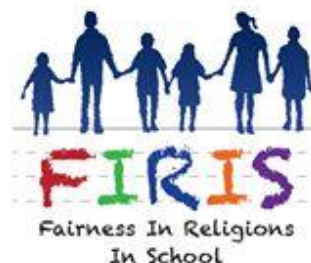


The Hon. Rob Stokes, MP
52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000



Dear Mr Stokes

Concerns regarding approval processes to provide Special Religious Education in NSW Government schools

Fairness in Religions in School (FIRIS) is writing to express concerns regarding the ongoing approval granted by your office and the Department of Education (the Department) to Liberty Baptist Church to be a provider of Special Religious Education (SRE) in NSW Government schools.

Liberty Baptist Church is currently listed under 'Independent Baptist Churches' in the Department's *Special religious education providers* list (see **Appendix 1.1**). According to the earliest list of approved SRE providers in FIRIS' records Liberty Baptist Church was approved to provide SRE on or before 20 April 2012. The pastor at Liberty Baptist Church is Mr Keith Piper.

FIRIS would like to bring to your attention the website of the Liberty Baptist Church hyperlinked in the Department's *Special religious education providers* list (see **Appendix 1.2**), particularly:

- the document *7 Bible truths disproving Islam* in which Mr Keith Piper writes that Allah "commands murder of unbelievers", that "Allah hates Jews", "hates Christians", and that the Quran makes "war a divine law" and that Islam seeks to take the world by violence, terror, Jihad (see **Appendix 1.2.1**).
- the document *4 Questions for Muslims* in which Mr Piper writes that Allah is a "murderer", that Allah permits murderers to build mosques, and that Mohammad raised murder and war to the status of divine law (see **Appendix 1.2.2**).
- the link (see **Appendix 1.2.3**) to the *Religion of Peace* website (see **Appendix 1.2.4**), which publishes negative stories about Islam and Muslims, including the news items 'Atrocity of the Week', 'Jihad Report', and 'Ramadan Bombathon 2017'.

FIRIS would also like you to be aware of the political activities of Mr Keith Piper:

- On 28 May 2017 Mr Piper spoke at the Party for Freedom protest against the development application for an Islamic school in Penrith (see **Appendix 3.1**)
- On 9 October 2015 Mr Piper took part in a protest at Parramatta Mosque (see **Appendix 3.2**) and it was reported that he was distributing leaflets with highlighted passages from the Quran that call for violence against non-Muslims. He was reported as stating: "I'm against the Quran, which poisons normal peoples' brains and turns them into terrorists..."

- Mr Piper was also the Christian Democratic Party candidate for the federal state of Parramatta in the federal election of 2016. Mr Piper’s wife, Mrs Tania Piper, reportedly has taught SRE in NSW Government schools and was a Christian Democrat Party candidate in the 2003 New South Wales Legislative Assembly election for Baulkham Hills.

FIRIS would also like to bring to your attention the following YouTube clips:

- *Major errors in the Quran* (see **Appendix 1.2.5**) in which Mr Piper states:

The Quran is a false, fake, lying book. Mohammad is a false, fake, lying prophet. Allah is a false, fake lying God. Islam is a false, fake lying religion and you can throw Islam and the Quran in the rubbish tin of history. (3:41)

- *Lessons from Paris and Brussels Terror Massacre (Lesson11)* (see **Appendix 2**) in which Mr Piper:
 - calls for the destruction of the “infrastructure of Quranic indoctrination”, such as mosques, Muslim schools “that brainwash the little kids into terrorist activity”, the closing-down of Muslim websites, Muslim publishing houses and Muslim bookshops, which he describes as “the conveyor belts to terrorism.” (1:39)
 - states that Islam is culturally incompatible with Western Christian values and peace (28:10), that Islam and democracy cannot peacefully co-exist (30:30), and that it is a “war of two deities...of two books (5.19)...of two cultures (7:30)...of two lifestyles.” (8:21)
 - refers to the Quran as a “virus” (12:16) and as “the evil, rotten, root cause of every Islamic terrorist action in the whole world” (9:20) and describes Islamism as a “cancer” that must be destroyed. (8:40)

FIRIS is particularly concerned at the following statement made by Mr Piper:

We need to have convictions of our values and I fear it is not being taught in the school system. A lot of schools they teach children how to become Sodomites rather than teaching them to appreciate our Western values which our freedom is all based on, Bible, Biblical free Western values...and they want to turn our children into Sodomites....I hate it... (3.40)

Mr Piper’s statements highlight risk in that representatives of Liberty Baptist Church would promote such messages to NSW Government school students while accessing such students as SRE instructors or as volunteers granted access by principals to NSW Government schools students outside of the time allocated to SRE, for example, on the playground and at school camps.

