

Submission to the Independent Review of Education in Tasmania

This review represents a very real opportunity for Tasmania to become a world leader in education.

With less than 300 schools across the state we have the opportunity for close collaboration across the three sectors: public, Catholic and independent. We have the opportunity to turn a page in Tasmania's rich education history, bolster community confidence, and stride forward with the excitement of possibility through collaborative action.

The independent review must be, logically, conducted with due regard to Tasmania's sociocultural and socioeconomic contexts. The focus must be on the meaning of equity and renewed, sustained strategies in the application of equity across all education provision.

There are highly significant implications for system operation, governance, and outcomes. This must include discussion of the design of educational provision in regard to reframing, retaining, re-booting or reversion (or all four) in a set of clearly articulated state strategies for all children from pre-birth.

While every year of education is important the foundations are laid in the first thousand days and the early years of schooling.

The status of the teaching profession must be bolstered through strengthened, whole-of-government support as a strategic focus. This includes, but is not limited to, the re-design of teaching as a career-long pathway of learning which is well-understood, highly attractive and recognised by Tasmanians as the central plank in our state's cultural vision and provision.

The media must be closely engaged in communication of issues and strategic responses including significant, differentiated reform of curriculum; and the reality that industrial contexts are most definitely a critical element of reform in education and the rejuvenation of the teaching profession.

I am personally very concerned that education policy is developed without a structured, replicable, profession-agreed process of genuine consultation with school leaders. The school is the superordinate organisational unit in education. This is where the focus of evaluation and fair or unfair judgement lies. Policy must be devised with close involvement with people who know the feeling of the classroom floorboards beneath their feet. Policy cannot be ideated without the faces and stories of children and their education settings first and foremost in the minds of administrators – whether this be a department of education, an education office, or a school's board.

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Malcolm Elliott