

Question	Liberal Party – Response by Hon Will Hodgman MP Liberal Leader	Green Tasmania – Response by Hon Nick McKim MP Greens Leader	Labor Party – Response by Hon Lara Giddings MP – Premier
<p><b>1. How will the appointed Minister for Education be considered to be the Minister for ALL schools in Tasmania, proactively and equitably supporting ALL schools, both financially and in terms of policy development?</b></p> <p><i>Sometimes government decisions are made that fund government schools to provide resources that could be made available to all students, e.g. online learning, and specialist support for Students with Disabilities. (It is important to note that our Catholic school system saves governments and taxpayers in the vicinity of \$1,000 per student per year though by operating with lower public resources).</i></p>	<p>The Liberal Party is the only party which has a record of strong support for all schools, irrespective of what sector to which they all belong. Throughout our history, and particularly during the last parliamentary term, our team has maintained persistent concern for the welfare of non-Government schools.</p> <p>Tasmania's education system has been largely characterised by failed reforms over the period of the Labor Government, and more recently, the Labor-Green Government, including Essential Learnings, Tasmania Tomorrow and more recently the school viability review.</p> <p>Tens of millions of dollars have been wasted and Tasmanian students and our professional education workforce have been the guinea pigs of a rushed and ill-considered education agenda.</p> <p>As a result of Labor-Green Government's cuts to education, results in Tasmania have gone backwards, retention rates have plummeted for post year 10, we have the lowest year 12 (or VET equivalent) completion rate of any State in Australia, and Tasmania is below the national average in every one of the 20 literacy and numeracy</p>	<p>The Greens regard the Minister for Education to be the Minister for all schools in Tasmania.</p> <p>As Minister for Education, Greens Leader Nick McKim repeatedly said that he regarded himself as Minister for all Tasmanian schools, and acted as such. He met regularly with representatives of non-government schools, including by accepting kind invitations of many Catholic schools to attend meetings at their school. The Greens believe that it is the responsibility of the Education Minister after the state election to continue to fight for the implementation of the Gonski Better School funding model for the full six years, which will benefit all schools.</p>	<p>Labor has a good record in working with all schools in Tasmania. Labor works proactively and equitably to support all schools, both financially and in terms of policy development. Labor understands that government and non-government sectors need to work together so all Tasmanians are afforded the very best possible education. Tasmania's future prosperity and social and economic growth are dependent upon our educational system being world-class.</p> <p>Labor acknowledges that the government and non-government sectors have much to gain from each other through stronger cross-sectorial consultation, collaboration and partnerships that benefit all students.</p> <p>Labor has demonstrated through initiatives such as National Partnerships, the Building Education Revolution and ongoing collaboration with Catholic and Independent schools relating to the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, that such inclusive practices do and will continue to exist.</p> <p>Labor is committed to ensuring that ongoing communication exists and regular meetings are held between the Minister responsible for the Education portfolio and representatives from Catholic Education. A commitment is also</p>

