

### **Prayers in state bodies and state schools**

In a secular nation, compulsory prayers held at government meetings, council meetings and schools - to list a few possibilities - are inappropriate. They undermine the secular ethos. The state and the schools job is to look after people not fairies or ghosts or gods. The policy should be that the prayers are optional and steps are taken to avoid forcing anything on anyone. If it is decided the prayers will be said, then if unbelieving persons are present, they can be silent. It is helpful to complain that prayer for protection can be followed by disaster. If prayer is asking some being to let harm befall people on the basis that it is for the best, then we have every right to be disturbed by it. It is not rude then to tell a person NOT to pray for you or to exclude you from their prayers.