

Give us a chance to have our say!

Mr Gerard Reid, President Northern Territory Council of Government School Organisations (NTCOGSO) has today expressed his shock and disappointment at the rushed consultation period for the new Education Act.

Mr Reid said “Minister Peter Chandler promised School Communities three months to review any changes to the Education Act.

“Instead we see what is becoming a concerning pattern – School Communities being asked to look at major changes in week 9 and 10 of school terms.

“We saw this in 2013 – with massive staff cuts happening in week 9 and 10 of term 4.

“We saw this in 2014 – with an entire overhaul of School budgets and the introduction of Global School Budgets in week 10, term 3.

“This afternoon is the first time we’ve seen the proposed Education Act and they’ve given Territorians five school weeks to look at these changes.

“The Minister has said today that these changes aim to “support a flexible education system” and “deal with current and future issues affecting school education in the Territory for the next 20 to 30 years”.

“Why then has the Minister changed his mind and only given School Communities a few weeks to comment on these changes?

“Schools are winding up for the term. Families are preparing for the Semester break and their holidays. School staff are busy, already working weekends, to get end of Semester reports done for their students.

“Out of the blue, parents are being asked to consider compulsory fees at their child’s public school.

“What we’ve seen in other states is compulsory fees mean that parents pay more for education – even for core subjects like IT and sport.



“It is cold comfort for Minister Chandler to “assure” parents that there will be no charges for basic education.

“We’ve seen in other states that over time, compulsory parent payments evolved from being used to support free core curriculum subjects to being essential to its provision.

“The Northern Territory and Federal Governments must fund education appropriately.

“It must not be up to parents to fill funding shortfalls, particularly where it leaves children from lower socio-economic group vulnerable to missing out on educational experiences.”

“COGSO will be looking for changes which affect families and the right of every child to have access to an adequately funded education”

“We urge Minister Chandler to let everyone have a say and provide the three month consultation period he promised” Mr Reid said.

Further information:

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