



**THE HON JULIA GILLARD MP**  
**DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER**

Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

17 JUN 2010

Mrs Julia Irwin MP  
Member for Fowler  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

*JG*  
Dear Mrs Irwin

Thank you for your letter of 1 June 2010, on behalf of the Standing Committee on Petitions, concerning a petition regarding the place of biblical truth in our education systems. In this context, biblical truth stands for religious beliefs about the origin of life known as intelligent creation or intelligent design.

The Australian Academy of Science, which is the pre-eminent body representing scientists in Australia, considers that, whilst evolutionary theory, like any other scientific idea, is subject to empirical testing, creationist accounts of the origin of life are not scientific ideas because they cannot be tested empirically. State and territory education authorities, which have primary responsibility for education in their jurisdictions, agree with the position of the Australian Academy of Science. They generally stipulate that creationism or intelligent design ought not be taught to students as science. That is also the position adopted by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) which, on behalf of all of Australia's education ministers, is preparing Australia's first national curriculum, including for science.

The approved curricula currently in use in each state and territory are intended to ensure that students educated in a wide range of schools established with quite different philosophical bases acquire the necessary knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes for their participation in contemporary Australian society.

Decisions about the teaching of religion and religious beliefs in schools are made by individual state and territory government and non-government education authorities. The petitioners may wish to raise their concerns about the place of biblical truth in Australian schools with those authorities. Contact details for those authorities can be found at [www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Pages/OrgContacts.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling/Pages/OrgContacts.aspx).

*JG*  
Yours sincerely

*JG*  
**Julia Gillard**  
**Minister for Education**