



Meredith Doig <meredithdoig@gmail.com>

Strengthening Victoria's Multiculturalism by introducing other religions' prayers and non-religious reflections

President RSA <president@rationalist.com.au>

17 April 2015 at 14:38

To: robin.scott@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Minister,

The Rationalist Society of Australia has for many years called for a change to the tradition of reciting the Lord's Prayer at each sitting of parliament.

While the vast majority of Australians used to identify as Christian - some 90% in the 1950s - this is no longer the case. Now, only about 60% identify as Christian, with about 32% reporting no religion or not stating a religion and about 7% affiliating with other religions. Clearly the Australia of the 21st century is not the same as the Australia of Federation.

It is no longer fair nor appropriate for the prayer of a single religious tradition to dominate the formal proceedings of the people's parliament.

Victoria's fine example of strong and effective multiculturalism could be strengthened by introducing the prayers of other religions and non-religious reflections in addition to the Lord's Prayer. I attach an example of what could be used by way of a non-religious reflection.

As Minister for Multicultural Affairs, will you support this move?

Sincerely,

Dr Meredith Doig
President
Rationalist Society of Australia
Mob: [0403 246 544](tel:0403246544)
Skype: meredith.doig

About the Rationalist Society of Australia Inc.

The RSA is the oldest freethought group in Australia, promoting reason since 1906. Members and supporters hold that all significant beliefs and actions should be based on reason and evidence, that the natural world is the only world there is, and that answers to the key questions of human existence are to be found only in that natural world. We seek to stimulate freedom of thought, support a secular and ethical system of education, promote the fullest possible use of science for human welfare, and encourage interest in science, criticism and philosophy as connected factors in a progressive human culture.



Alternative to prayers before Parliament.docx
31K



Office of the Minister for Finance
Office of the Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Level 5, 1 Macarthur Street
East Melbourne Victoria 3002
Telephone: 03 9651 1044
Facsimile: 03 9651 1088
DX 210759

Meredith Doig
President
Rationalist Society of Australia
Via president@rationalist.com.au

22 APR 2015

Dear Ms Doig

**STRENGTHENING VICTORIA'S MULTICULTURALISM BY INTRODUCING OTHER RELIGIONS'
PRAYERS AND NON-RELIGIOUS REFLECTIONS**

Thank you for your correspondence dated 17 April 2015 regarding the reciting of the Lord's Prayer at each sitting of parliament.

As parliamentary business is the responsibility of the Legislative Council and Assembly Clerks, I have forwarded your correspondence to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly Mr Ray Purdey and the Acting Clerk of the Legislative Council Mr Andrew Young for their consideration and appropriate action.

Yours faithfully



Steve Palmer
Chief of Staff



Meredith Doig <meredithdoig@gmail.com>

Fw: Referral from the Office of the Minister for Finance and Multicultural Affairs

1 message

ray.purdey@parliament.vic.gov.au <ray.purdey@parliament.vic.gov.au>
To: meredithdoig@gmail.com

23 April 2015 at 08:53

Dear Dr Doig,

The Minister for Finance has forwarded your email regarding the Lord's Prayer to me for a response.

The beginning of each sitting of the Legislative Assembly is preceded by the reciting of the Lord's Prayer. This has its origins in a motion passed by the House in 1928 to that effect. It is for the House to determine whether or not this practice should be changed.

Regards,

Ray Purdey**Clerk of the Legislative Assembly & Clerk of the Parliaments****Phone:** (03) 9651 8550 | **Fax:** (03) 9650 4279**Business Address:** Legislative Assembly | Parliament House | Spring Street | Melbourne 3002

--- Forwarded by Ray Purdey/ParlOfficer/PARL on 23/04/2015 08:41 AM ---

From: Minister Scotts Office/DTF/VICGOV/AU@DTF
To: Ray Purdey/ParlOfficer/PARL@PARL, Andrew Young/ParlOfficer/PARL@PARL
Date: 22/04/2015 04:57 PM
Subject: Referral from the Office of the Minister for Finance and Multicultural Affairs
Sent by: Application Administrator@DTF

Dear Ray and Andrew,

Please find attached correspondence addressed to the Minister for Multicultural Affairs and referred to your office for response.

Please note that the correspondent has been advised of this referral.

Should you require further information regarding the attached correspondence, please contact Sarah Leighton at sarah.leighton@minstaff.vic.gov.au or 9651 5266.

[attachment "Alternative to prayers before Parliament.docx" deleted by Ray Purdey/ParlOfficer/PARL]

Kind regards

Office of the Minister for Finance
Office of the Minister for Multicultural Affairs
Level 5, 1 Macarthur Street

From: Minister Scotts Office/DTF/VICGOV/AU@DTF
To: Dishella Fernando/DPC@DPC,
Date: 21/04/2015 03:09 PM



Meredith Doig <meredithdoig@gmail.com>

Correspondence from the Office of the Minister for Finance and Multicultural Affairs

President RSA <president@rationalist.com.au>

23 April 2015 at 10:28

To: ministerscottsoffice@dtf.vic.gov.au, robin.scott@parliament.vic.gov.au

Cc: Daniel Andrews <daniel.andrews@parliament.vic.gov.au>, ray.purdey@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Steve Palmer,

Thank you for responding to my letter of 17 April regarding prayers before sittings of the Victorian parliament. I note you referred my letter to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly and Clerk of the Parliaments, whose subsequent letter referred the matter back to the House.

Respectfully, this is an unacceptable response.

Firstly, the Minister has not responded to the question in my letter.

Secondly, your attempt to pass accountability for a policy decision from the Minister to an administrative servant of the Parliament is reminiscent of a "Yes Minister" scenario, a potentially endless cycle of exhausting referral and counter referral.

I therefore ask again that the Minister respond to my question: "As Minister for Multicultural Affairs, will you support this move?" where "this move" refers to introducing prayers of other religions and non-religious reflections in addition to the Lord's Prayer.

Dr Meredith Doig
President
Rationalist Society of Australia
Mob: 0403 246 544
Skype: meredith.doig

About the Rationalist Society of Australia Inc.

The RSA is the oldest freethought group in Australia, promoting reason since 1906. Members and supporters hold that all significant beliefs and actions should be based on reason and evidence, that the natural world is the only world there is, and that answers to the key questions of human existence are to be found only in that natural world. We seek to stimulate freedom of thought, support a secular and ethical system of education, promote the fullest possible use of science for human welfare, and encourage interest in science, criticism and philosophy as connected factors in a progressive human culture.

[Quoted text hidden]



Minister for Finance
Minister for Multicultural Affairs

18 MAY 2015

Level 5, 1 Macarthur Street
East Melbourne Victoria 3002
Telephone: 03 9651 1044
Facsimile: 03 9651 1088
DX 210759

Dr Meredith Doig
President
Rationalist Society of Australia
Via meredithdoig@gmail.com

Dear Dr Doig

Thank you for your correspondence dated 23 April 2015 regarding prayers before sittings of the Victorian Parliament.

As previously communicated to you by my Chief of Staff, the administrative nature of both Houses of Parliament are the responsibility of the Presidents of each House.

On a personal note, I currently support Standing Order 4.02 but if the House in the future determines that the Standing Order should be changed to better reflect Victoria's multiculturalism, then I, like all members of Parliament, will consider this amendment.

Thank you again for taking the time to write to me.

Yours faithfully

ROBIN SCOTT MP
Minister for Finance
Minister for Multicultural Affairs