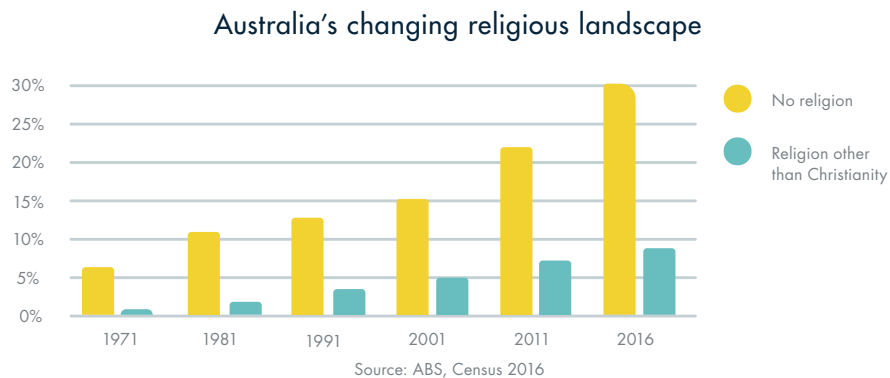
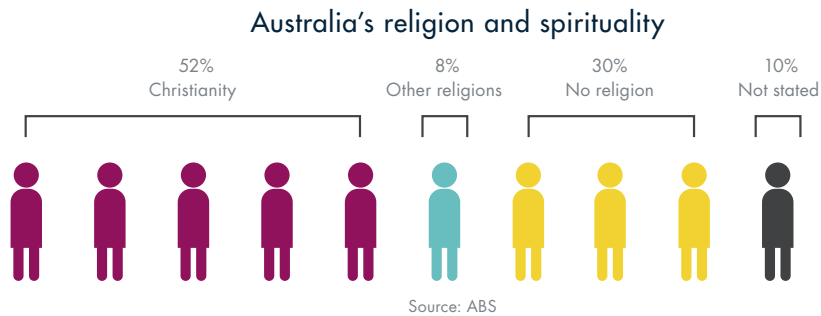


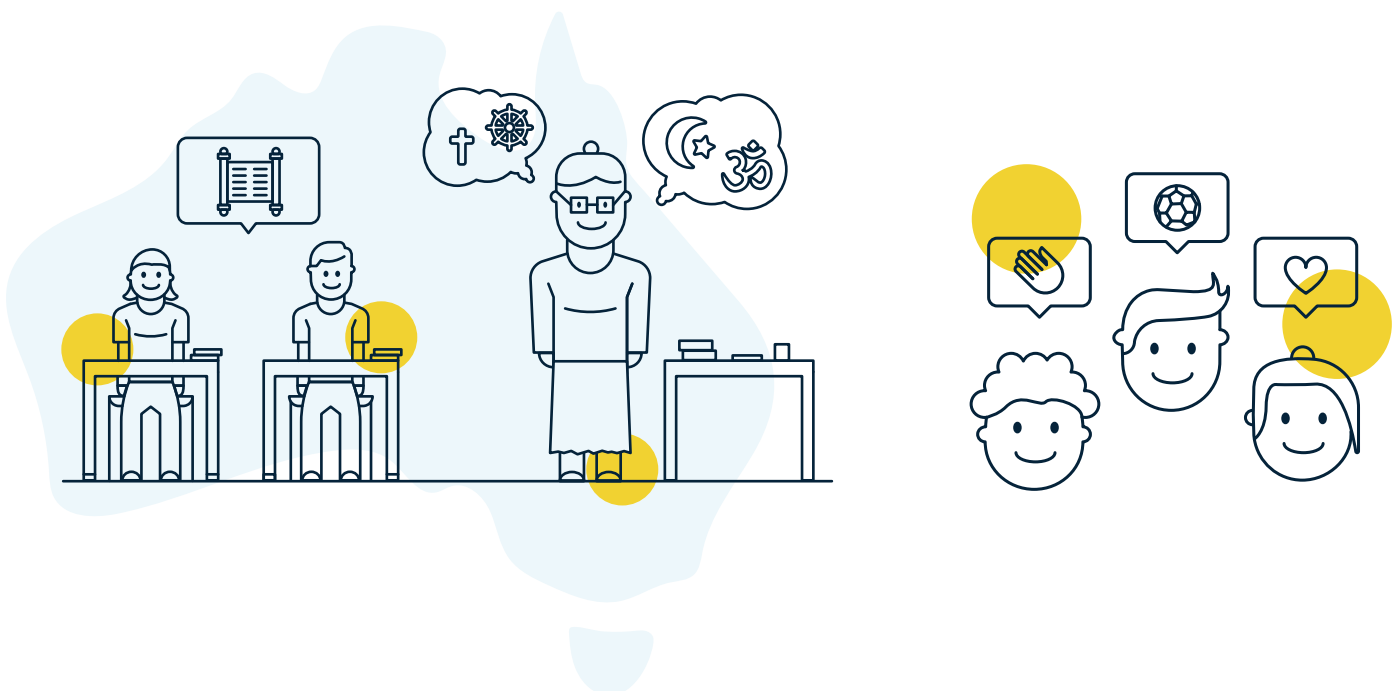
Special Religious Education and its value to contemporary society

SRE is an important part of the rich tapestry of contemporary Australian society

Religion is an important marker of our changing cultural landscape. The proportion of Australians identifying with a spiritual or religious belief is declining, however, most Australians still identify with a religion or spiritual belief. Christianity remains the largest religion although religious diversity is increasing.



Faith and belief continue to be an integral part of Australian society and Special Religious Education (SRE) provides an important opportunity to integrate religious education into the Australian educational system.

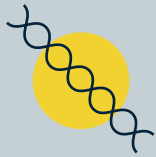


Special Religious Education and its value to contemporary society

SRE provides key benefits including:



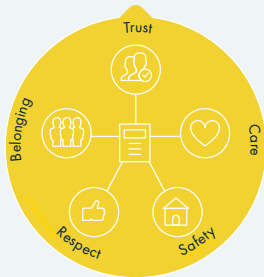
An effective **values education** that empowers student decision making, fosters student action and assigns real student responsibility



Strengthening the multicultural fabric of Australian schools



Creating **safe places** for students to explore deeper questions of faith and belief



Important **psychological benefits** to students' mental health and wellbeing

Studies link positive health and wellbeing outcomes with:



Belief in a higher spiritual being, public and private prayer, meditation



Expressing gratitude



Concepts of giving and generosity to others



Values education

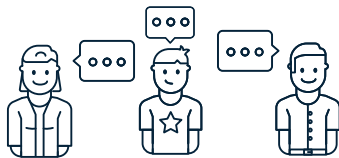
"Consistent with prior literature, our results suggest associations of frequent religious participation in adolescence with greater subsequent psychological well-being, character strengths, and lower risks of mental illness and several health behaviours."

Chan and VanderWeele, Harvard University, American Journal of Epidemiology, September 2018

Bringing the system into the 21st century

SRE facilitators need to be trained in the best practice approaches to religious education. The following pedagogic concepts are key to providing best SRE practice in the future

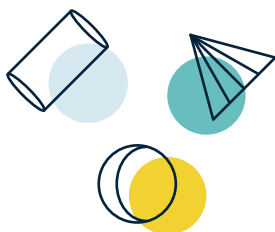
Socialisation



Constructivist teaching approach



Experiential learning



Reflective teaching and learning



Students need to be provided with the opportunity to reflect on their values and beliefs, and situations where their own values might conflict.