

## KEY ISSUES

### Proposed Education Act

COGSO remains concerned, *but not limited to*, the following issues;

- 1. The 'Education Regulations' which will take effect on the commencement of a new Education Act, have not been provided.**

It is our understanding that the regulations have not been written.

It is these Education Regulations which provide school councils with the rules and requirements to govern.

- 2. Proposed lowering of the compulsory school age from 6 years old to 5 years old, removing a 12 month period from parents to determine.**

(97% of children aged 5 are participating in school – what is the motivation for change?)

- 3. Proposal for a set allocation for each child of 26 semesters of government schooling.**

Students requiring additional semesters will be required to apply to the Chief Executive of the Department of Education.

- 4. Fees and Charges for Public Education – currently a lack of detail and clarity.**

COGSO supports the right of every child in the Northern Territory to have access to a high quality, free education regardless of their parents' ability to pay fees or charges.

- 5. Northern Territory Board of Studies (NTBOS) – to be reduced from sixteen members who represent a wide range of education stakeholders, to seven members, with four appointed by the Minister**

Reducing the independence of the NTBOS as an advisory board.

- 6. Under section 71M of the current Education Act, members of School Councils who act in good faith in the performance of their duties are protected from civil or criminal action. This is as an individual member, or as the School Council as a whole.**

It is noted that under the proposed Education Bill, there is no longer reference to protections from liabilities for the School Representative Body *as a whole*, only for *members* of the School Representative Body.

It is hoped that this is merely an oversight and that School Representative Bodies that act in good faith in the performance of their duties continue to have protection from liability.

**7. COGSO notes that there are different commencement dates planned for sections of the proposed Education Act.**

**The majority of the Act is proposed to commence on 1 January 2016, except:**

Part 6, Division 2 – School Representative Bodies

- **This Division comes into effect on 1 April 2016;**
- **It must be noted that School Councils must hold their School Council AGMs by 15 March, causing potential confusion as to which legislation School Councils operate under for the first four months of 2016;**

Part 6, Division 4 – School or Multi-School Management Councils

- **This Division comes into effect on 1 April 2016;**

Part 7 – Non-Government Schools

- **This Part comes into effect on 1 April 2016;**

Part 3 – Northern Territory Board of Studies

- **This Part comes into effect on 1 July 2016**

**8. The Minister remains focused on implementation 1 January 2016; however the need to rush such important legislation and regulations remains unclear to school councils.**

Particularly given the regulations are not ready for public consultation.

**Further information:**

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