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Senate Education and Employment Committees
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SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

INQUIRY INTO THE AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION AMENDMENT BILL 2017



The Anglican Schools Commission (Inc.) (ASC) welcomes the opportunity to submit comments to the Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee on the Inquiry into the Australian Education Amendment Bill 2017.

The Reverend Peter Laurence OAM
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



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I respond on behalf of The Anglican Schools Commission (Inc.) (ASC) to the Senate Inquiry by the Standing Committee on Education and Employment into the Education Amendment Bill 2017.

The Anglican Schools Commission is based in Western Australia and owns 14 schools, with 11 in Western Australia, two in Victoria and one in New South Wales. Our schools provide a low-fee, high quality, Anglican education and aim to be inclusive and accessible to as many families as possible.

The ASC operates as a System with Commonwealth funding for our schools received and distributed to our schools through the Commission. Commonwealth funding remains a crucial share of our school funding and allows our schools to remain accessible to families and retain our schools as low-fee non-government schools.

We respond to the Inquiry by acknowledging the Government's policy intent to fund all students based on need and regardless of which State or under which System they are based.

Moving to a more equitable needs-based model should provide for all school students and we note that there will be a minimum annual indexation rate of at least three per cent.

On first analysis, we take a positive outlook on the funding for our schools under the new system. The Government's intent to further invest in education is encouraging.

We also raise some points of reservation that we hope will be considered when moving forward to implement the legislation.

COMMUNICATION WITH SYSTEMS

The first issue the ASC faced was a lack of communication at a System level. Prior to this Inquiry, there was no consultation or ability for Systems to comment on any of the proposed reforms. Further, there has been a very short response time to this Inquiry.

FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

There is a need for improved communication to Systems and individual schools. ASC schools received inaccurate estimates from the Government's website. Once the reforms were announced by Government and the Funding Estimator launched, our schools were listed with individual funding dollars attached. This was despite the advice we received that the Funding Estimator was only accurate for individual schools and not applicable to schools which were part of a system. Our schools did not receive this advice, except by way of a small note on the Funding Estimator itself.

TIED FUNDING

The legislation ties Commonwealth funding to the implementation of the national education reform agenda. This agenda is as yet unknown. The ASC is willing to implement policy reform which improves the education of our students without compromising the ongoing viability and sustainability of the System, but advises that further participation and consultation with education providers is necessary. This is particularly in relation to any changes to Regulations on the implementation of the national education policy reform agenda and any associated costs. We acknowledge that a COAG Regulatory Impact Process will be triggered in this event.

FUTURE CONSULTATION

Government needs to put in place a process for consultation and information exchange on changes contained under this legislation. The ASC believes that future consultation will be paramount to the success of the Government's reforms and submits that the ASC and ASC schools wish to work with Governments, both State and Federal, to ensure we continue to provide the best possible education to our students.

The Reverend Peter Laurence OAM
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
The Anglican Schools Commission (Inc.)