



# Premier of Queensland

For reply please quote: *IGR/JE – TF/13/12647 – DOC/13/99175*

14 JUN 2013

Mr Glenn Worthington  
Committee Secretary  
House of Representatives Standing Committee  
on Education and Employment  
ee.reps@aph.gov.au

Executive Building  
100 George Street Brisbane  
PO Box 15185 City East  
Queensland 4002 Australia  
**Telephone +61 7 3224 4500**  
**Facsimile +61 7 3221 3631**  
**Email** [ThePremier@premiers.qld.gov.au](mailto:ThePremier@premiers.qld.gov.au)  
**Website** [www.thepremier.qld.gov.au](http://www.thepremier.qld.gov.au)

Dear Mr Worthington

Thank you for your letter of 6 June 2013 inviting the Queensland Government to provide a submission on the *Australian Education (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2013* (the Bill).

The Queensland Government will not provide a formal submission, but I am grateful for the invitation to participate. I would, however, like to take this opportunity to provide some general points about Queensland's position on national school funding reform and why we neither support the related *Australian Education Bill 2012*, nor this Bill.

The Queensland Government is disappointed at the way the Federal Government has negotiated school funding reforms. The fact that your committee received a reference for an inquiry on 5 June, which allows only one week to consider the Bill, speaks volumes about this Federal Government. It does not want to properly consider the implications of its far-reaching proposals, or work cooperatively with the states and territories on them. This is yet further evidence of that.

I am greatly concerned about the outcomes being sought by the Bill and the *Australian Education Bill 2012*. Specifically, Queensland does not support the Federal Government having the right to determine how and on what basis the Queensland Government may fund our state schools. We also do not accept that, as the minority funder of Queensland state schools, the Federal Government has any right to demand that Queensland provide implementation plans for school improvement, or that funding be contingent on these.

Queensland is undertaking its own education reforms through the provision of financially responsible, timely and targeted investment in practical measures to improve education, including by committing \$535 million in our direct action plan, *Great Teachers = Great Results: A direct action plan for Queensland schools*.

Our plan focuses on two critical areas for action — professional excellence in teaching and boosting school autonomy. It will pair new teachers with experienced mentors, recognise high performing teachers and school leaders, boost the qualifications of teachers, principals and deputy principals, and deploy high performing teachers to where they are most needed.

In addition to our plan and the almost \$6 billion a year we already invest in education, the 2013–14 Queensland Budget provides for an increase in education expenditure of 6.6 per cent. This is real funding, developed by Queenslanders for Queenslanders, which will be spent right now on Queensland schools, not years into the forward estimates like the Federal Government's proposals.

Regardless of whether Queensland is a participating or non-participating state, the Federal Government's proposals, as embodied in this Bill and the *Australian Education Bill 2012*, involve a huge expansion of regulatory reach into state and non-state schools. Not only is this inappropriate and a burden on all schools, but it will sap revenue and energy from the task we all share of improving education. This regulatory reach undermines the independence of all non-government schools and the foundations of parental choice in education, which allow schools and school systems to manage their future to meet their own needs. The Queensland Government is totally opposed to this course of action.

Queensland considers that the reforms to Federal Financial Relations, as implemented through the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations (2009) were a sound step forward in providing flexibility for states to implement reforms in the most efficient and effective ways. Queensland believes that passing the Bill will remove a significant level of flexibility in school service provision and reduce state budget flexibility. Queensland also believes that while these reforms are ostensibly aimed at providing higher levels of accountability, they will in fact achieve the opposite because of the burden of reporting and federal approval they will usher in.

This is no way to encourage flexibility and innovation to deal with the myriad challenges of education into the future. Queensland remains implacably opposed to the reforms proposed by the Federal Government and the provisions of this Bill in support of them.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

Yours sincerely

CAMPBELL NEWMAN

Your letter is dated 6 June 2013 seeking submissions by the 12 June 2013!

Frankly the whole thing is an outrage!