



TASMANIAN
PRINCIPALS
ASSOCIATION

Leadership in Focus

Tasmanian Principals Association

The Tasmanian State Government has set in train processes to review the Education Act (1994) and is committed to the drafting of a new Act for implementation in 2017. This raises practical and philosophical issues about what the setting of an Education Act means for an evolving education system influenced as it is by a complex range of social factors.

This review, consultation and drafting period is accompanied by considerable media interest in the performance of Tasmania's public education system. A public "hot house" and UTAS symposium as well as running commentary by journalists and community members in two of the three daily newspapers has kept education's profile high. This level of interest would be much more welcome if there wasn't the implication that the public system was in some way second rate and/or failing – neither of which is true. What Tasmania faces is a collective social challenge to continue to improve outcomes for students experiencing disadvantage.

While the government will carry the political burden of a change to the staffing formula, which has seen a reduction in front-line teachers in schools in 2015, it remains committed to continuing with Gonski ideals and increased funding to the end of 2017. Further evidence of interest in equity issues is the Ministerial Advisory Group which will report on Students Living with Disability at the end of July.

The state budget has also included money for much awaited and very welcome extra senior staff support in primary schools. This comes at a time when the Minister has also publicly expressed support for the Principals Association's championing of the Riley Report on Principal Health and Well Being. The Department of Education has set up a high level working party including key stakeholder groups which commences its work in the next few weeks.

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