	<p>measures under NAPLAN.</p> <p>The Liberals understand our educators are reform-weary, and just want to get on with the job of improving educational outcomes for Tasmanian students.</p> <p>We are also the strongest supporters of Independent and Catholic schools in Tasmania, recognising that these schools provide an invaluable service in educating around one third of Tasmanian children from a wide range of backgrounds.</p> <p>When the Labor-Green Government cut the education budget by \$190 million, these cuts had the two-fold action of a proportional reduction in funding in the Catholic, as well as the further 5 per cent punitive cut without consultation. We spoke out against this and stood alone.</p> <p>When the Labor-Green Government was negotiating with the former federal Labor Government, we spoke out against their trying to gain public sympathy for their attempt to reduce funding in the final agreement to Catholic and Independent schools. In this, we also stood alone.</p> <p>When the Labor-Green Government finally made amendments to the <i>Anti-Discrimination Act regarding</i></p>		<p>made to ensure regular liaison between Catholic Education and ministerial advisers.</p>
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	<p><i>exemptions</i> for faith-based schools, we stood firm in our resolve to provide protection for all faith-based schools. Unfortunately, we did not enjoy the support of Catholic Education at the time, despite working to deliver what we knew was requested. Nonetheless, we will act in Government to provide a proper, as of right to the provisions of the Act which prevent faith-based schools from operating within their own faith community, if they so wish.</p> <p>The Liberals support all our schools, Government and non-Government, and we have a plan to invest in schools for the education benefit of all Tasmanian families.</p> <p>A majority Liberal Government will engage with the Catholic and Independent sectors with a view to playing a constructive role in the development of non-Government schools. We will adopt a view that government decision making surrounding education should take into account the needs and concerns of each school sector and what each sector can offer to others through collaboration and mutual policy development. We would be willing to enter into discussions regarding collaboration between sectors for the development of online learning resources and sensible protocols for the sharing of same.</p>		
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	<p>In short, just as our Shadow Minister Michael Ferguson MP has been a strong advocate for every school sector, any Minister for Education within any government I lead will be a proactive minister for all schools.</p>		
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<p><b>2. Will you guarantee to provide for the Catholic Schools system a just proportion of the \$83 million quarantined in the 2013 State Budget to support the implementation of schools funding, 2014-2017?</b></p> <p><i>There is some anxiety that this money may be already be dispersed, in part or in full, to fund initiatives that have been publicly announced to improve the quality of educational provision in Government schools, e.g. Capital improvements in a number of government schools, learning Programs that are recent initiatives put into place in Government schools only.</i></p>	<p>The Liberals strongly support the principles of the funding agreement and we will continue to do so. This is despite the agreement not even being properly finalised between the two levels of government prior to entering caretaker mode last August.</p> <p>If elected on March 15, we will work constructively with the Federal Government to ensure Tasmania's share is delivered in full.</p> <p>The Liberals want to see every available Commonwealth dollar for Tasmania in education, because we deserve that and because we believe in education and the importance that Tasmania must begin to place on students getting the best educational outcomes to fix the Tasmanian economy. Our policies announced to date underscore this.</p> <p>I personally travelled to Canberra in early December to discuss measures needed to reboot Tasmania's economy. I was able to confirm the Tasmania's Gonski funding share was secure. The Australian Government has also publicly stated that the funding for Tasmania will be the same across four years. That</p>	<p>Yes. As Minister for Education, Mr Mckim ensured that these new funds were allocated in the 2013 state budget to the whole Tasmanian education system, not just to government schools.</p>	<p>To support the Better Schools: A National Plan for School Improvement reforms, the Australian Parliament passed the Australian Education Act 2013 (the Act) which prescribes how Australian Government funding will be made available from 1 January 2014 to government and non-government schools. Labor is committed to meeting its obligations as required under the Act and the Commonwealth Heads of Government Agreement.</p>
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	<p>money is now flowing to Tasmania.</p> <p>Last year, we noted with concern that the Premier attempted to manipulate the school funding changes proposed by the Commonwealth in a deliberate attempt to cut funding to independent and Catholic schools under the proposed "Gonski" model.</p> <p>We support all our schools, Government and non-Government, and have a plan to invest in our schools for the education benefit of all Tasmanian families.</p> <p>If fortunate enough to be elected to Government, we will always negotiate with the Federal government on the basis of getting the best possible deal for Tasmania, and will ensure that the Catholic system gets its just proportion of the \$83 million provided in the 2013 State Budget.</p>		
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**3. Will you undertake to increase state capital funding for the Catholic School system?**

*At present the amount of state government funding for capital purposes for Catholic schools is around \$600,000 per annum in total. This amount is inadequate to support the capital needs of our 37 schools and colleges.*

The Liberals have been the biggest supporters of education in Tasmania. We were the only party to stand up for Tasmanian schools while Labor and the Greens tried to forcibly close them. And we argued on behalf of schools when Labor and the Greens ripped \$190 million out of the education budget two years ago, including the additional punitive 5 per cent cut – cuts which have still not been restored.

