

As the former General Manager of The Smith Family in Tasmania I am very supportive of the essential role of parents and other carers and families in supporting childrens' education.

The Smith Family is Australia's largest children's charity supporting children and families from low income backgrounds through education. For 6.5 years I helped to establish and grow The Smith Family in Tasmania from an initial focus on the early years to include learning and mentoring support programs for over 3,000 school aged children. Through my background and passion in health and community development, I successfully applied for Commonwealth and State Government funding for innovation school-community partnerships projects in two sites; in addition to literacy and career pathways, these projects each included a strong focus on parental engagement.

I believe there s a role for the community sector to work with schools to expand parent engagement initiatives statewide. Not all school associations have the social capital to raise funds and involve parents and families to the same extent, and all children deserve an education that will enable them to fulfil their potential no matter their postcode. A majority Labor government will reduce cost as a barrier to engagement and participation in schools, waiving school levies and offering free bus transport to children's closest public school or faith based school. A new genuine needs based funding model will also address longstanding inequality in the distribution of resources and particularly address resourcing to support children with disability in schools.

kind regards

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