



TASMANIAN
CATHOLIC
education office

13 May 2016

Dear School Board Chairs and P & F Presidents

RE: CATHOLIC EDUCATION FEDERAL ELECTION COMMUNICATION MATERIAL

With a federal election called for 2 July, communication materials have been developed to promote the work of Catholic education in Australia and raise awareness among parents, teachers and local candidates, of the key issues facing Catholic schools.

The contribution of Catholic education in Australia today is immense, with 1,731 Catholic schools across the country educating more than 765,000 students. In Tasmania this equates to 38 schools and colleges and over 16,000 students.

Five Priority Issue newsletter inserts have been prepared for use in school newsletters. With the federal election campaign now in full swing, five priority items have been identified. The newsletter inserts have also been designed for use in other communications channels, including social media. Schools and Colleges are encouraged to share these messages with their communities.

The following materials can be found on the TCEO website. [Click here](#) to access these materials:

1. *Priority Issues – Tasmanian Version* for use in newsletters (and forming the basis for TCEO media releases and social media).
2. *Additional Newsletter inserts – Tasmanian version* intended supplement the priority messages.
3. *Current Issues in Catholic Education – Tasmanian Version*, including key facts and messages about Tasmanian Catholic education and specific funding information on Catholic schools.
4. *Current Issues in Catholic Education – Australian Version*, including key facts and messages about Catholic education in Australia and specific funding information on Catholic schools.
5. *Catholic Schools in Tasmania* brochure, containing simple demographic and funding information on Catholic schools. (NB currently being printed and will be distributed to schools in the coming weeks)
6. *Catholic Education Current Issues - fact sheet* supporting material and additional information on school funding.

All material has been developed from the best available information and is intended to help parents and carers understand Catholic schools and the importance of government funding.

Additional material will be provided in the lead-up to the federal election, including information on how political parties believe their education policies will support school education, and Catholic education in particular. A website, www.SchoolFundingFacts.com is also available to provide further information on Catholic education and school funding at the national level.

In presenting this information to our school communities, it is also important to remember that our schools and schools authorities are charities and as such are regulated by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC).

The ACNC released the pre-election guide outlining what charities can and can't do in terms of advocacy in the upcoming election campaign. These rules have always existed, but the ACNC's decision to issue this guide suggests they will be enforced more strictly now.

The key points to be aware of are that **charities should not:**

- promote or oppose any political party or candidate
- distribute how-to-vote cards on election day for a particular candidate or party
- produce material asking its members or supporters to vote for a particular candidate or party
- donate money to a particular candidate or political party during an election campaign

A charity may, however:

- produce material that compares and ranks the policies of political parties
- spend money to publicly express its views on issues and policies of different political parties during an election as they relate to the charity's purposes
- hold an event to debate a matter of law or policy during the election campaign, provided it invites members and candidates representing a range of political parties and persuasions (to mitigate any risk of the charity being found to have a purpose of promoting a particular political party or candidate)
- publish research on current or proposed laws, government policies or practices related to its charitable purpose

If you have any questions about the material or have any feedback, please contact the TCEO Directorate office on 6210 8810 or email director@catholic.tas.edu.au

Yours faithfully



John Mula
Director – Tasmanian Catholic Education



Michael Polley
Chair – Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission



Brendan McManus
President – Tasmanian Catholic School Parents Council

Cc Catholic Education Principals