

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2006-2007 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 1
Output Group: 1.3

DEST Question No. E842_07

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question:

Schools Chaplaincy Program - Role of the chaplain

You say in the program guidelines (Code of conduct) that a chaplain:
"...will in good faith express views and articulate values consistent with his or her denomination or religious beliefs, [but] a chaplain should not take advantage of his or her privileged position to proselytise for that denomination or religious belief."

1. What does that mean in practice? If I am, say, an Anglican, can I explain to the students the teachings of my Church – for example that Jesus is the Son of God? Or is that "proselytising"? You don't define "proselytising" in your guidelines' glossary, do you? What is "proselytising"?
2. Can you provide examples of what a chaplain under this program can say to students about religion?
3. How do I assist students to "explore their spirituality" without talking about religion? Can this be done in a vacuum, or would such conversations always take place in practice within the context of a particular faith?

Answer:

Schools Chaplaincy Program – Role of the Chaplain

1. The Programme Guidelines do not prevent chaplains under this Programme from providing general religious advice. The definition of "proselytising" is taken from The Australian Concise Oxford Dictionary Fourth Edition (2004, p1130) which is to "convert (a person or people) from one belief etc to another."
2. The Programme Guidelines do not provide specific examples of what a chaplain under this Programme can say to students about religion.
3. The Programme Guidelines do not prescribe how spirituality or religion should be discussed, apart from prohibiting proselytising.