



31st October 2008

Mr John Carter
Committee Secretary
Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee
Department of the Senate
P.O. BOX 6100

Dear Mr Carter

I am the Principal of both Casey Grammar School and also Balcombe Grammar School in Cranbourne and Mt Martha respectively. I write to you on behalf of my school communities. Both schools are low-fee independent schools in Victoria. Our mission is as follows:-

Casey Grammar and Balcombe Grammar Schools pledge to provide the highest professional standards of teaching and quality educational services, with the aim of achieving our school and our families' objectives for holistic child development, academically, spiritually and socially, in the pursuit of knowledge and excellence.

The parents of the students who attend our schools do not come from affluent areas and would be alarmed to know that the sacrifices they make to send their children to a school of their choice may be adversely affected by the proposed Schools Assistance Bill 2008. I refer to the following concerns:-

1. CURRICULUM - Will we be able to continue following our current educational curriculum? We are regulated by the VRGA and follow VELS, this seems to suit our clientele and their needs well. Without seeing what the National curriculum contains it may not be in the best interests of our students to adopt. We would request that this be amended to say that the National curriculum or an agreed alternative be allowed to inform the curriculum.
2. FUNDING – I am interested to know why the school's financial reporting needs to be expanded to include funding sources and then this would be a matter for publication. Why does the government think that it has a role in reporting on information on the private investment decisions by parents and the community? Conversely, as the Government provides funding to schools it should be rightly concerned with the financial viability of a school but not with after-tax income that individuals choose to invest in education. Can the government guarantee that if this information is collected that it will not be used as the basis for new State and Federal funding models? How does commercial in-confidence information help governments manage education?

Thank you for your attention to these matters, I look forward to the outcome of the Senate inquiry.

Yours faithfully

Evelyn Sayers

PRINCIPAL