



Australian Skeptics Inc.

11th June 2010

**Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Economics: Inquiry into the
Tax Laws Amendment (Public Benefit Test) Bill 2010**

The Australian Skeptics promote the proper and sensible investigation of paranormal and pseudo-scientific claims. This submission is from Australian Skeptics Inc. in New South Wales.

We support the move to introduce a public benefit test for religious and charitable institutions. There should not be a general presumption that religious institutions and other charities act for the public benefit.

When we scrutinise the groups that call themselves 'religions' we find a mixed bag extending from worthy institutions to exploitative cults.

There is compelling evidence of psychological manipulation and abuse carried out by destructive cultic religious groups within Australia.

The Church of Scientology is a prominent target of such allegations, but they extend to other religious and non-religious groups. It would be wrong to assume that the proposed test targets only Scientology; rather, the purpose of the test is to protect tax payers from subsidising any organisation that does not use its funds to provide a benefit to the public.

Legitimate religious institutions and other charities should not fear or avoid the opportunity for greater transparency and accountability. It is vital these groups are open, professional and observe high ethical standards.

Exploitative groups which provide no public benefit should have their charity status revoked.

Sincerely,

Eran Segev -President
Australian Skeptics Inc.

Scientific investigations of pseudoscientific and paranormal claims

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