



8 August 2010

Senator Bob Brown
Leader of the Australian Greens
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
via email senator.bob.brown@aph.gov.au

Dear Senator Brown

URGENT POLICY CLARIFICATION REQUIRED

I write on behalf of 130 schools in membership of Christian Schools Australia to seek your party's position on an issue of great importance to our membership, and their communities.

You are quoted in *The Canberra Times* on Friday 6 August in an article by David McLennan as indicating that:

"I won't be taking funding from the private school system to fund the public school system now that we have the mining tax alternative. It is a much better way to go,"

The article goes on to indicate that the ACT Greens candidate Lin Hatfield Dodds said no money would be taken out of any Canberra private schools.

These statements are at odds with the Greens education policy released in March this year which indicates as follows:

61. End the current arrangement for recurrent funding to non-government schools by no later than the end of 2010.

62. Implement a new model for recurrent funding to non-government schools based on the following: proper consideration of the resource levels of non-government schools and their financial capacity, including fees and other parent contributions; an appropriate measure for indexation of the funding of non-government schools that de-couples it from spending on public schools; and non-government schools to be fully accountable to the parliament and therefore transparent to the public on their use of government funds and their financial situation, including all income and assets.

65. Support the maintenance of the total level of Commonwealth funding for private schools at 2003-04 levels (excluding that re-allocated under previous clauses), indexed for inflation.

Christian Schools Australia Limited ACN 092 580 124

National Office 3 Karri Street O'Connor ACT 2602 Mail PO Box 6061 O'Connor ACT 2602

Phone (02) 6257 7989 Fax (02) 6257 6637 Email csa@csa.edu.au Web www.csa.edu.au

Can you urgently provide clarification of the Greens policy in relation to the funding of non-government schools in the light of these conflicting statements? In particular can you indicate:

- Whether your statement that the Greens *'won't be taking funding from the private school system to fund the public school system'* is conditional upon the imposition of the mining tax in the currently proposed form?
- Whether your statement encompasses the maintenance of funding in real terms, indexed, or merely the retention of existing dollar amounts of funding?
- Whether you can provide an unequivocal commitment that the Greens will support the continuation in real terms of total funding to non-government schools of at least the current levels contained in the Budget forward estimates?

We would appreciate your brief response by **Wednesday 11 August** in order that we can circulate the responses to our membership.

Yours sincerely

Mark Spencer
Executive Officer, National Policy

cc Lin Hatfield-Dodds - campaign@act.greens.org.au
Senator Sarah Hanson-Young - senator.hanson-young@aph.gov.au