

Did you know?

(This is the first in a series of articles that will explore aspects of religious education in government schools.)

Did you know that the Education Act 1990 refers to two forms of religious education in government schools.

General religious education is taught through the curriculum and is about what people believe and how that belief affects their lives. It mainly occurs in the learning area of human society and its environment (HSIE) where the world's major faiths are treated.

There are many other opportunities to teach about general religious education and the Department of Education and Training is sending a resource to all primary schools next week called *Belief in action*. This resource has people, events and ideas that have a religious base. It identifies the religious motivation behind people and events, many of which are commonly known. It will be a suitable resource to support existing units of work for students in HSIE for Stage 3.

The Education Act also provides for special religious education (SRE) where authorised representatives of approved religious persuasions teach students in school time whose parents have nominated that persuasion for instruction.

Commonly known, inappropriately in my opinion, as "scripture" there has been an increasing number of providers approved in recent years. The list of approved providers is on a Department web site www.curriculumsupport.nsw.edu.au/hsie and look for Special Religious Education under Human Society and Its Environment.

There are more primary and secondary schools receiving SRE now than ten years ago because of the increased interest from providers of all faiths.