

19 October 2023

Anita Coles
Committee Secretary
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights

By email: human.rights@aph.gov.au

**Re: Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Framework
Response to a question on notice from Senator Thorpe**

Dear Anita,

As per your request, please find below the response of the National Catholic Education Commission to the question on notice from Senator Thorpe.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Tonkli
Director of Mission and Operations
National Catholic Education Commission

Question:

“The Catholic church is one of the country’s biggest non-government property owners, all of which sit on stolen land, is worth huge amounts of money which accrued while the church played a role in the genocide including the stolen generation. When school children are learning about human rights in schools, how will you ensure they are taught the full truth of this country’s historical and ongoing human rights abuses against First Nations Peoples, as well as their rights to reparations which forms part of the right to an effective remedy laid out in Article 2(3) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)?”

Response:

The National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) is the peak body for Catholic education in Australia and is responsible for the national coordination and representation of Catholic schools and education authorities.

Under the Australian Education Act, Catholic schools are required to teach the Australian Curriculum as endorsed and authorised by Education Ministers, or an equivalent curriculum recognised by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

As communities of faith inspired by the person and teaching of Jesus Christ, the activity of Catholic schools is also centered around the integration of faith, learning, life and service. This includes respecting the human dignity of every person, including our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The NCEC acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples of Australia as the traditional owners and custodians of the land of our educational communities. We respect their heritage and deep connection to country and are inspired and nurtured by their wisdom, spirituality and experience.

The NCEC is advised by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Network on issues of national interest related to the development, implementation and evaluation of strategies, programs and policies impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. Through listening to the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, we seek to actively work together for justice and reconciliation.