

Will You Stand up Minister for the Welfare of NT Students?

The Northern Territory Council of Government School Organisations (NTCOGSO) is extremely disappointed to see the Federal government blatantly side-stepping a recent High Court decision which ruled that payments made by the Commonwealth to schools under the National School Chaplaincy program were invalid.

COGSO President, Gerard Reid, said the current tactic to invite State and Territory Education Minister to administer the funding for the Commonwealth should be rejected by our NT Minister for Education, Peter Chandler.

“On behalf of our government schools we urge the Minister to reject this invitation until the funding includes secular welfare workers, not just faith based chaplains”, Mr Reid emphasised today.

“If the Commonwealth truly wanted to make a valuable contribution to the wellbeing of students and school communities, they would ensure that this public funding was redirected to fund counselling and similar services run by trained professionals. This would ensure that welfare services are available to all students”

In stark comparison Mr Reid highlighted Federal Minister Pyne’s School Autonomy model, which espouses, “This initiative aims to givegovernment schools more control of local decision making and to help encourage stronger links between schools, parents and the local community”

“Then equally give schools the same control of local decisions and allow them to decide on the type of provision of student welfare services under this \$243.8 million program, Mr Reid demanded.

“This program was commenced under John Howard who told Australia that students need the guidance of chaplains, rather than just counsellors. We continue to reject that view on behalf of all of our students in secular public schools” concluded Mr Reid.

Further information:

Michelle Parker

NT COGSO Executive Officer

Ph: 042 888 5353

MEDIA RELEASE