



Media Release
24 November 2014

The results are in: Political parties tell OCOS what they will do for Victorian schools

In anticipation of Saturday's election, OCOS shares answers from political parties in response to a series of questions on the State's schools.

OCOS spokesperson Catherine Hall explained, 'We sent a letter to all parties to help us work out where each stands on the issues that matter to us. We hope these answers will help all Victorian parents, grandparents and voters who care about our schools when they cast their vote on Saturday. Of course every electorate will have its own issues and parents will know what's going on in their own community but these links to party responses on our website might help to paint a clearer 'big picture' of each party's approach.'

<http://www.ourchildrenourschools.com.au/news-election-2014/> (or read down for summary)

Catherine Hall sums up the responses like this:

'While the Coalition is throwing money at schools in their election promises, OCOS is not convinced that they are listening to parents and communities. They appear to be priding themselves on their past record and haven't provided a new vision for public schools in Victoria. Remember, most Victorian children are at public schools and people are crying out for something better than what we have now, so this is concerning.'

'The Australian Labor Party took some trouble to answer all of our questions and on the whole we can see that they are listening to parents and communities and giving education a high priority. We'd like to have seen a little more focus on investment in public education for the long term and not just playing catch up on the failings of the last government'.

'The Greens and Socialist Alliance gave OCOS full and detailed responses to our questions. Both parties echo many of the sentiments that OCOS has been calling for. It is also heartening to see some PUP candidates who clearly understand the education issues in their areas. They appear conscious of the equity issues emerging in our current system and look set to fight for parents and children. But if parents are thinking about voting for one of the minor parties then we'd encourage them to think carefully about where their preferences will end up.'

End quotes

Summary of responses to OCOS letter addressed to political parties

Party	Letter response	Questions answered	Alignment with OCOS aims	Meeting requested by OCOS	Meeting granted
ALP	✓	Answers provided		Yes	Yes
Q1		Partly	Close		
Q2		Fully	Not aligned		
Q3		Fully	Somewhat		
Q4		Partly	Somewhat		
Q5		Partly	Unclear		
Q6		Partly	Close		
Liberal Party	✓	No answers provided		Yes	Yes
Q1 – 6		Provided links to Education Department publications	Unable to rate		
The Greens	✓	Answers provided		No	n/a
Q1		Fully	Close		
Q2		Fully	Somewhat		
Q3		Fully	Close		
Q4		Fully	Close		
Q5		Fully	Unclear		
Q6		Fully	Close		
PUP	✓	No answers provided		No	
Q1 – 6		Provided link to Party website. School media releases by Northern Metro and Western Victoria candidates.	Media releases show some alignment with OCOS aims, particularly on issues of equity and community ownership of schools.	No	n/a
Family First	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No answers provided	n/a	No	n/a
Socialist Alliance (requested letter)	✓	Answers provided		No	n/a
Q1		Fully	Close		
Q2		Fully	Close		
Q3		Fully	Close		
Q4		Fully	Close		
Q5		Fully	Close		
Q6		Fully	Somewhat		

Questions asked:

1. To avoid the skewing of demand for public schools, would you move to establish an independent school resourcing body which would take account of communities' lifecycles and ordinarily plan for the public infrastructure provision of primary and secondary state schools? Would you establish a community advisory committee for the resourcing body to make informed and long term planning possible?
2. Would you undertake to immediately stop the sale of schools and land by the state until an independent resourcing body is established?

3. Would you undertake that in future, all education income, including sales revenue would stay in the education portfolio and be redeployed there along non-political, need-based criteria?
4. Seeing state schools do the heavily lifting of the education burden in terms of equity, will you promise to positively discriminate on behalf of state schools? Such measures would include planning for a state school before contemplating building a non-government school and stating in planning documents such as Plan Melbourne that everyone has a right to have a state school within 20 mins to increase the liveability of the city?
5. Remaining inequities threaten the future of all of our children, will you promise to implement Gonski in full?
6. Given the State has responsibilities towards both government and non-government school systems inherent conflicts are more than obvious, including making public school funding political 'announceables': will you establish an all-level Education Ombudsman which will audit all education spending and an enforceable community standard of educational provision throughout the school systems, including measuring access and equity between comparable groups (such as low SES, gender, disability, regional status) as well as quality of the delivery of such community standard?

For more information please visit www.ourchildrenourschools.com.au.

- ends -

About Our Children, Our Schools

Our Children, Our Schools believes every Victorian child should have access to high-quality Foundation-to-Year 12 public education in their local community.

This means that these schools must be proactively planned for and built, well-maintained, staffed and funded appropriately.

OCOS members are community groups campaigning for the same outcomes as OCOS:

- Beaumaris School Community Group (BSCG)
- A new school for Bannockburn District
- High School for Coburg (HSC)
- Doreen and Mernda Secondary School Alliance
- Friends of Kyneton Education (FoKE)
- Oakleigh Ward Local Secondary School (OWLSS)
- Richmond High School Choices
- Secondary Education for Seddon, Kingsville and Yarraville (SKY High)
- TwoSchoolsNow (Port Phillip and Southbank)
- High School for Preston
- Restore Strathmore Heights' School Zones
- Reopen Our Schools Banyule
- Friends of Elwood College
- PGR (Public Education Group)
- Nunawading Primary School Site Preservation Group
- Fishermans Bend Network
- Northern Mallee School Council Presidents Group
- Docklands Community Forum
- Point Cook Action Group

For interviews with an Our Children, Our Schools spokesperson, please contact:

Darren Saffin

0411 089 209

darren@djscommunications.com.au

Or

media@ourchildrenourschools.com.au