

Noel Pearson removes teaching curriculum from Aurukun



Noel Pearson. Picture: Jake Nowakowski

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- [MICHAEL MCKENNA](#)

Noel Pearson will withdraw his teaching curriculum from the Cape York community of Aurukun next year after failing to reach agreement with the Palaszczuk government over management of the local school.

In a letter to Education Minister Kate Jones, Mr Pearson yesterday accused the government of sabotaging negotiations in refusing to legally enshrine a partnership to deliver Direct Instruction teaching at the school.

Mr Pearson's "Good to Great Schools Australia" intends to continue with the US-based teaching method at the two other schools — in Coen and Hopevale — which along with Aurukun form the three campuses of the Cape York Academy.

In May, the primary school in Aurukun, on the western side of Cape York, was shut down and the teachers evacuated after the principal was allegedly twice carjacked by youths wielding machetes.

Ms Jones used the incidents to order a preliminary review of the school, which later led to the state government exercising more control in the delivery of the curriculum.

The government also ordered the Auditor-General to investigate financial “irregularities” at the academy — which Mr Pearson welcomed.

Documents obtained by *The Australian* show that the cited irregularities largely involved poor bookkeeping by Queensland education staff who were responsible for the administration of the school.

In the letter to Ms Jones, Mr Pearson accuses the government of renegeing on the original 2009 proposal with the former Bligh Labor government — when the schools were being planned — to eventually give statutory backing over the “governance and operation” of the Cape York Academy.

“It is now six years later and the failure to move from a trial arrangement under a MOU to the kind of statutory authorisation which we originally proposed in 2009, is inexcusable,” he wrote.

“In view of this, it is GGSA’s intention to cease provision of all support in Aurukun school from the commencement of the 2017 school year and to cease our current negotiations with the department in relation to Aurukun,” he said.