



Anglican Diocese of Armidale

TELEPHONE
(02) 6772 4491
FAX
(02) 6772 9261
E-MAIL
diocarm@northnet.com.au

DIOCESAN REGISTRY
116 Rusden Street
Armidale 2350

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SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMICS:

Inquiry into the Tax Laws Amendment (Public Benefit Test) Bill 2010

The Anglican Diocese of Armidale comprises 33 parishes in the New England and North West regions of NSW. We provide pastoral care and services to many thousands of people in regional centres and remote communities. These services are available to all people and include youth programs, courses for marriage, family and parenting, together with counselling services and ministry for weddings and funerals.

We are concerned that:

1. Levying the broad measures suggested under the Bill would create a compliance cost which will limit our ability to carry out these services to the community in an effective way. The Committee needs to be mindful that this would reduce the public benefit we are bringing to our region and, in so doing, create additional pressure on the Government's community and welfare services.
2. The changes would impose an unnecessary burden on a sector which has been operating under a presumption of public benefit, a principle which is long established in Australia, has proven to work well, and at low cost to all parties.
3. The impetus behind the Bill has arisen because of various concerns about the Church of Scientology. Given that these concerns relate to alleged criminal activity, then we suggest that these are best dealt with by the police, rather than via taxation law.

On the basis of the foregoing we recommend to the Committee that the Bill be rejected.

P R Brain
Bishop of Armidale