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Ms Allyson Smith
President – Tasmania Branch
Australian Association of Social Workers
Room 15, Level 1 McDougall Building
BATTERY POINT TAS 7004

27 NOV 2014

Dear Ms Smith

Thank you for your letter of 2 October 2014 regarding the inclusion of secular workers within the National School Chaplaincy Programme. I apologise for the delay in responding.

In my discussions with the Australian Government, I made it clear that secular welfare workers should also be included in this program. Unfortunately, the Australian Government would not reinstate on this point, and we had no choice but to either accept the non-secular nature of the programme or deny all schools access to the chaplaincy programme.

School communities around the State have come to value chaplains for their support and pastoral care, and their work alongside a range of professionals, including social workers, psychologists and speech and language pathologists.

I am confident that the programme will be managed appropriately in Tasmania. All chaplains in Tasmanian Government schools must follow the *Guidelines for Chaplains in State Schools and Colleges in Tasmania*, which is currently undergoing a review to ensure appropriate management continues into the future.

Thank you again for writing to me on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Rockliff MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education and Training