

12th June 2014

Dear Friends

Please see the following statement and thank you for the overwhelming support on these matters, Evonne

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ACCESS ministries - Statement of facts
Recent media coverage regarding ACCESS ministries has presented information that is simply untrue.

ACCESS ministries (AM) thanks the numerous individuals and organisations that have contacted us seeking clarification and in response, the truth is provided below:

Claim: *ACCESS ministries enters schools without permission*

Fact: Every accredited AM volunteer has received Departmental approval to deliver our SRI program. No volunteer participates in AM SRI without approval or permission.

Claim: *ACCESS ministries' volunteers proselytise during Special Religious Instruction (SRI Classes)*

Fact: AM strictly forbids proselytising within schools and all our SRI teachers are clearly instructed that this is the case. All SRI classes must be conducted with a teacher from the school present.

A review commissioned by the then Commonwealth Minister, Peter Garrett, and another conducted by HLB Mann Judd for the State Education Department in 2011, found no evidence of proselytising.

Claim: *ACCESS ministries receives \$21 Million of Government funding for SRI*

Fact: State Government funding for SRI runs from July to June of each year. For the 13/14 financial year, \$135,000 was received to be used in providing SRI in Victorian Government Schools.

AM receives no money for SRI from the Federal Government.

Claim: *ACCESS ministries' SRI volunteers receive 6 to 8 hours of training*

Fact: AM Instructors receive two days initial accreditation training, followed by one term of supervised classroom instruction. They also participate in ongoing professional development, in order to retain their accreditation and enhance their teaching and engagement skills.

Claim: *ACCESS ministries accredited 'OAC'*

Fact: AM does not accredit OAC

Claim: *ACCESS ministries is a deeply dishonest organisation*

Fact: We comply with all Department regulations and policies as applicable to the delivery of SRI. Parents freely choose to have their children participate in the program. Our website provides information and sample curriculum for parents to make an informed choice.

Around 90,000 children in nearly 800 schools used the ACCESS ministries CRE program in 2013. Parents make this choice for their children and we know that the program is highly valued by parents and schools across Victoria.

We have the highest respect for the schools and communities within which we serve and we honour the privilege through a commitment to the values of honesty, generosity and caring.