



30 October 2008

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

Dear Mr Carter,

RE: STATE INQUIRY INTO SCHOOLS ASSISTANCE BILL

I write as Principal of St Paul's Anglican Grammar School, which is the largest Independent low fee paying school in Gippsland. Our mission is to provide our students with the opportunity to grow into outstanding and worthy members of the global community. Our imperative is the philosophy that it is students which matter every single day: their learning; personal and spiritual development; and their success. We fully embrace a holistic approach to education that integrates educational, pastoral, staffing, spiritual and environmental dimensions. Our parents, students and staff embrace our School knowing that it is a community which builds a strong and sustainable future for our society.

Our School boasts one of the largest geographical intake areas in Australia. We have students from east of Traralgon right through to the west of Berwick, north to Jindivick and south to Korumburra. Our parents value the School's culture and Anglican ethos and it is vitally important that our community of parents have 'Choice' in relation to education in our society.

I wish to raise the following issues as concerns that affect all members of our community:

1. Our School boasts a broad curriculum offering encompassing the key learning areas evident in most schools and in addition learning areas which underpin the value system of our School. It is vitally important that our Curriculum offering is one which underpins the values of our School

within our community. I seek assurance that our current educational program will not be compromised under the proposed legislation.

2. I am concerned about the reporting of our commercial-in-confidence financial information. I strongly believe that the Government should not collect more information than it needs for policy decisions. In essence, we believe the Government should encourage investment in education from parents and communities. Government funding is critical to the success of a low fee paying school in which many families have both parents working in order to send their children to our School. Is there a guarantee that the State Government will not use this commercial-in-confidence financial information for its funding models?
3. Our School is currently the school of choice for parents seeking an Independent school education. Any negative impact of Government funding on our School would have significant ramifications for our parent community and would compromise the quality educational outcomes that we espouse and deliver. There is a concern brewing within our School community about the School's Assistance Bill 2008 and I trust that you will take these concerns seriously and deliberate to produce outcomes that will not be detrimental to Gippsland families who choose to send their children to our Warragul and Traralgon Campuses.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Robertson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark Robertson
Principal