



FORESTVILLE MONTESSORI SCHOOL

**Mr. John Carter
Committee Secretary
Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee
Department of the Senate
P.O. Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600**

7 November, 2008

Dear Mr. Carter:

The Montessori community and our schools are pleased that the Rudd Government has honoured its election commitments regarding non-government schools, particularly in relation to maintaining the existing funding arrangements. There are, however, some provisions in the current Schools Assistance Bill, which cause us some concern, especially regarding the national curriculum and the requirement to identify all sources of school income.

We do support a national curriculum in principle as long as it retains sufficient flexibility for schools to continue to operate under their own educational philosophies and pedagogies which are currently widely accepted around the world. At this time, there is little detail about how the national curriculum will cater for these different approaches.

Our schools continue to support transparency and accountability in educational and financial operations. We are concerned, however, about the lack of detail regarding the comparability of data between schools and school sectors including issues such as small samples generated by small independent schools, which skew data and render scores of individual children easier to identify. We are also concerned about the lack of detail available around identification of all income sources.

We are of the understanding that the details regarding these matters will be contained in the Regulations and that there will be ample opportunities for consultation and negotiation in all areas of concern.

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We support the passage of the Schools Assistance Bill 2008 without delay to ensure that critical funding for our schools will be provided in a timely manner. Many schools would find it very difficult to continue to fully support the needs of students and staff if the bill were to be delayed for any length of time.

We are continuing to actively work with the Association of Independent Schools of NSW on these issues and are confident that this will lead to the negotiation of acceptable Regulations for all independent schools.

Thank you very much for your continued efforts.

Sincerely yours,

**Frances G. Reed
CEO/Principal
Forestville Montessori School
Board Member of Montessori Australia Foundation**