Tasmania has just recorded the biggest budget deficit in the State's history of \$316 million. There are only two ways for any government to be able to fund further capital investment in Catholic schools at this time – increased revenue or increased savings. Increased revenue will flow from a growing economy, and responsible financial management should be an enduring principle of good government.

Today, therefore, we could not commit to specific increased capital funding for the Catholic school system over and above what has been allocated over the forward estimates. However, with a growing

The Greens acknowledge the capital needs of the Catholic School system. We commit to working closely with the Catholic system to better understand the need, and provide appropriate funding assistance.

Labor will ensure that all Tasmanian students access effective, stimulating and attractive educational facilities and environments. Against the backdrop of challenging economic times, to enable this work to progress, Labor would continue to work with and lobby the Federal Government to further assist in the development of our schools. Past Building Education Revolution funds for Government, Catholic and Independent schools have enabled the greatest modernisation program in Tasmanian history. Labor believes that our students deserve the best.

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	<p>economy and fiscal discipline, we can commit to negotiating in good faith into the future in recognition of the need to maintain the capital needs of the 37 Catholic schools and colleges.</p>		
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**4. How will you take into account the potential impact any change to the Year 11 and 12 College structure within government schools would have on the Catholic Schools of Tasmania?**

*It is clear that any move to restore Year 11 and 12 to small country high schools will have an impact on the viability of all schools in Tasmania.*

We do not believe it is acceptable for Tasmania to have the lowest year 12 (or equivalent) completion rate of any state in Australia. Tasmania's unacceptable education standards are the very reason why Tasmanian high schools need to go to year 12. It is no coincidence that Tasmania is the only state where high school finishes at year 10 and we are also the state with the lowest year 12 completion rates in the nation.

The Liberals have already committed to the no closure of secondary colleges in our detailed plan to invest \$45.5 million over four years, employ up to 105 new teachers and extend 21 high schools in rural and regional communities to year 12, by 2018.

Specifically, we have stated Colleges and TasTAFE will remain in place and will continue to educate year 11-12 students as they do now. Under our Plan, there will be up to an additional 2000 students completing year 11 and 12 in the first four years.

Our policy has nothing to do with migrating students from one setting to another, and we do not accept the suggestion that it will have any adverse impacts on the viability of

The Tasmanian Liberal Party has stated it intends to keep colleges open as well as move to reinstate year 11 and year 12 in all Tasmanian government schools. The Greens believe that the Liberal policy would lead to government colleges closing. It is our view that the best way to improve retention rates in Tasmania is by more focus and funding for the early years and encouraging attitudinal change in our community, rather than structural change. The Greens are not proposing structural change in Yr 11 and Yr 12, so impacts on Catholic Schools would not occur under the Greens.

