# OECD Report shows we need Gonski to address link between disadvantage and low performance at school



A new OECD report showing students from disadvantaged backgrounds are far more likely to be low performers at school is more evidence of the importance of needs-based Gonski funding, the AEU said today.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said the Federal Government needed to listen to the message of the OECD Report into Low Performing Students – that helping disadvantaged students was essential for society and the economy.

“This research shows clearly the strong connection in Australia between poorly resourced schools and poorly performing students,” Ms Haythorpe said.

“We need Malcolm Turnbull to abandon his plan to scrap the Gonski agreements after 2017 and deliver needs-based funding to these schools so they can give disadvantaged students the education they need.

“The report found that one-third of Australian students from disadvantaged backgrounds are in danger of leaving school without the maths skills they need for work or further education, compared to just 8 per cent of advantaged students.

OECD Director for Education and Skills, Andreas Schleicher said that: *“The social and economic gains from tackling low performance dwarf any conceivable cost of improvement.”*

“The Turnbull Government needs to listen to this and remember that helping disadvantaged students is not a cost, it’s an investment in their future,” Ms Haythorpe said.

“We cannot be an innovative nation if we don’t give all schools the resources they need to educate their students.

“The increase in the number of low-performing students coincides with the inequitable pre-Gonski funding system.

“In the years prior to Gonski our schools funding was moving away from equity, from 2009-10 to 2013-14 annual real increases in government funding per student to public schools rose by just 0.6 per cent compared with 3.4 per cent for private schools.

The Report found that countries with more equitable school funding systems had less incidence of low performance in maths.

It warned that countries where a large share of the population lacked basic skills would have their long-term economic growth severely compromised.

The report's recommendations include:

- Providing remedial support as early as possible;
- Encouraging the involvement of parents and local communities;
- Providing targeted support to disadvantaged schools or families;

"Gonski funding is helping us to deliver support for students who are struggling," Ms Haythorpe said.

"Smaller classes, one-to-one support and targeted Literacy and Numeracy programs are making a difference already, but we need the full six years of Gonski funding.

"We also need the Turnbull Government to introduce proper workforce planning to ensure all students can be taught maths by a qualified teacher.

"At present 40 per cent of our Year 7 to 10 mathematics classes are taught without a qualified teacher and the Turnbull Government is doing nothing to address this.



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