



BALCOMBE
GRAMMAR SCHOOL

30 October 2008

John Carter
Committee Secretary
Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee
Department of Senate
PO Box 6100

Dear Mr Carter

I am the Chairman of two Christian Ecumenical Schools, namely Casey Grammar, Cranbourne, and Balcombe Grammar, Mt Martha.

The two Schools are low fee and have a clean concern for expressing Christian values in their community life and teaching.

In the Senate inquiry into the Schools Assistance Bill in 2008 I would like to make the following submissions:

1. In respect to choice of schooling, I wish to plead the right of parents under the UK Declaration of Human Rights where clearly a choice of schooling is given as a right. Does this proposed Act in any way contradict this Bill of Rights of which Australia is a signatory.
2. Funding: These two schools are both members of the Victorian Ecumenical System of Schools. That System already reports on behalf of its members to the Federal Government on the financial status of its schools.

It is surely worth noting that all non Government schools are required to make complete financial returns to ASIC a statutory body of the Federal Government as part of their legal obligation as legal entities.

Why is this accountability under question? From public reports it would appear that agreements have been reached with the Catholic Education System, and yet no similar concern has been shown to the other non Government Schools.

Already the State Government has made a Capital Grant of 36 million to the Catholic Schools of Victoria.

My concern touches two issues:

1. The right of parents to choose a Christian based education for their children.
2. That low fee school that are not of the Catholic system should be discriminated against by this proposed Bill.

Finally may I plead that in the general area of school funding that the Government's real responsibility is to the family.

It seems strange that our medical needs can be based on family income and yet ignore that the same families' educational needs and choices are also based on income ability.

No matter what Government funding does, it is worth noting that every non Government student is saving the Federal Government and State Government at least 50% of the Average General Recurrent Cost.

With my best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John A. Leaver". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a solid horizontal line.

JOHN LEAVER
CHAIRMAN