	<p>schools in the Catholic sector or indeed any schools.</p> <p>Rather, it is about providing for and expecting students to actually complete year 12 or a VET equivalent - admitting that the lowest retention and completion rates of all the states is unacceptable. More students mean more demand for educational provision. Choice will be retained, and students who wish to continue either or both years 11 and 12 at one of our existing colleges will be encouraged to do so.</p> <p>Finally, because of our respect for the non-Government school sectors and our determination to improve the state's completion rates, we would be willing to work to support your organisation, should Catholic Education seek to implement any of the recommendation of its 2011 report into the issue.</p>		
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<p><b>5. What guarantee will you provide that the annual state government payment to support VET provision in schools will be continued and indexed into the future?</b></p> <p><i>We appreciate that this payment has been continued for 2014, and need to have assurance that it will not cease thereafter. This payment helps to provide essential upgrading of qualifications for VET teachers and the maintenance of the Trade Training Centres recently constructed, which are serving the needs of students across the state.</i></p>	<p>As a result of Labor-Green Government's cuts to education, results in Tasmania have gone backwards, retention rates have plummeted for post year 10, we have the lowest year 12 (or VET equivalent) completion <i>rate</i> of any State in Australia, and Tasmania <i>is</i> below the national average in every one of the 20 literacy and numeracy measures under NAPLAN.</p> <p>Additionally, we want to see all participants in VET engaged in purposeful training – where publicly funded training responds to the demands of labour market demand.</p> <p>We recognise that the upgrading of qualifications for VET teachers and the maintenance of Trade Training Centres is critical to improving learning outcomes, and are committed to supporting the VET provision in schools into the future, appropriately indexed.</p>	<p>We guarantee the continuation of VET funding, including indexation.</p>	<p>Labor will commit to the continued level of funding with indexation to support VET in Schools in the Catholic sector. Labor supports VET inschools being delivered by any registered training organisation, including private providers and TasTAFE.</p> <p>Labor believes that Trade Training Centres are important for providing better access to vocational training for people in rural and remote areas, and they are particularly important for areas such as Tasmania that have such regionally dispersed populations. Labor notes the Catholic sector has its own Trade Training Centres and that, disappointingly, the Federal Liberal Government has now ceased this program.</p>
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<p><b>6. Will the Government be willing to enter into a signed Agreement to ensure that state government funding commitment (post 2014) for Catholic schools honours federal/state obligations under The Education Act of 2013 to fund the Tasmanian Catholic school system?</b></p>	<p>We support all our schools, Government and non-Government and have a plan to invest in our schools for the education benefit of all Tasmanian families.</p> <p>We will honour the State Government funding commitment for Catholic schools.</p>	<p>The Greens would be willing to enter negotiations, and enter into such an agreement if it was drafted acceptably to both parties.</p>	<p>Labor is committed to working with Catholic Education in relation to the allocative mechanisms that currently exist pertaining to the state allocation and current budgetary processes. Budgetary/Funding arrangements between the Federal Government and the Catholic Education are covered by a separate agreement. Labor would continue to work with the Catholic Education on this matter.</p>
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<p><b>7. Will the new Minister for Education lobby the Federal Government to roll out fibre-based NBN provision to ALL Tasmanian schools?</b></p> <p><i>Some schools already have the NBN facility and if the remaining schools receive only a copper-based access this will create inequity of opportunity to access high speed internet access.</i></p>	<p>The Tasmanian Liberals have always supported the NBN rollout in Tasmania and fibre to the premises.</p> <p>As a result of my discussions with the Federal Minister for Communications, Malcolm Turnbull, Mr Turnbull has tasked the NBN Co to undertake work on a trial and has indicated that if the trial shows the costs of fibre to the premises over power poles being comparable to the fibre to the node option, then there will be a strong case to deliver fibre to the premises through the power poles.</p> <p>We will continue to work constructively and cooperatively with the Federal Government to ensure the NBN is rolled out in Tasmania as quick and efficiently as possible, rather than shout from the sidelines.</p> <p>I would encourage your membership to ask themselves: Who do they think is best placed to get a good outcome for Tasmania – the Liberals who are working positively with the federal government, or the Premier, Lara Giddings who is standing on the sidelines shouting at them?