

Deputy Premier
Minister for Education and Training
Minister for Primary Industries and Water



Committee Secretary
Senate Select Committee on School Funding investment
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

17/03/2016

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission from the Tasmanian Liberal Government to the Senate Select Committee on School Funding investment.

The Tasmanian Government firmly believes in the Students First (Gonski) funding and education reforms and is delivering on the State's commitment of the full \$134 million of additional funding over the scheduled six years. Whilst the reforms are in their initial stages, I am pleased to report we are seeing positive early indicators in Tasmania.

The Tasmanian Government is also committed to broader reform through its review of the legislative framework for education in the State, including proposed changes for an earlier starting age and later leaving age. This reform is aimed at increasing student learning opportunities and increasing retention, both of which are critical to student achievement and hence a skilled workforce. This is essential for Tasmania's future development.

The Tasmanian Government recognises the need for prudent financial management and appreciates the Australian Government must do the same. However, it is considered that only committing to four years of Students First funding will not be sufficient to see the levels of sustainable generational change that we all want to see.

The combination of the additional funding in 2018 and 2019 not being provided and lower levels of indexation than was in the original Heads of Agreement is an accumulative recurrent impact in the order of \$50 million per year. However, Tasmania is also significantly affected by the Australian Government's proposed redistribution from 2018; in the 2015-16 Federal Budget and media release it is stated:

"In 2018, the distribution of funding to government school systems will be adjusted to ensure a fair and consistent proportion of Commonwealth funding goes to each and every state and territory, fixing the inequities across state borders.

State allocations from 2018 school year onwards are indicative only and final allocations are subject to formal negotiations between the Commonwealth, the States and the non-government sector."

In Tasmania's case the impact is a reduction and this is already reflected in both the Australian and State 2015-16 Budget Papers. The effective impact is approximately \$14 million or a 7.5 per cent reduction in government school funding for the 2018 calendar year.

Other areas where we seek resolution with the Australian Government include funding for Universal Access to Early Childhood Education post-2017 and the finalisation of reviews into loadings for low socio-economic status, students with disabilities and English language proficiency.

Tasmania has the highest level of socio-economic disadvantage of any state or territory, presenting my government with a range of challenges. There is common agreement that education is the key strategy in overcoming disadvantage, a view that Tasmania strongly supports. We have clearly demonstrated our intent through increased investment in education via Students First and the education legislative reforms I announced on 9 March 2016.

Delivering improved educational outcomes for all students is an absolute priority for my Government. For Tasmania to truly prosper, all levels of government need to work collaboratively to overcome disadvantage so I call on the Australian Government to escalate negotiations so we can constructively work together with the aim to provide Tasmania with the resources and funding it needs.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide a submission.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Rockliff MP
Deputy Premier
Minister for Education and Training