



Early Childhood and Primary Education
Secondary Education
Technical and Further Education
Vocational Education and Training
Higher Education
Adult and Community Education

DGS 07/2120

The Hon R M Parker MLC
Chair,
Education and Training, Industrial Relations,
Assistance Finance and Central Coast
Budget Estimates Committee
c/- Room 812 Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Robyn
Dear Ms Parker

I need to clarify comments I made on 22 October 2007 during committee proceedings.

During the hearing you asked about signs promoting public education that appear on some school fences.

I thought these were departmental signs and said so. I was wrong. The signs are produced by the NSW Teachers Federation, provided to schools and displayed by those school communities that choose to. I now know this has been the case for some years.

As I said during committee proceedings, the signs do not express a partisan-political view. They simply seek to extol public education.

The current signs read: "Public education – Great schools. Great future. Greater communities."

Fine sentiments, but I do maintain the view I put to the committee that there is a problem with the signs. They undersell what happens in schools by not featuring the greatest asset of any school: students, parents, teachers and other staff.

I emphasised before the committee that schools are neutral grounds for rational discourse and objective study.

I tabled a copy of my memo of 12 September 2007 reminding principals that any attempt to use students in political campaigns breaches long standing policy, is unacceptable, and puts at risk the wonderful reputation of public education.

I am sorry for my error at the recent hearing and trust that this letter clarifies the situation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Coutts-Trotter".

Michael Coutts-Trotter
**DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
MANAGING DIRECTOR OF TAFE NSW**