



Ms Lara Wood
CEO
Fairness in Religions in Schools
religionsinschool@gmail.com

RML15/5642

Dear Ms Wood

I write in response to your emails of 20 October 2015 and 3 December 2015, to the Hon Adrian Piccoli MP, Minister for Education, regarding Special Religious Education (SRE) in NSW Government schools. The Minister asked that I reply on his behalf.

Section 32 of the Education Act 1990 states, *the religious education to be given is in every case to be the religious education authorised by the religious body to which the member of the clergy or other religious teacher belongs.*

The Minister for Education has received advice from the Crown Solicitor which states the Minister does not have the power to control the content of SRE under the current provisions of the Education Act. The approach of the Department is consistent with advice received from the Crown Solicitor on the scope of the Minister's powers in respect to content approval.

The Department sent an email on 6 May 2015 to all approved providers of SRE, reminding them that only approved, age-appropriate curriculum is to be used. The Department requires all approved providers to return an Annual Assurance before the beginning of school for 2016 assuring that the curriculum is taught with sensitivity and in an age appropriate manner.

As you are aware, the Department has engaged ARTD Consultants to undertake a review of the implementation of SRE and Special Education in Ethics (SEE) in NSW Government schools. The review is underway and will inform ongoing improvement of SRE and SEE for the Department and providers.

The Department continues to work closely with approved providers and members of the SRE Consultative Committee to support the successful delivery of sensitive and age-appropriate SRE curriculum in NSW Government schools.

Yours sincerely

Nell Lynes
R/Director, Early Learning and Primary Education
6 January 2016