

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12

MEDIA ALERT QLD SCHOOL CHAPLAINCY NUMBERS SET TO EXPLODE EVEN FURTHER

MORE young people than ever before will have access to a school chaplain's invaluable support, after the federal government announced yesterday that a further 232 Queensland State schools successfully applied for National School Chaplaincy Program (NSCP) grants.

This figure tops all of those from other States, and is in addition to the 385 applications already approved in Round One of the funding program.

Prime Minister John Howard also announced additional funding of \$50 million to the NSCP, bringing the total amount of funding to \$165 million over three years.

"I believe this demonstrates a real desire for pastoral care and spiritual guidance in Australian schools," Mr Howard said.

Tim Mander, CEO of Australia's largest employer of school chaplains, SU Qld, said the announcement was the most exciting and challenging news the organisation had ever faced.

"We are already well on the way to meeting this challenge, with an additional 140 school chaplains beginning work in Term 4 this week," Mr Mander said.

"But Round Two applications announcement means Queensland school chaplaincy numbers could explode even further than we originally planned.

"More importantly, this additional funding demonstrates the value State schools and local communities place upon the unique support our chaplains provide to young people."

Mr Mander said a school chaplain cared for young people in a very special way.

"School chaplains give students the helping hand, listening ear and caring heart they need to carry them through such challenges as broken families, study pressures, low self-esteem and much more," he said. "As such, school chaplains complement support already provided to young people in Queensland State schools."

For more information on the National School Chaplaincy Program and for a full list of schools awarded grants, click on the link at the website www.dest.gov.au
For more information on SU Qld, check the website www.suqld.org.au

SU Qld is an inter-denominational Christian organisation, which has cared for children and young people around the State for 75 years. The movement aims to bring hope to a young generation through school chaplaincy, camping, community outreach and programs for at-risk young people.

To interview SU Qld CEO Tim Mander, call 0408 899 444. To interview a school chaplain or for more information on SU Qld, contact PR and Media Manager, Charlotte Durut on 3632 2210 or 0408 691 343, or email charlotted@suqld.org.au