

## SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE NECESSARY TO 'COUNTER RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM'

Religion is the one "*special interest group*" that should be **KEPT AWAY** from our governments at all costs!

**TOTAL SEPARATION** of church and state is the only way to ensure the freedoms and interests of ALL citizens.

The United Nations' Special Rapporteur Karima Bennouna has recommended that states provide for the separation of religion and state to help counter religious extremism.

Her [report](#) on protecting cultural rights, for the UN Human Rights Council, warned of "rising tides of fundamentalism and extremism" that "represent major threats to human rights worldwide".

See [Separate religion and state, urges UN Special Rapporteur](#)

---

## SURVEYS: AUSTRALIANS LITTLE INFLUENCED BY RELIGION WHEN THEY VOTE AND THEY WANT RELIGION OUT OF GOVERNMENT

### Influence of religion on voting?



An **August 2015 IPSOS** survey on behalf of the Rationalist Assn of NSW and the Humanist Society of Queensland

found that only 14 per cent of Australians say their religious belief influences the way they vote.

Of that 14 per cent, only 5 per cent said they were 'very much' influenced by their religion. The other 9 per cent said they were 'somewhat influenced' by their religion.

The questions had no applicability to the largest cohort of the survey, those with no religion, 34 per cent of the sample.

Catholics constituted 21 per cent of the sample. Only 4 per cent of Catholics said they were very much influenced by their religion with 11 per cent somewhat influenced.

Max Wallace, vice-president of the Rationalist Association of NSW said the results cast doubt on the notion that there is an influential, across-the board Christian or Catholic vote in Australia. He said 'this squares with what we know about widespread support for voluntary euthanasia and gay marriage.'

The **January 2016 IPSOS survey** on behalf of the Rationalist Assn of NSW and the Plain Reason organisation of South Australia, found **78 per cent of Australians do not want religion dictating social policy.**

**72 per cent** favoured a change in the wording of the constitution to make the division between religion and government in Australia more precise.

Plain Reasons's Brian Morris said 'politicians, the law, media, academia and the public sector should take note of this potent community mood to limit religious influence in contemporary social policy.'

---

### What on earth is 'Extreme Secularism'?

After taking on "[militant atheists](#)" in their last publication, London School of Economics Director Craig Calhoun and University of Bristol Sociology Professor Tariq Modood have now found a new target for their quest against what they call the problem of "[lack of religion in the public sphere](#)". This time, it is "[extreme secularism](#)". See blog Dishonest and harmful attacks on 'extreme secularism' by Chris

Moos, <http://freethinker.co.uk/2015/12/01/dishonest-and-harmful-attacks-on-extreme-secularism/>

**SICK OF CHURCHES MISREPRESENTING SECULARISM? THESE CATHOLICS ARE.**

A liberal international Catholic group has criticised the Pope for misrepresenting secularism in a [joint declaration](#), he issued with Patriarch Kirill of the Russian Orthodox Church, stating that "very

aggressive secularist ideology" sought to "relegate" Christians to the "margins of public life."

See summary [here](#).

---

**"Freedom from coercive ideology is both a human right and a fundamental civil liberty, which is why freedom from religion should figure in any codification of human rights alongside the freedom to have a religion. The right to freedom from religion also means freedom from proselytisation or coercive demands to belong to one, or harassment and punishment for not belonging to one, and very importantly from the requirement to live according to the tenets or demands of a religion to which one does not subscribe. As it happens, this right is entailed by the right to self-determination, a fact which is insufficiently recognised and acted upon."**



**A C Grayling *The God Argument: the Case against Religion and for Humanism* (2013)**