

Responses of Major Political Parties on Issues of Importance to Catholic Education in Tasmania

During the election campaign, the major political parties in Tasmania were asked to provide their responses to the following questions in the knowledge they would be shared with our 12 500 CET families across the state:

Q. 1 Will you commit to the State Government working with Catholic Education Tasmania (CET) to implement the new Commonwealth Direct Measure of Income (DMI) model whilst ensuring that CET's funding remains at the 20% contribution level?

Liberal response: *We value the significant role of Catholic Education in Tasmania. The Tasmanian Liberals are fully committed to the National School Reform Agreement signed in December 2018. As part of this agreement, the State appropriation funding for the non-government sector continues to grow. The growth from the 2019-20 original budget to 2023-24 budget estimate is approximately 12.5% for the non-government sector. Our Government is committed to the bilateral agreement and as such will contribute no less than the prescribed contribution requirement of 20 per cent of the School Resourcing Standard (SRS).*

Labor response: *We cannot, from Opposition, commit to implementing a new income assessment model without a full understanding of its impacts on the broader Tasmanian education system. Labor will maintain Tasmanian's obligations under existing agreements and legislation.*

Greens response: *We would like to see more evidence that the Commonwealth Direct Measure of Income (DMI) model does not adversely affect public education funding, but we are open to a conversation about this model and how it might improve outcomes for students in the Catholic education system.*

Q. 2 Further to question 1 will you provide an ongoing commitment to the current level of funding (\$1,024,409 with annual indexation) for Capital Assistance funding for low SES Tasmania Catholic schools?

Liberal response: *A re-elected majority Liberal Government will provide an ongoing commitment to the current level of funding (\$1,024,409 with annual indexation) for Capital Assistance funding for low SES Tasmanian Catholic schools.*

Labor response: *A Tasmanian Labor Government will provide Capital Assistance funding of more than \$1 million for low SES Catholic schools in the next budget year and will be open to negotiating further assistance in following years*

Greens response: *We are committed to the current level of funding for Capital Assistance to low SES Tasmanian Catholic schools.*

Q. 3 Will you commit to providing \$1 million assistance with Capital infrastructure support (indexed annually) for the "Working Together" initiative for 3 year olds in Catholic schools across Tasmania?

Liberal response: *The Tasmanian Liberals are proud of the Working Together initiative that funds child care places in Early Childhood Education and Care Centers. However, it is important to note that Working Together is about providing holistic support services, it has never included funding for infrastructure. These children could go on to enrol in any school including Catholic, Government or Independent.*

Labor response: *Labor will provide \$1 million in capital infrastructure funding to support the 'Working Together' initiative in the 2021-22 budget year, and will be open to further negotiation for extended funding*

Greens response: *We can provide in-principle support to providing \$1 million assistance with capital infrastructure support for the 'Working Together' Program for three year olds in Tasmanian CET schools.*

Q. 4 Will you commit to indexed annual support of \$250,000 (currently \$158,000) for vision, speech and other services in low SES Catholic schools in Tasmania?

Liberal response: *Our Government will provide increased annual support of \$175,000 (indexed) for support services in low SES Catholic schools in Tasmania.*

Labor response: *A Labor Government will provide annual indexed support of \$250,000 for vision, speech and other services in low SES Catholic schools subject to outcome reporting arrangements.*

Greens response: *We can also commit to indexed support of \$250 000 indexed for vision, speech and other services in low SES non-government schools*

Q. 5 Will you commit to ensuring every student travelling to school on a bus in Tasmania has safe access to a designated seat?

Liberal response: *The Tasmanian Liberal Government's priority is ensuring Tasmanian students are able to get to where they need to, safely and efficiently. A re-elected majority Liberal Government commits to continuing to engage with the Catholic Education Office on transport needs.*

Labor response: *Labor understands the significance of bus travel to Tasmanian school students and will work to improve capacity and safety within our public transport system*

Greens response: *We will continue to advocate for better bus safety for students, including more and more regular services to prevent overcrowding.*

Q. 6 Will you commit to enabling CET schools to continue to teach the fullness of Catholic beliefs, tenets and practice without restriction?

Liberal response: *We appreciate that the study of Catholic belief underpins the ethos and teachings within Catholic Schools and our Government has no plans to restrict the capacity of Catholic schools to teach these beliefs. However, it is essential that all education sectors comply with anti discrimination and other relevant legislation. In addition, all schools whether Government, Catholic or Independent must provide all students with access to rich and robust learning programs that are founded on the Australian Curriculum that sets the expectations for what all young Australians should be taught, regardless of where they live in Australia, their background or beliefs.*

Labor response: *Labor unreservedly endorses the teaching of Catholic beliefs, tenets and practices within the Catholic Education system, within relevant legislation.*

Greens response: *Acknowledging the need for every Tasmanian student, whatever school they attend, to feel valued, supported and equal within their school community, and within the constraints of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1998, yes. The Greens also, however, support a ban on harmful conversion therapy.*