



TASMANIAN ASSOCIATION OF STATE SCHOOL ORGANISATIONS INC.

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Scurrilous Behaviour In Challenging Times – Private Schools Funding Advance

The Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations (TASSO) President Nigel Jones said, “We are dismayed but not surprised by the Federal Government’s announcement yesterday to offer \$1.4 billion to Independent and \$1.6 billion to Catholic Schools in two funding advance payments if they meet specific conditions. These schools have already received their funding and collected levies for 2020. Is this yet another special arrangement in the making for the non-government school sector?”

Australian Council of State School Organisations President Andrew Bidwell, in a media release dated April 30, 2020 asked, “...the biggest unanswered questions are – what happens next year? Will the non-government sector be happy with only 75% of their funding or will the Federal Government bow to the additional pressure to fill a perceived funding shortfall of its own making?”

TASSO have always supported ACSSO’s call that the funding agreements in education be fair, simple and transparent, and promoted our own policy that education should be free of politics. The actions of the Federal Government fly in the face of this.

What more could be expected from a Federal Government that has also gone against the decision of National Cabinet.

“Principle 4 of the COVID-19 National Principles for School Education, as agreed upon by the National Cabinet, says “State and Territory Governments and non-government sector authorities are responsible for managing and making operational decisions for their school systems respectively, subject to compliance with relevant funding agreements with the Commonwealth.” “This deal undermines their responsibility” said ACSSO President Andrew Bidwell.

“Tasmanian public schools, like schools in all sectors and jurisdictions, have increased expenditure and decreased income, due to the inability to hire out school venues and conduct traditional fundraisers, just like most families. The State Government has supported schools by providing additional funding for cleaning, staffing and technical support. The Tasmanian Department of Education has assisted families through the refunding of school levies, in some cases the loaning of digital devices to students and the delivery of items necessary for learning at home to the homes of students. All of this has been

done with no additional support from the Federal Government. The Tasmanian Government has been focused on keeping people safe whilst continuing with the education of young Tasmanians and rightfully so. Any offers of additional funding to education should be fair, open and transparent, without added clauses putting increased pressure on Education decision makers which could potentially be to the detriment of all” said Nigel Jones.

Nigel Jones in reflecting the stance of the TASSO stated, “We need to remain focused and positive on what is best for Tasmanian students, their families and educators. There is a need to stop looking into a crystal ball and claiming that having student’s learning at home will cause gaps in their education resulting in them falling behind. Why would you bother doing something if you will not benefit from it? How can families be expected to encourage their children to learn at home, if they start to believe all the negative predictions some people keep making? How can teachers feel proud and respected as professionals, if the amazing effort and work they have and continue to do, is predicted not to help kids to continue learning at the rate required to be successful learners?”

“Families, students, school communities, educators, governments and their relevant Ministers, need to remember that, what we do should always have the education and wellbeing of students as our highest priority. In Tasmania this has been the case throughout this pandemic” stated Nigel Jones.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nigel Jones". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

For further comment contact

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