

## An important note from CEO, Tim Mander

The National Schools Chaplaincy Program (NSCP) has the potential to significantly expand chaplaincy services in Queensland State Schools. Many schools previously unable to employ a chaplain have already conveyed their widespread interest in adding a valuable asset to their school to SU Qld field staff. Whilst SU Qld is excited about the prospects NSCP will create, we also recognise its potential pitfalls.

One of the reasons school chaplaincy has been so successful in Queensland is because of some of the distinctives that the three-way partnership model has promoted. Each SU Qld Chaplaincy Service is established and operated as a partnership between the local churches, the school and SU Qld. One of the challenges that we face is ensuring that these distinctives aren't sacrificed for the sake of expediency and opportunism.

Let me be more specific.

One of the issues we see as being a potential danger of this funding is ongoing sustainability. We are committed to investing in schools through chaplaincy long term. To date this has been through local churches providing financial support towards their local school chaplains. This has created some assurance of the future of the chaplaincy as well as ensuring local ownership of the service. We believe this has contributed to a true community based service.

A total reliance on federal funding for a future service may undermine this important principle. We need to remember that at this stage the funding has been promised for only three years. Although we at SU Qld will be doing everything in our power to influence the policy makers to continue the funding, I believe it would be unwise to build a dependence upon it. To go through all of the hard work involved in setting up a chaplaincy service that is highly valued by the school community only to see it cease three years later would be of minimal benefit, and it could actually be detrimental in the long run. **We strongly urge you to develop a plan for financial sustainability beyond the government.** This will not only assist in ongoing sustainability but also give your application a better chance of succeeding.

Secondly, we are keen to ensure that local church involvement remains an essential element of every chaplaincy service. The Christian framework through which SU Qld Chaplaincy operates is what sets our services apart from other support services. This is largely due to involvement in and ownership of Chaplaincy Services by local Christian churches. School chaplaincy has also proven to be a strategic and effective way to connect the local church and

school communities. There is the potential for schools, in their haste to take advantage of the current funding, to omit local church involvement. Whilst it takes more time to develop these partnerships, without them the chaplaincy service runs the risk of diluting its purpose and distinctiveness. Now, more than ever, it is critical for Christian communities to be an integral part of the formation and development of SU Qld Chaplaincy Services.

Thanks for your hard work and commitment to the well-being of the young people of your community. Together we can have a significant impact on their spiritual and emotional development.

I would encourage you to speak to your local SU Qld representative to find out the best possible way to make this federal funding work most effectively in your local school.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Mander". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Tim Mander  
CEO - SU Qld