MEDIA RELEASE

REPLACING THE STICK WITH A BASEBALL BAT

Peter Chandler MLA

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"For the best part of a decade as Education Minister, Paul Henderson has spoken about taking a ‘carrot and stick’ approach to parents who don’t send their kids to school,” says Shadow Education Minister, Peter Chandler.

"The announcement today that he’s upping fines for truancy from $200 to $1995 – $2600 for a second offence – suggests he’s put away the stick – and taken out the baseball bat.

"The real question is does Labor intend to prosecute parents who do not send their children to school – and what happens if they don’t pay the fine.

"No parents have been charged with failing to send their children to school in the 10 years since Labor won Government.

"The Government says this is because fines are a last resort. So what will change with higher penalties?

"The people who are most likely to face fines are the ones least able to pay.

"A $200 fine, if imposed, will be just as effective as a $2000 fine that isn’t prosecuted.

"It hardly seems likely the Government will chase down the parents of repeat truants for a $2600 fine if they aren’t prepared to do so for a $200 fine.

"Instead of muscling up without consequence, the Government should impose the fines that are already in place.”

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