



**Tim Mulherin**

# Labor for Queensland

telephone: 3844 8101 address: 16 Peel St South Brisbane Qld 4101

web: [abetterwayforqld.com.au](http://abetterwayforqld.com.au) twitter: @timmulherinmp

C/15/7524

20 JAN 2015

Mr Mike Byrne  
Executive Director  
Queensland Catholic Education Commission  
GPO Box 2441  
Brisbane QLD 4001

Mrs Carmel Nash  
Executive Director  
Federation of Parents and Friends Associations of Catholic Schools in Queensland  
GPO Box 2410  
Brisbane QLD 4001

*Dear Mike and Carmel*

Dear Mr Byrne and Mrs Nash

Thank you for your letter to the Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk MP, Leader of the Opposition, concerning the main policy issues facing the Catholic education sector in the 2015 Queensland election. Ms Palaszczuk has asked me to respond on her behalf.

Queensland Labor appreciates the continued, constructive engagement we have had with your organisations over the last three years. We believe a strong Catholic school sector is vital to the Queensland education system. A future Labor Government will work closely with you to ensure Catholic schools receive the support they deserve.

## **1. Annual per student funding that keeps pace with the rising costs of education**

If elected Labor will continue the existing method of providing state funding to Catholic and independent schools through the basket-nexus formula. As the cost of educating a child increases in the state system there will be a commensurate increase in per student funding to the Catholic system.

It should be noted that due to policy decisions made by the Newman Government, funding per student has fallen over the last two years which will have a flow-on effect on the Catholic education system. Under the LNP, funding in the state system has fallen by \$165 for every primary school student, \$203 for every high school student and \$1770 for every student with a disability.

Given the Newman Government's record it is reasonable to assume that per student funding will continue to fall if they are re-elected. Labor will ensure that Queensland school children are funded to receive the very best education whether they are in the state, Catholic or independent sectors.

A better way for Queensland **Labor**

Queensland



Authorised A Chisholm 16 Peel Street South Brisbane Qld 4101 for the Australian Labor Party.

## **2. Increased capital funding to deliver the additional student places required to meet the needs of Queensland's growing population**

Queensland Labor appreciates that the schools planning process currently underway has widespread support among education stakeholders and we will continue this collaborative process. We also believe there is an appropriate role for government to provide capital grants to the non-state schooling sector for the construction of new schools and upgrades of existing schools.

A Labor Government will provide an additional \$37 million in capital grants for the non-state schooling sector in each of the 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 financial years. The Catholic sector will receive \$25 million per annum under this capital grants program.

In government we will also work closely with the non-government school sector to lower the cost of building new schools. We will ensure proper planning is undertaken so that neighbouring schools, whether they are government-run, Catholic or independent, can share sporting facilities – lowering the cost of purchasing large tracts of land. We will also investigate the provision of low-interest loans or loan guarantees to non-government schooling bodies.

## **3. Students With Disability**

The task of caring and educating children with special needs has become harder under the Newman Government due to a number of cruel and unfair policy decisions. The 2013-14 Annual Report of the Department of Education, Training and Employment shows that funding has fallen by \$1770 per student with a disability. The LNP has also reduced services for students with a disability in the non-state system by introducing fees for advisory visiting teachers. There is no doubt that children with special needs are receiving fewer services and less support under this Government.

The challenges of raising and educating a child with a disability are difficult wherever you live but they are exacerbated in rural and remote areas when services are few and far between. In government, Queensland Labor will examine the possibility of creating teams of specialists to ensure all children in our state, whether they are educated in state, Catholic or independent schools are assessed for disability support and are provided with the help they need.

## **4. Vocational Education and Training for secondary school students**

The continued strength of our Vocational Education and Training (VET) system is vital in creating a skilled workforce which meets the changing job requirements of the economy. Unfortunately the Newman Government has undermined our strong VET system and cannot be allowed another three years to dismantle it.

A Labor Government will invest \$34 million to rebuild the Queensland TAFE system from the damaging cuts inflicted by the Newman Government. In particular we will invest \$5 million over three years to increase the number of courses available through VET in schools.

## **5. Parent Engagement Strategies**

Parents have a paramount role in providing a high quality education for their children and they must be involved in the schools their children attend. Queensland Labor is encouraged by the ongoing research and evidence which demonstrates that strategies to involve parents in their children's education have real and lasting benefits.

We will work with the Catholic sector to design and support parent engagement strategies with an appropriate program of research to analyse the efficacy of particular actions. A Labor Government will make available \$250,000 over three years to the Queensland P&F Association to roll out its parent engagement strategy in Catholic schools.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tim Mulherin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small dot at the end.

Tim Mulherin MP  
**Deputy Leader of the Opposition**