

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

PRESS RELEASE 568#

Questions for PM Abbott on his comment concerning separation of church and state

PM Tony Abbott says he is committed to separation of church and state. In press release from the Rationalist Association of NSW his commitment is questioned.

THE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION OF NSW INC.

Established

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ABN

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MEDIA RELEASE

20 September 2014 International Freethought Day

QUESTIONS FOR PRIME MINISTER ABBOTT CONCERNING HIS COMMENT ON SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

On ABC's AM radio program on 15 September 2014, Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, said:

I would like to see over time an understanding by all people, and cultures, and religions, that there should be a separation of church and state, that there is a sense of rendering unto Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.

- Prime Minister, on 12 December, 2013 a petition signed by 370 citizens requesting the House of Representatives to legislate for constitutional separation of church and state was entered into Hansard. The Attorney-General, George Brandis, was evasive in his response to the petition. He has not responded to a faxed letter seeking clarification. Given your stated commitment to separation of church and state, will you ask the Attorney-General to respond?
- Prime Minister, why is the Government supporting religious chaplains in public schools to a cost now rising to approximately \$700M? If you support separation of church and state, why isn't this money going to qualified counsellors?

- Prime Minister, will you question the Office of the Governor-General that Christian verses to the National Anthem may be sung in churches? If no, would you support Islamic verses to the Anthem being sung in mosques? [UNDERMINING AUSTRALIA'S SECULAR NATIONAL ANTHEM](#)
- Prime Minister, why, in 2002, did you refer favourably to 13 of the 42 front benchers being Catholic, using the term 'Catholicisation' to describe the statistic? <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2002/08/15/1029113981482.html>
- Prime Minister, if you support separation of church and state, why did you concur with the government, of which you were a part, appointing an Anglican archbishop as Governor-General in 2003?
- Prime Minister, if you support separation of church and state, why did you concur with the federal government giving more than \$20M to the Catholic Church for the Pope's World Youth Day in Sydney in 2008?
- Prime Minister, is your opposition to gay marriage based on your Catholic belief?
- Prime Minister, if you support separation of church and state, why do you continue to believe Australia should remain a constitutional monarchy with the face of the Supreme Governor of the Church of England in England, the Queen, on our currency? Why are there Christian prayers in parliament? Why are there Christian saints' crosses in the Australian flag?
- Prime Minister, was your off-the-cuff remark on ABC radio, cited above, really only meant for Islamic nations, not those whose history is partly Christian? Is it true you prefer secular government abroad and soft theocracy at home?

Meg Wallace PhD
president

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ON 3CR

855 ON THE AM DIAL: 12.00 NOON SATURDAYS