

DOING THINGS SMARTER - EDUCATION AND LEARNING

Position:

- FAMILY FIRST believes education and learning are the cornerstones to developing and equipping young Australians for the future. Education and learning are also vital for Australia's continued prosperity and to ensure young Australians have the skills demanded in rapidly changing industries;
- FAMILY FIRST believes in lifelong learning and supports the desire of many older Australians to continue learning as well as to share their wisdom and skills;
- FAMILY FIRST strongly believes Australia's education system – primary, secondary and tertiary – should promote access and fairness;
- FAMILY FIRST believes it is vital that values are taught in schools; values such as honesty, compassion, politeness and generosity. Students should be taught about individual responsibilities as well as community obligations, as well as the importance of resilience and coping mechanisms;
- FAMILY FIRST believes parents are the most important teachers of their children;
- FAMILY FIRST believes parents should have the final choice about their children's education and supports Government funding for both government and non-government schools;
- FAMILY FIRST believes it is fair that funding is set by need and takes into account the incomes of parents at each school;
- FAMILY FIRST is particularly concerned about parents of children with disabilities, who suffer financially if they send their children to non-government schools. There are about 30,000 students with disabilities at non-government schools. FAMILY FIRST believes they should receive the same funding and support for their disability as children at government schools;

- FAMILY FIRST believes it is fair that university students who receive some of the community benefit of university education should pay some of the costs. But there is always a balance between contributing to the cost and ensuring the cost is not an unreasonable burden. FAMILY FIRST believes the costs are currently unreasonable;
- FAMILY FIRST opposes allowing universities to offer degrees to only full-fee students. Access to university must be based on merit, not on who can afford it;
- FAMILY FIRST is also concerned that further deregulation of the university sector could punish smaller and regional universities.

Actions:

- FAMILY FIRST will lobby to ensure all parents have genuine choice about the school that is best for their child and supports their family's values. No parent of a child with a disability should be locked into a school for fear of losing vital funding and support;
- FAMILY FIRST supports measures to reduce class sizes and increase literacy levels;
- FAMILY FIRST supports greater school accountability to parents and reports written in "Plain English";
- FAMILY FIRST wants increased funding for vocational education and training which is vital in training young people so they can get jobs in key industries and areas of skill shortage;
- FAMILY FIRST will argue for increased funding for universities, particularly smaller and regional universities;
- FAMILY FIRST voted against legislation allowing universities to offer degrees to only full-fee students.