

**TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF  
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

This petition of certain citizens of Australia draws to the attention of the House:

The great value provided by the National School Chaplaincy Program, which was built on the excellent history of school chaplaincy in Australia, and was introduced by the former Coalition Government in 2007/2008 with a commitment of \$165 million for its first three years. The program offers pastoral care and spiritual guidance to all. Chaplains have religious beliefs which underpin their work. These beliefs are representative of the school communities the chaplains work in and they do not hinder chaplains from working with those of other beliefs or none. It operates in 1915 schools and enjoys strong support among principals, schools and in the community generally. The Rudd Government (as at October 2009) has refused to confirm its ongoing support and funding for the program, despite the program's social benefits, sound administration and strong community support.

We therefore ask the House to:

Renew and extend funding for the National School Chaplaincy Program in its current form.