Our ref: 34-69914

Dr Tim McDonald
Executive Director
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Ms Siobhan Allen
President
Parents & Friends Federation of WA Inc.

Dear Dr McDonald and Ms Allen

Thank you for your letter regarding the State Government’s commitments to Catholic school education in Western Australia.

The Liberal-led State Government recognises the significant contribution the Catholic school sector makes to education in Western Australia. Over $900 million in State Government per capita grants is expected to be provided to Catholic schools in Western Australia over the next four years. In addition, over $120 million is forecast to be provided in low interest loans over the same period, to fund capital works at Catholic schools.

A response to the issues outlined in your letter is set out below.

**Election Commitment 1: Will your government confirm that the longstanding agreement for the State government to fund Catholic student places to at least 25% of the Average Government School Recurrent Cost (AGSRC) will remain in place for the term of your government?**

The per-capita funding system is critical to providing Western Australian families with a diverse range of education options for their children.

If re-elected, the Liberal-led State Government will continue its commitment to provide non-government schools with funding at a rate that is at least 25% of the Average Government School Recurrent Cost (AGSRC).
Election Commitment 2: Will your government support a new annual capital grant commitment of $40 million per annum over the course of the next 10 years (replacing the existing Low Interest Loan) that will enable CEWA to cater for the growth in student population and in doing so will save the State Government $2 billion in recurrent expenditure?

While it is acknowledged that the Catholic education school sector in Western Australia will continue to grow, it is also recognised that the Federal Government is the majority contributor of recurrent funding to non-government schools. As such, the provision of further State funding for capital works, over and above the Low Interest Loan Scheme funding, will need to be considered in consultation with the Federal Government. If re-elected, the Liberal-led State Government will undertake a review of school planning processes to consider the demand for non-government schools and identify appropriate funding models to support the establishment of new non-government schools.

Election Commitment 3: Will your government increase the funding available to provide additional psychologists in Catholic schools, to represent a ratio more in keeping with government schools, and in doing so deliver annual indexation on the funding amount?

The Liberal-National Government acknowledges the need to provide high quality psychology services to students across all school sectors. The cost of these services within the public school sector is incorporated in the calculation of the AGSRC. As the per-capita grant funding for non-government schools is based on the AGSRC, it includes a pro-rata amount commensurate with the per-student funding for psychology services provided for public school students. Each non-government school or sector has the discretion to allocate its per-capita grant funding based on its individual needs. As you will be aware, non-government school per-capita funding has increased each year during the term of the Liberal-National Government.

In addition to the per-capita funding, the State Government has provided nearly $6 million in supplementary funding for psychology services in Catholic schools since January 2015. A further $2.4 million is due to be provided in 2017-18. The service level agreement which governs this funding is due to expire on 30 June 2018. If re-elected, the Liberal-led State Government will establish a new agreement, effective from 1 July 2018, which will include provision for annual indexation.

Election Commitment 4: Will your government establish a cross-sectoral committee to plan for new government and non-government schools in WA?

As the major provider of education in Western Australia, the Department of Education undertakes extensive planning for public schools in consultation with the Department of Planning and local planning authorities. In addition to the public school sector, the non-government school sector is recognised as providing schooling for a significant number of the State's children. To continue to provide families with a diverse range of educational options, it is important that both government and non-government stakeholders work together to plan for the further development of the non-government school sector.
Currently, the Non-government School Planning Advisory Panel provides advice on the need for the establishment of new non-government schools. If re-elected, the Liberal-led State Government will review the process for the planning of non-government schools, to ensure it supports the strategic development of the non-government school sector to meet the needs of the Western Australian community. This will include a review of advisory mechanisms to ensure relevant government and non-government stakeholders are represented.

The Liberal-led State Government has been a proud supporter of Catholic education in Western Australia over the past eight years. I look forward to this relationship continuing into the future and working with you to ensure that the Western Australian community continues to have access to a high quality and diverse education system.

Kind regards

[Signature]

Hon Peter Collier MLC
MINISTER FOR EDUCATION
14 FEB 2017