A MONASH councillor wants more religious education in schools as a way of promoting tolerance. Cr Charlotte Baines said she wants to see students learning more about different religions in schools, in response to a debate about whether religion has any place in the education system.

Cr Baines, who is completing a PhD in religious communication, said she wanted to see students learning about all religions.

"I'm a big fan of multi-faith education in our schools," she said. "I think it's a key to be able to promote religious tolerance within our community."

Cr Baines' comments come at a time when debate rages over whether volunteers should be
The Victorian branch of the Australian Education Union recently called for special religious instruction to be removed from schools. The union was mainly referring to the Christian group Access Ministries' volunteers, who run the majority of religious education classes in Victoria.

When the Weekly first reported the story, local schools said they ran special religious instruction because the community wanted it.

Cr Baines disagreed with the AEU.

"I'd like a structure where the curriculum is based around a whole variety of different religions — you're not just taught about Christianity, Buddhism or any one religion.

"Within that 30 minutes of religious instruction you begin to learn about diversity of religious groups, the role they're playing and the role they play in society."

She said education was the key to reducing religious tension.

"The more we get to know each other and understand our differences, the more the tension will be minimised."

Should we have more religious education in schools? Let us know at eastnews@yourweekly.com.au