Turnbull's budget fails fairness test and abandons disadvantaged students



Yesterday's Federal Budget has confirmed that Malcolm Turnbull will abandon needs-based Gonski funding and turn his back on disadvantaged schools and their students.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said that Malcolm Turnbull's budget left schools $3 billion short of what they would receive under the full six years of Gonski and that it would deprive students of the programs and one-to-one support they needed.

"This budget has failed the fairness test by denying disadvantaged schools the extra funding they need," Ms Haythorpe said.

"Students who need the extra literacy and numeracy programs, smaller classes and one-to-one support that Gonski can provide will be the losers from Malcolm Turnbull's failure to invest in our schools.

"Budgets are about priorities, and Malcolm Turnbull has found money for tax cuts for high income earners, yet is unable to find money to properly fund our schools.

"He has failed to invest in Australia's long-term future by giving all schools the resources they need to ensure students leave school with the skills they need for life and work.

"Malcolm Turnbull needs to match Labor's $4.5 billion commitment to fund Gonski in full.

"He has confirmed that he won't deliver Gonski and his alternative is a pre-election fix that will leave schools $3 billion short.

"There is still no clarity around how his alternative schools funding policy will work. We do not know how the funding will be distributed or exactly what conditions will be place on the States. There is no guarantee States will be required to maintain their own spending on schools.

"All we know is that many schools would not get the resources the Gonski Review found they needed.

"Two-thirds of the extra funding in the Gonski agreements is to be delivered in the last two years of the agreements - 2018 and 2019.

“This funding is urgently needed to help students at disadvantaged schools which have had years of under-funding.

“From 2009/10 to 2013/14 combined government per student funding to public schools actually fell by 3 per cent in real terms while private school funding rose by 10 per cent.

“That’s why funding on the basis of need is so important. We need the full six years of Gonski funding to address these inequities and make sure all schools have the resources they need for their students.

“We cannot have an agile and innovative nation if one-in-seven 15 year olds is at risk of leaving school without the basic skills they need for work.

“The Budget also fails on the crucial issue of support for students with disability. The extra funding in 2016 and 2017 will go nowhere near meeting the needs of the 270,000 students with disability not receiving funded support.

“It also admits that increased funding, promised for 2016, to ensure all students with disability get the support they need will be delayed until 2018.

“This budget contains nothing to support TAFEs or to fix the mess created by the flawed VET FEE-HELP scheme. It has also failed to confirm funding for 15 hours of pre-school beyond 2017.”

Authorised by Sally Dennis, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.
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