



Jessica Bennett  
Operations Manager  
Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations

8 July 2025

**RE: TASSO election priorities**

Dear Jessica

Thank you for your email of 1 July 2025 regarding the Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations' six key education priorities.

I am again running as an independent candidate for the seat of Franklin and am committed to good public policy, greater investment in health, education, public transport and housing and improving the quality of life for all Tasmanians. And I place very high priority on supporting the most vulnerable in our community.

In this context education is critically important and public schools must always have priority in State Government education investment and planning decisions. As open, secular and (nominally) free institutions, public schools provide all Tasmanians (and particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds) with the foundation knowledge and skills necessary to lead productive lives in the social and economic spheres. And a good education can be life-changing for many students.

Bullying is a serious issue in our schools and I would support the continuation of a parliamentary inquiry. School violence and bullying is regularly raised with my office by constituents, and I have engaged with a number of local principals about this. A greater focus on family engagement by the Department would assist in addressing bullying in addition to improving learning outcomes.

With regards to allied health professionals in schools, psychology and speech pathology specialists can make a big difference to educational outcomes, particularly for more vulnerable students, and I support the use of the kinds of incentives set out in the TASSO statement.

I am concerned with the way capital investment is directed, having seen several schools in my electorate in desperate need of maintenance waiting years for funds to be allocated, and sometimes waiting years more for the funds to be actually spent. I have lobbied the government for funding for a number of schools in my electorate



I would support greater transparency and clarity of decision making around the allocation of capital expenditure to ensure schools with more urgent needs are prioritised.

On the delivery of Year 11 and 12, this matter is more complex in Tasmania than in other jurisdictions (except the ACT) given the long history of separate senior secondary colleges. I can understand concerns about duplication and potentially wasteful spending associated with transitioning high schools into Year 11 and 12 provision where there is an existing college in relatively close proximity and would welcome an independent review of this matter.

A lack of transport is a significant barrier for many children when it comes to school attendance, especially in our rural and regional areas. Children should have access to a quality education no matter where they live and what their family circumstances are.

Through the last term of parliament, public transport was a priority for me and I consistently held the state government to account over reductions in Metro Services. I also advocated with the Transport Minister directly over specific school bus transport issues which were raised with me by local schools.

if I have the privilege of being re-elected, would welcome continuing dialogue with TASSO to ensure the voice of parents of state school students is heard in the State Parliament.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'David O'Byrne', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**David O'Byrne**  
Independent for Franklin