

Submission to the Independent Review of Education in Tasmania.

Personal beliefs.

My name is Peter Kearney. I have been a teacher in schools for 45 years, mainly in Tasmania; 25 as a principal. My three children all attended government schools in Tasmania. I have an OAM for service to the community and to education.

My narrative.

For some years there has been a campaign in Tasmania to get rid of colleges. It emerged with a group self titled the Education Ambassadors. Founded by Michael Rowan and his late wife, it skillfully infiltrated local government in Tasmania with its agenda.

The agenda was that if Year 11 and 12 schooling in Tasmania was extended into current Year 7 to 10 high schools making them Year 7 to 12 somehow there would lead to a massive change in educational outcomes.

Well, the Liberal State Government adopted the plan and a great deal of money has been spent. But the only real change has been to make sure the statistics better reflect what are the actual realities.

There has been no review of the program!

The Education Ambassadors had seemed to retreat into the past.

But the same agendas have been revived again based on the latest Productivity Commission figures. One figure was plucked out and run across all the media. On this occasion it was Saul Eslake running the media. The extraordinary amount of media time he has been given and used seemed to reflect the his obsession of this agenda

The campaign was successful and that is why we are now having this review.

I hope the review will reflect on the reputational damage done in the process. Hard working staff who live with all this and have to work on

despite the distraction. Parents who unnecessarily start to doubt the quality of their college. Loss of student morale. Added costs.

Education is a competitive market. The Secondary Colleges compete with the non- government schools for enrolments. At present a significant number of students are leaving non-government schools to enrol at government secondary colleges for Year 11-12. There is a market and many students are voting with their feet.

Students really like going to school at a government secondary college.

Summary.

The events that have led to the calling of this Review are very disappointing.

Why have people outside the DECYP and the former Dept. of Education had to defend our state schools. What we have seen is simply an attack on government schools. If the DECYP will not defend our schools then let school staff and Principals come out and speak publicly in defence of our schools.

There is endless talk about school improvement.

It is not unduly simplistic to assert that getting good teachers in classes and good principals running schools will produce good outcomes. We will get school improvement.

Teachers and principals need to be able to get on with their job, be supported and listened to. They need to be supported.

The time for our DECYP schools being pushed around by bystanders with their own agendas is over.

Peter Kearney