</p>	<p>Yes. The Greens have long campaigned on the necessity for, and benefits of, fast data speeds for health, industry and education sectors, including Catholic Schools. During the election campaign we have issued a specific election commitment to progress the NBN roll-out as swiftly as possible. This policy initiative is available for download: <a href="#"><u>Building the Tasmanian Broadband Network</u></a></p>	<p>Labor will invest in growing a smart Tasmania by supporting the development of infrastructure for the 21st century. Labor is committed to giving every Tasmanian access to superfast broadband and WiFi so that everyone can harness cutting-edge technology for health, learning and business.</p> <p>A re-elected Labor Government will connect Tasmanians faster by allowing NBN Co free access to Aurora's public infrastructure, worth \$25 million over 20 years. This will allow the NBN to be rolled out more quickly so that Tasmanian businesses and communities can get swifter access to the superfast broadband of the future.</p> <p>A re-elected Labor Government will include optic fibre in its plans for a second Basslink cable. Labor's commitment of \$1.5 million for a full feasibility analysis into building a second Bass Strait electricity interconnector will include optic fibre for greater capacity, market contestability and lower prices. Labor will continue to lobby the Federal Liberal Government to honour their pre-election promise to roll out the NBN to all Tasmanians.</p>
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<p>8. What support will your party provide to the Tasmanian Catholic Education sector?</p>	<p><b><i>What are the Liberal Party's specific plans for assistance to the Catholic Schools and our students over its first four years of Government?</i></b></p> <p>Before responding to your specific points, I would point to the fact that the only schools which the State operates are Government schools. You ask what role exists for Catholic Education in our published plans. In reality, we have not to date received any approaches for the state to play a greater role in the operation of non-government schools and such a request would be rather unexpected. You will appreciate that a majority Liberal Government will respect and support non-government schools as previously described; and that our own plans for education primarily sits with the schools we would run.</p> <p>However, that is not to suggest in any way that we would want to maintain the level of segregation that has existed under the present government. Rather, we would welcome increased collaboration.</p> <p><b><u>Extending high Schools to Year 12 Implementation Plan:</u></b>  <b><u>The party's policy talks of all High Schools extending to year 12 within a decade of achieving Office. Where do Catholic High Schools fit into the liberal Party plans in this policy area?</u></b></p> <p>We recognise the need to</p>	<p>The Greens are consistent and strong advocates for the Gonski Better Schools funding reforms to be delivered in full across the full six years. We also believe that the sixth year funding level should be a baseline minimum funding level for all Tasmanian schools in perpetuity. The Greens also value close relationships with all stakeholders and a collaborative approach to policy development, as demonstrated during Mr McKim's tenure as Minister for Education.</p>	
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	<p>normalise the idea that a student hasn't completed their secondary education until they have achieved their TCE or a VET equivalent. To this end, what is needed are more students continuing their education journey and provision of educational opportunity is obviously key to this.</p> <p>Because of our respect for the non-Government school sectors and our determination to improve the state's completion rates, we would be willing to work to support Catholic Education seek to implement any of the recommendations of its 2011 report into the issue.</p> <p><b>The policy calls for an establishment of an Implementation Taskforce. Why is Tasmanian Catholic Education not included as a key stakeholder?</b></p> <p>In order to ensure that all stakeholders are fully consulted and involved in the implementation of our policy, we will establish an Implementation Taskforce, made up of key stakeholders, to assist and advise the Minister on the implementation process.</p> <p>The Implementation Taskforce will consist of key stakeholders, experts in the field, and interested parties. The list provided in the</p>		
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policy document quite clearly relates to those stakeholders within the government secondary school system. As it is not exhaustive, we would be prepared to consider interest from other parties, including Catholic Education, should you wish to support efforts to make this change. We have to date not received any such indication. In this regard, should we be successful at the March 15 election, we would welcome contact to establish exactly what working relationship we could strike on this key education reform.

