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4 May 2007

Mr Geoff Howard
Chair
Education and Training Committee
Parliament House
Spring Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3002

Via email etc@parliament.vic.gov.au

Dear Mr Howard

Re: Parliamentary Inquiry into Dress Codes and School Uniforms in Victorian Schools

Please find attached the submission of the Victorian Independent Education Union to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Dress Codes and School Uniforms in Victorian Schools.

If you have any questions in respect to the submission, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Debra James', is written in a cursive style.

Debra James
General Secretary

Parliamentary Inquiry into Dress Codes and School Uniforms in Victorian Schools

Submission of the Victorian Independent Education Union

1.0 Preamble

- 1.1 The Victorian Independent Union (VIEU) represents staff in Catholic and non-Catholic independent schools, including Principals, Deputies, Teachers and support staff.

The Victorian Independent Education Union wishes to address in this submission a number of general points related to school uniforms and dress codes in Victorian Schools.

2.0 School Uniforms

- 2.1 VIEU believes that decisions about uniform policy such as whether students should wear school uniforms and the nature of those uniforms should be the subject of consultation with staff, parents and students in individual schools.
- 2.2 Schools should endeavour to ensure that the cost of school uniforms is affordable for parents and that there should be subsidisation and full cost recovery available for parents who have financial difficulty in meeting the cost of uniforms.
- 2.3 School uniform policies should conform with all anti-discrimination legislation. In addition uniform policies should be aligned with health promotion policies and be sensitive to the cultural diversity of the school's parent and student community.
- 2.4 Any sanctions imposed by schools on students for non-compliance with uniform policy should be the subject of consultation with parents, students and staff of individual schools.

Manufacturers and retailers of school, sports and corporate uniforms

- 3.1 Schools should ensure that the manufacturers and retailers of their school and sports uniforms and any corporate uniforms worn by staff are accredited to the Homeworkers Code of Practice. The code is a self-regulatory system that monitors the production chain from retailer to outworker, to ensure legal wages and conditions.

3.0 Staff Dress Codes

- 4.1 Staff dress codes should be the subject of consultation between the management of individual schools and the staff of the school and as far as possible respect the professional judgement of education staff.