

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Northern Territory Government Gags Public School Communities**

"Public education is the backbone of this country, and public school supporters have a right to advocate for better resourcing. In an area of the country that is rich in diversity but extremely high in needs we are appalled to think that the government would believe resources were plentiful."

This is the reaction from Australian Council of State School Organisations President Peter Garrigan to a Northern Territory Government memo stating school facilities can only be used for official school business and that National Day of Action is not classified as such.

In a memo to school principals, Acting Head of School Education and Training Operations Alan Baillie said, "... It is timely to remind staff that they should not use, directly or indirectly, the resources of the Department or the school or the students for any activity other than official school purposes or authorised activities".

"While the interest of school communities in the future of school funding is recognised it is important to adhere to the above requirements."

"At this time in public education, there is *nothing* more important than the future of funding," Mr Garrigan responded. "The memo issued by the Northern Territory Government to "ban" teachers and parents using school equipment to take part in the Federal Schools Funding Review 'National Day of Action' is an absolute disgrace."

"As many students in the territory live in isolated communities, where resources are limited and communities don't have access to internet other than at school, this is a disappointing memo."

"Of all the states and territories, the Northern Territory has the highest Indigenous population, the majority attending public education. If we are to achieve the outcomes of "Closing the gap", funding models need to change in favour of public education."

"Decisions such as this effectively condone reduced levels of funding to public education," Mr Garrigan continued. "Parents, teachers and principals value public education and they should be supported not gagged."

The National Day of Action is an important opportunity to show support for greater federal funding to public schools, before the Federal Schools Funding Review comes to a close.

For further comment:

**Peter Garrigan: 0419 986 547**

**Australian Council of State School Organisations**

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