**What support will the Liberal Party provide to Tasmanian Catholic Education to further improve retention rates within Catholic Schools?**

The Liberal commitment is strategic investment into careful, evidence-based policies to get better outcomes.

Naturally, we would embrace any opportunity to engage with Catholic schools to improve retention and completion rates. To date this has not been raised with us; however as previously stated there will be opportunity to share the benefit of our experiences extending high schools to year 12 with Catholic education and be willing to receive feedback and suggestions on how we can.

**In respect to VET provision and the plan for flexible learning and Improved online learning capabilities, will the Liberal Party support greater online access to Tasmanian Catholic Education schools either by direct financial support or via Education Department provision?**

Today, we could not commit to increased financial support for greater online access to Tasmanian Catholic Education schools beyond what has been allocated over the forward estimates.

However, with a growing economy and fiscal discipline, we can commit to negotiating in good faith with the Catholic Education into the future to progress the issue of greater online access in the context of future budgets. As previously stated, our party beliefs are strikingly different from Labor and the Greens who have acted to increase separation between government and non-government schools. A majority Liberal Government would welcome any opportunity to increase collaboration and sharing of learning resources.

**The Implementation plan allocates \$44.5 million over a four year period. What share has been**

**allocated to Tasmanian Catholic Education from this amount?**

Our Plan, as it currently stands, only applies to public High Schools funded by government, and no share of designated funding has therefore been allocated to Tasmanian Catholic Education. However as we have made clear, we have constantly stood firm to ensure non-government schools receive their full funding entitlement.

- **Leading the nation in education:**

**The policy states "We support the additional state investment of \$83 million under Gonski and we have a plan to further invest in schools for the education benefit of all Tasmanian Families." Where do Tasmanian Catholic Education Schools and Colleges fit into this initiative?**

The Liberals strongly support the Gonski funding agreement and we will continue to do so. If elected in March we will work constructively with the Federal Government to ensure Tasmania's promised share is delivered in full.

The Liberals want to see every available Commonwealth dollar for Tasmania in education, because we deserve that and because we believe in education and the

	<p>importance that Tasmania must begin to place on students getting the best educational outcomes to fix the Tasmanian economy. Our policies announced to date underscore this.</p> <p>We support all our schools, Government and non-Government and have a plan to invest in our schools for the education benefit of all Tasmanian families.</p> <p>If fortunate enough to be elected to Government, we will always negotiate with the Federal government on the basis of getting the best possible deal for Tasmania, and will ensure that the Catholic system gets a just proportion of the \$83 million quarantined in the 2013 State Budget.</p> <p><b><i>25 new literacy and numeracy specialists:</i></b> <b>The Policy states "A majority Liberal Government will have at its heart a commitment to invest in education to improve educational outcomes increase productivity, and create more job opportunities for young Tasmanians. As part of this plan, a majority Liberal Government will employ up to 25 new specialist literacy and numeracy teachers."</b></p> <p><b>This has been costed at \$8.4 million over four years. Where do Tasmanian Catholic Education</b></p>		
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**Schools and Colleges fit into this initiative?**

The up to 25 new specialist literacy and numeracy teachers that we have committed to employ as part of our Plan to invest in education, to improve educational outcomes, increase productivity, and create more job opportunities for young Tasmanians, will be placed in the public school system, with the key focus being on years 7 to 9.

Although Catholic Education students will not be able to access these specialists, we hope that their successful operation can be replicated in the Catholic and Independent school systems, and we can commit to negotiating in good faith, and working with, the Tasmanian Catholic Education into the future on this.

It would be *our* expectation that *the* additional funding *for* Catholic Education provided *for* in the funding agreement could be utilised in a similar way. If Catholic Education would like to, we would be willing to collaborate on the training and networking of both sets of specialist literacy and numeracy teachers.

***Improved support for students with a disability:***

**This policy includes '\$1 million for an autism specific satellite unit in the south of the state, so children with autism are given the best opportunity to learn and reach their full potential, while still being included in a mainstream environment."**

***Tasmanian Catholic Education has 208 diagnosed Autistic students currently within our schools and colleges. What access would these students have to similar facilities or services throughout the State?***

The Liberals support the right of the parent to choose the right education for their child, whether that is in a support school or in a mainstream school.

We will pilot the establishment of an autism-specific satellite unit attached to a local public school in the south of the state, so children with autism are given the best opportunity to learn and reach their full potential, while still being included in a mainstream school environment. It is not correct to cost this specific initiative at \$1 million. Rather, that amount is the total cost of our rather comprehensive policy to support families with autism.

Although this initiative will be based at a southern government school,

	<p>we would be most willing to negotiating in good faith, and working with, Tasmanian Catholic Education to ensure that students enrolled in Catholic schools may participate in this pilot. Our \$1 million policy also includes kick-starting a longer-term strategy to implement best practice autism care to Tasmania, including introducing the American, web-based Rethink Autism program to the State. The program, based on Applied Behaviour Analysis, is individually tailored and can be delivered in the home, in child care centres, in schools and anywhere the child goes.</p> <p>It is our intention that Catholic and Independent Schools will be able to access the program license, enabling the program to be delivered all Tasmanian Schools.</p>		
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