



TASMANIAN
PRINCIPALS
ASSOCIATION

PO Box 607
New Norfolk, TAS 7140
0457 526 372
info@tpa.org.au

Media Release

Education Matters Year 11 and 12

The Mercury, Thursday 17th December 2015

Our culture, not colleges, is the issue.

Our secondary colleges are not “failing” – but a Tasmanian culture that does not value education highly enough is, and has been for many years.

The Tasmania Report, commissioned by the TCCI and TASCOS and written by Saul Eslake should be of vital interest to all Tasmanians. The idea that greater levels of educational attainment lead to higher earning levels and greater productivity is not new but is a message that must not be ignored. The effect of aggregated disadvantage is real, though, and equally, cannot be ignored or brushed aside.

Parents must sell education to their children. This is crucial to their children’s life opportunities. There is no excuse for families putting a cap on participation in education and training. No excuse.

The media have so far played an important role in the gathering momentum for social change in Tasmania. Valid data is necessary, though, if we are to reliably assess our education systems – public, Catholic and independent - all of which are in receipt of state and federal funds.

The college “issue” is clouded by invalid, unfair data comparisons. Senior secondary certificates eg the TCE, are not the same across the country. Measurements of attainment are not based on the same cohort basics. In at least one state the student group being measured is the one that exists in October – just prior to the testing or exam period. In Tasmania we measure the group as it exists in March. In one state students who are working part-time can submit a folio showing what they have achieved in their work which counts towards their Senior Certificate. We are not comparing like with like.

The way forward from here is one of solid planning supported by carefully developed and enacted policy which is going to take time to bring about change.

There is work to do in education – yes. But this is a time for methodical work on partnerships for the public good. Our issue is one of establishing a Tasmanian culture of universal valuing of education - and equity of opportunity.

Malcolm Elliott
President
Tasmanian Principals Association