



Premier of Queensland
Minister for Trade

For reply please quote: CAPS/AT – TF/20/30661 – DOC/20/241195

8 DEC 2020

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

1 William Street Brisbane
PO Box 15185 City East
Queensland 4002 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3719 7000
Email ThePremier@premiers.qld.gov.au
Website www.thepremier.qld.gov.au

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to Petition 3380-20 about State Government assistance to religious organisations, which was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 9 September 2020.

As the Government was in caretaker mode at the time a response to the petition was due for tabling, I was unable to provide you with a substantive response but provided an interim response under Standing Order 125(6)(a) which was tabled on 8 October 2020.

I am now able to provide you with the following final response to Petition 3380-20 under Standing Order 125(6)(b).

State Government assistance, exemptions, subsidies or funding is provided to organisations solely on the merit of each case before the government for consideration. The religious views of an organisation are not sought or taken into consideration in making such decisions.

The petitioners may be interested to know that the *Human Rights Act 2019* (the Act), which my Government introduced into the Parliament, commenced in full in Queensland on 1 January 2020.

The Act protects 23 human rights which public entities must uphold when they make decisions, create laws, set policies and provide services.

Two of these rights are the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief (section 20 of the Act) and the cultural rights of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples (section 28 of the Act).

My Government believes in the right of every person to have the freedom to adopt a religion or belief of the person's choice, and to not be coerced or restrained in a way that limits the person's freedom to have or adopt that religion or belief.

Equally, my Government believes that Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples hold distinct cultural rights as the first Australians, and must not be denied the right to live life as an Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander person who is free to practise their culture.

Indeed, my Government has a deep respect for First Nations culture. This is also made clear by our release of the *Treaty Statement of Commitment and response to recommendations of the Eminent Panel* in August 2020. This document outlines the Queensland Government's response to the recommendations made by the Eminent Panel – a panel established to provide advice to the Queensland Government and guide public consultation on what a Treaty would mean for Queensland.

The Queensland Government accepts or accepts in-principle the Eminent Panel recommendations and is committed to a treaty-making process with First Nations peoples. You can find out more information by visiting the Department of Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships website at www.datsip.qld.gov.au and click on (1) 'Programs & initiatives', (2) 'Tracks to Treaty', (3) 'Path to Treaty' and then (4) 'statement of commitment and response'.

As outlined earlier, my Government respects all of the human rights outlined in the Act, as part of our decision-making processes.

I trust this information is of assistance to the petitioners.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Annastacia', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

**ANNASTACIA PALASZCZUK MP
PREMIER OF QUEENSLAND
MINISTER FOR TRADE**