair Work Amendment (Equality in Treatment in Religious Schools) Bill 2026*

The bill would remove significant existing religious freedom protections for faith-based schools and educational institutions, substantially restricting their ability to employ staff who share their faith, require new and existing staff to uphold their religious beliefs and standards of conduct, and maintain their distinctive religious character.

In light of this, we are grateful for the commitments that you and the Government made to faith communities ahead of the 2025 federal election. We particularly welcomed Labor's unequivocal commitment that "legal protections for people of faith will not go backwards under Labor", together with the commitment to maintain the right of religious schools and educational institutions to preference people of their faith in the employment of staff.

We also welcomed Labor's commitment that any changes in these areas must be progressed on a bipartisan basis with the Coalition, so that changes would be enduring, unifying and fit for purpose.

In light of Ms Spender's bill, we are grateful for the reassurances we have received this week from the Government that these commitments remain firmly in place. As this bill does not have bipartisan support, we understand it will not receive support from the Government.

Faith-based schools and educational institutions make a significant contribution to Australian education and to the communities they serve. Their ability to maintain their distinctive religious character, including through their staffing and employment practices, is fundamental to their mission and to the choices available to Australians.

We thank you for your continued engagement with faith communities and look forward to the Government's ongoing support for faith-based education, consistent with the commitments that you have made and reiterated.

We look forward to continuing to work constructively with your Government to ensure that religious freedom remains protected for all Australians.

Yours sincerely,

Rev Mark Edwards OAM
Religious Freedom Representative
Australian Christian Churches

Rt Rev Dr Michael Stead
Bishop of South Sydney
Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney

Rev Mark Wilson
National Ministries Director
Australian Baptist Ministries

Rev Dr Stuart Bonnington
Moderator General
Presbyterian Church of Australia

Kojo Akomeah
Director Public Affairs & Religious Liberty
Seventh-day Adventist Church

Mike Southon
Executive Director
Freedom for Faith