FIRIS is concerned that the current provisions for SRE in the *NSW Education Act 1990* greatly increase this risk by enabling organisations such as Liberty Baptist Church to authorise their own curricula over which your office has no control or authority as long as approval to provide SRE in NSW Government schools is granted to such religious organisations.

In addition, FIRIS maintains that the risk is further increased by the lack of a policy or procedural direction that a Department of Education employed teacher must remain in the SRE classroom while SRE is being held.

Furthermore, given that the Department of Education enables religious organisations, such as Liberty Baptist Church, “to inform the students who participate in that SRE class...of related extra-curricular activities including local church groups” (DOC16/670509), FIRIS is concerned that NSW Government schools are being used to advance the causes of religious organisations which promote ideological messages and engage in activities which may be

deemed by a rational member of the NSW public to be contrary to the values of public education and the principles of multiculturalism.

The *National framework for values education in Australian schools* (see **Appendix 4.1**) includes as one of its nine core values:

Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion: Be aware of others and their cultures, accept diversity within a democratic society, being included and including others. (p. 4)

The Department's *Values in NSW public schools* policy (see **Appendix 4.2**) identifies core values which "represent the aspirations and beliefs of the Australian community as a whole, including its concern for equity, excellence and the promotion of a caring, civil and just society." The policy also recognises the importance of values in relation to the achievement of the educational goals and outcomes of public schooling, including "appreciating Australia's history and multicultural society" and "care and respect for families and communities." The policy states that NSW public schools will contribute to a society that "develops social cohesion" and "rejects violence, harassment and negative forms of discrimination."

The principles of multiculturalism outlined in the *Multicultural NSW Act 2000* (see **Appendix 4.3**) include:

...the people of New South Wales are of different linguistic, religious and ancestral backgrounds who, either individually or in community with other members of their respective groups, are free to profess, practise and maintain their own linguistic, religious and ancestral heritage [Section 3(1)(c)]

The Department's *Multicultural Plan 2016-2018* (see **Appendix 4.4**) states that its aim is "to build a socially cohesive and civil society that respects and appreciates cultural, linguistic and religious diversity." (p. 2) The plan also includes the target:

Culturally inclusive school and teaching practices enhance student wellbeing and learning outcomes and promote intercultural understanding and positive community relations. (p. 5)

The Department's *Multicultural education policy* (see **Appendix 4.5**) states that "schools provide teaching and learning programs that develop intercultural understanding" and "promote positive relationships". The policy also states that:

Schools ensure inclusive teaching practices which recognise and respect the cultural, linguistic and religious backgrounds of all students and promote an open and tolerant attitude towards cultural diversity, different perspectives and world views.

However, FIRIS questions the ability of the Department to guarantee fulfilling the abovementioned target and policy requirements while SRE is being held, given that the current provisions for SRE in the NSW Education Act 1990 do not provide your office or the Department with authority to control the teaching practices of SRE providers and their instructors, such as Liberty Baptist Church.

In addition, FIRIS maintains that the ongoing approval to grant organisations such as Liberty Baptist Church access to NSW Government school students is contrary to the fundamental principles of the Department's *Wellbeing Framework* (see **Appendix 4.6**). The Framework establishes the commitment that NSW Government school students "will experience a sense of connection, inclusion, respect for individuality and difference." (p. 9) and that:

Teaching and learning occurs in environments that celebrate difference and diversity and recognise, respect and respond to identity and cultural background. (p. 9)

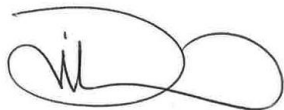
FIRIS believes that ongoing access to NSW Government school students by organisations that are working towards removing the ability of some NSW Government school students to 'connect' with their cultural, religious, or spiritual backgrounds is counterproductive to creating

an environment in which “students experience a sense of belonging and connectedness that respects diversity and identity.” (p. 6)

In consideration of all of the above information, FIRIS maintains that the current provisions related to SRE in the *NSW Education Act 1990* are no longer appropriate in the context of the abovementioned departmental plans, frameworks, policies and procedures. FIRIS is concerned that that the Department of Education is failing to comply with the *Multicultural NSW Act 2000* by failing to have in place robust monitoring system aimed at preventing access to NSW Government school students by organisations which do not promote a diverse, cohesive and harmonious multicultural society with mutual respect for and understanding of cultural diversity.

