ALERT TO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL COMMUNITIES ON GREENS EDUCATION POLICY

The Independent Schools Association of SA is alerting its 97 member schools to the Greens education policy and its serious consequences for Independent schools and parents.

The Association’s Executive Director, Garry Le Duff, labelled the Greens education policy an artefact of the 1950s and an affront to more than one-third of South Australian parents with children at non-government schools.

“The Greens want to wind back the clock to destroy parental choice, cut non-government school funding, create a funding hit-list against certain schools, force up school fees, reduce school choice for parents and duplicate existing State policy on the establishment of new schools,” said Mr Le Duff.

“This is totally at odds with both of the major parties, Liberal and Labor. The Greens education ideology poses an enormous and unacceptable threat to Independent schools and their communities.

“The Greens could play a key role in the Senate after the election. It is vital that school communities carefully check the education policies of the minor parties.”

The Greens policy would:

- Abolish the Commonwealth Government’s schemes for funding private schools, including the socioeconomic status (SES) and funding-maintained formulae
- Redirect the money from ending subsidies to some private schools into a ‘national equity funding program for public schools’
- Maintain total level of Commonwealth funding for non-government schools at 2003-04 levels, indexed for inflation, with a review at the end of the 2005-08 quadrennium
- Reintroduce the New Schools Policy to prevent the development of new private schools that threaten the ‘viability and diversity’ of existing public schools
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- Extend to private schools the ‘anti-discrimination measures’ that apply in public schools
- Introduce ‘accountability’ frameworks for government funding to non-government schools

“The concepts that underpin the Greens education policy were debated and rejected long ago,” said Mr Le Duff.

“Accountability associated with Commonwealth funding is already the same for Government and Non-Government schools.

“The Greens’ policy would punish parents who send their children to Independent schools and generate uncertainty for families of children across the State. These are families that make a significant contribution to educating their children.

“It is a policy that would restrict choice of school for many parents, discourage parental investment and duplicate State legislation.

“It is policy that looks for things to destroy and to control, not build and sustain.”

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