New analysis shows government funding increases to private schools double those of public schools



The importance of the full six years of needs-based Gonski funding has been highlighted by a new AEU analysis showing government funding to private schools has increased at twice the rate of public schools.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said Malcolm Turnbull's plan to cut Gonski funding after 2017 would fail students and further entrench inequity.

"Malcolm Turnbull's plan would see gaps in resources between schools grow, and fail to address the inequities caused by a system which gave the biggest funding increases to advantaged schools.

"He wants to return to a system which ignores student need and leaves thousands of students without the support they need to succeed at school.

"His plan for our schools won't fix the problem, it will cut funding and support to kids who need it.

"Disadvantaged schools don't need cuts to Gonski. They need the $4.5 billion in investment Labor and the Greens are promising, which will see all schools with the resources they need to educate their students."

The analysis of the most recent My School funding data shows that between 2009 and 2014 total combined State and Federal Government annual funding for public schools in Australia rose by:

- $1539 per student for public schools (increase of 14.6% not adjusted for inflation)
- $2332 per student for Catholic schools (increase of 30.2% not adjusted for inflation)
- $1911 per student for independent schools (increase of 30.3% not adjusted for inflation)

Both independent and Catholic schools now have more resources per student than public schools once fees and other income is taken into account, despite educating far smaller numbers of disadvantaged students.

Total 2014 figures per student are:

- $17,604 per student in independent schools
- $12,998 per student in Catholic schools
- $12,779 per student in public schools

Low SES students comprise only 9% of Independent school enrolments and 14% of Catholic schools compared to 30% of public school enrolments. Public schools also educate a disproportionate number of students with disability.

The analysis also shows that:

- Government funding to NT public schools has dropped and WA's funding has flatlined over the last three years due to State Governments failing to pass on their Gonski funding.
- Victorian public schools receive the lowest amount of combined government funding and have the biggest gap between public and private school resourcing.

"In the years leading up to Gonski we were not funding schools on the basis of need. We had a flawed and inefficient funding system which was delivering the biggest gains to private schools," Ms Haythorpe said.

"This is the period during which Australia's performance has declined compared with the rest of the world and our disadvantaged students have fallen further behind.

"We know that disadvantaged students are three years behind their advantaged peers by the time they get to Year 9. Unless we invest in the schools which educate these students we won't turn around the performance of our school system.

"The first amounts of Gonski funding coming into the system in 2014 have not been nearly enough to turn this around after years of skewed funding.

"Gonski funding is making a difference in schools – students are beginning to get the smaller classes, one-to-one support and extra literacy and numeracy programs they need.

"But without the full six years of the Gonski agreements we won't close these gaps in funding.

"The Gonski Review recognised that we need to direct funding towards the schools which teach the most disadvantaged students, because those are often the most under-resourced schools.

"Why can't Malcolm Turnbull see it is in Australia's long-term social and economic interest to make sure all our students get the education they need for life and work?"

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