FIRIS looks forward to your response

Yours sincerely,



Darrin Morgan
on behalf of FIRIS

17 July 2017

Appendix 1 – References

1.1 List of Special Religious Education providers – dated 19.06.2017

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/curriculum/religion-and-ethics/approved-sre-providers> - accessed 11.07.2017

1.2 *Liberty Baptist Church* website

<http://www.libertybaptistchurch.org.au/> - accessed 14.07.2017

1.2.1 *7 Bible truths disproving Islam*

https://www.libertybaptistchurch.org.au/muslims/7_bible_truths.pdf - accessed 11.07.2017

1.2.2 *4 Questions for Muslims*

https://www.libertybaptistchurch.org.au/muslims/4_questions.pdf - accessed 11.07.2017

1.2.3 'Links to Christian websites you may find useful'

<http://www.libertybaptistchurch.org.au/links.html> - accessed 14.07.2017

1.2.4 *Religion of Peace* website

<http://www.thereligionofpeace.com/> - accessed 14.07.2017

1.2.5 *Major errors in the Quran* YouTube video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9fpk5QuiPc> - accessed 11.07.2017

Appendix 2 – Lessons from Paris and Brussels Terror Massacre (Lesson 11)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hgvkf - rxM> - accessed 11.07.2017

This clip was published on 7 April 2016. It is identified on YouTube as a recording of Mr Piper's presentation 'Incompatibility of Islam & Christian / Western values' at the Australian Christian Nation Association (ACNA) Forum.

ACNA (<http://acna-aus.com/>) is an organisation formed in 2005 because of the perceived threat of Islamisation in Australia. The organisation maintains that the same threat is "advancing to the detriment of our nation because we have not upheld Christianity as our founding character".

During Mr Piper's presentation he lists the following 'barbaric Islamic practices':

- Slavery
- Beheading
- Terrorism
- Wife beating
- Child marriage
- Concubines, multiple wives and temporary marriage
- Rape of non-Muslim women
- Female genital mutilation
- Whipping fornicators
- Lying and abrogation from oath
- Paedophilia
- Burka, hijab, niqab
- Crucifixion
- Cutting off hands and feet
- Inequality of men and women in law, inequality of Muslims and non-Muslims
- Honour killing
- Stoning adulterers
- Jihad and terrorism
- Call to prayer over loudspeakers at 05:30
- Anti-Bible
- Anti-Christ
- Anti-music
- Aim of destroying our culture and replacing it with Sharia law
- Brainwashing of young people with jihad and Quran's brutality

The following images are included in the YouTube clip *Lessons from Paris and Brussels Terror Massacre (Lesson 11)*



Appendix 3

3.1 Pastor Keith Piper speaking at the Party for Freedom protest against the development application for an Islamic school in Penrith (28 May 2017)



"Sydney, Australia. 28 May 2017. Pictured: Pastor Keith Piper speaks at the rally. Party for Freedom organised a protest in Penrith to the west of Sydney calling on the "treasonous Penrith Council, it's Mayor John Thain and Councillors" to vote against the development application for an Islamic school to be built in the heart of Penrith. Counter protesters believed to be from a group calling themselves 'Antifa' or 'anti-fascists' also turned up. Credit: Richard Milnes/Alamy Live News"

<http://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-sydney-australia-28-may-2017-pictured-pastor-keith-piper-speaks-at-142747446.html> - accessed 14.06.2017

3.2 Prayers and Protests at Australia's Most Controversial Mosque

Jed Smith – 13 October 2015

https://www.vice.com/en_au/article/exqgg4/prayers-and-protests-at-the-parramatta-mosque - accessed 14.07.2017

Article regarding protest outside Parramatta Mosque on 9 October 2015

"One of these anti-Islam protestors is Keith Piper, a pastor from the nearby Liberty Baptist Church in Carlingford. He walks around the perimeter distributing leaflets with highlighted passages from the Quran that instruct violence against non-Muslims.

"I'm against the Quran, which poisons normal peoples' brains and turns them into terrorists," he tells me. "(Jabar) attended the mosque and the mosque has told him he has to kill infidels in order to get into paradise."



Meanwhile, anti-Islam protesters and anti-racism protesters faced off outside

https://www.vice.com/en_au/article/prayers-and-protests-at-the-parramatta-mosque

Appendix 4

4.1 *National framework for values education in Australian schools*

http://www.curriculum.edu.au/verve/_resources/framework_pdf_version_for_the_web.pdf - accessed 14.07.2017

4.2 *Values in NSW public schools policy*

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/values-in-nsw-public-schools> - accessed 14.07.2017

4.3 *Multicultural NSW Act 2000*

<http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/inforce/1149872b-2d24-4592-a299-ddf65dd8c048/2000-77.pdf> - accessed 16.07.2017

4.4 *Multicultural Plan 2016-2018*

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/media/schools-operation/Multicultural-Plan-2016-18.pdf> - accessed 16.07.2017

4.5 *Multicultural education policy*

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/multicultural-education-policy> - accessed 15.07.2017

4.6 *The wellbeing framework for schools*

https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/wellbeing/about/16531_Wellbeing-Framework-for-schools_Accessible.pdf - accessed 15.07.2017