

From: Faruqi, Mehreen (Senator) <Senator.Faruqi@aph.gov.au>

Sent: Monday, 29 April 2019 10:21 AM

Subject: RE: Policy questions from Catholic Education

Dear Jim,

Please see our responses below.

Kind regards

Mehreen

Dr Mehreen Faruqi

Greens Senator for NSW

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My electorate office is on the land of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation.

1. *As the Commonwealth is the predominant funder of non-government schools, how will your party ensure Catholic schools remain affordable for most Australian families?*

The Greens believe that federal funding to the school education system should be on the basis of need and equity to ensure that all Australian children have the opportunity to fulfil their best educational outcomes.

2. *What support will your party provide to help Catholic and other non-government schools upgrade learning facilities and keep pace with enrolment growth, given the rising costs of land, construction and classroom technology?*

The Greens will increase the Capital Grants Program funding to \$400 million a year and expand it to include public schools so that all schools can build the teaching and learning facilities they need.

3. *What is your party's position on the right of religious schools to retain faith based exemptions from anti-discrimination legislation in relation to staffing, enrolment and policy matters?*

The Greens support legislation to enshrine the protection of religious belief. However we also believe that actions (including teachings) must be limited when those actions interfere with the right of Australians to live free from discrimination, even when those actions are based on religious doctrines, tenets and beliefs. This would include actions in relation to the hiring and firing of staff and the enrolment or expulsion of students. We believe that there are sufficient safeguards already contained within our anti-discrimination laws to protect religious teachings, and we believe that where potential conflicts between religious beliefs and the right to be free from discrimination exist they should be considered under a comprehensive charter of rights.

4. *Catholic schools are providing an increasing number of pre-school services for families that chose Catholic education. What will your party do to support this important stage of early childhood education?*

The Greens will ensure universal early childhood education for 3 and 4-years-olds, and extend the available hours of preschool from 15 to 24 per week. Our commitment to extending the National Partnership Agreement for Universal Access to Early Childhood Education on an ongoing basis will genuinely ensure every child, everywhere in the country, has optional access to 24 hours a week of a quality early learning program.

In addition, the Greens' policy on child care will make it fee free for 80% - or four out of five – families in Australia. We will also abolish the activity test to access the childcare subsidy. To ensure access in areas of high First Nations populations and high levels of disadvantage, the Greens will allocate a proportion of the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) for quality community-controlled and culturally safe integrated early years' services. We will develop and implement a workforce strategy with the early learning sector and unions to achieve professional pay and better working conditions for educators and carers. The Greens will also provide grants worth \$200m for centres in areas of high need to reduce waiting lists.