**AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**

**PRESS RELEASE 540#**

[**CHURCH AND STATE PETITION**](http://www.concordatwatch.eu/kb-38005.834) **REFERRED TO ATTORNEY-GENERAL**

**Rationalist Assoc NSW press release 2014-02-07**

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MEDIA RELEASE
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The organiser of a petition to the federal government requesting the House of Representatives legislate for constitutional separation of church and state in Australia, Dr Max Wallace, has been informed that the petition has been accepted and now appears in Hansard under the title ‘National Religion.’

A letter from the Standing Committee on Petitions says the petition, which was signed by 370 citizens including Lyn Allison, the former leader of the Australian Democrats and Barry Jones, the former president of the Labor Party, has been referred to the Attorney-General for his response.

Max Wallace said he was looking forward to receiving a response from the Attorney-General, Mr George Brandis.

“The petition was entered into Hansard on 13 December 2013. We understand the new government will take some time to respond. We look forward to Mr Brandis either (a) arguing separation of church and state already exists in Australia when three High Court judges have said it does not or (b) accepting that our criticism is accurate and what steps the government will take to legislate for separation.”

Max Wallace said it is very important for citizens to also understand that all the Australian states have their own constitutions and none of those constitutions separates church and state.

“The clear implication is that Australia is less democratic and more theocratic than is commonly understood. This matters a great deal because any government is free to involve itself in religious matters or fund religion as it sees fit at both levels of government.”

Max Wallace pointed out the petition also states that alternatives to religion, such as atheism, should be excluded from any government support.

“The whole point of the petition is that government should opt out of the belief business and recognise the words of Australia’s first prime minister, Edmund Barton, in 1901, that “the whole mode of government, the whole province of the State is secular”.

Max Wallace
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