Schools funding a key issue in marginal seat swings - whoever forms government must back Gonski in full



AEU

The election results show voters have rejected Malcolm Turnbull's cuts to needs-based Gonski schools funding and want whoever forms Government to implement it in full.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said that, regardless of the final outcome of the election, any future government needed to commit to the full six years of Gonski funding.

"All political parties and independents should reflect in the next few days on the high levels of support for Gonski and opposition to Malcolm Turnbull's cuts," Ms Haythorpe said.

"Schools need the full six years of Gonski, which Labor and the Greens have already committed to, to ensure they have the resources they need for all their students.

Exit polling by SKY News yesterday found that 63 per cent of voters rated education policy as "very important" as an issue, second only to health on 72 per cent, and well ahead of economic management.

"This backs AEU polling in marginal seats in the final weeks of the campaign which showed voters clearly supported Gonski and backed investing in schools ahead of Malcolm Turnbull's cuts to company tax," Ms Haythorpe said.

"Voters supported Gonski by a margin of 61.6 per cent to 17.4 per cent, and 63.6 per cent preferred it to company tax cuts.

"The Coalition's arrogance in refusing to fund the essential public services that families rely on has come back to haunt them.

"Yesterday saw bigger-than-average swings against the Coalition in NSW and Queensland electorates where Gonski is already delivering extra resources to schools, and where State Governments are backing Gonski.

“These include Eden-Monaro – where winning Labor candidate Mike Kelly named Gonski as a key issue – Gilmore, Dobell, Lindsay, Macquarie, Forde and Longman.”

“These are regional or outer suburban seats where schools and students are major beneficiaries from targeted Gonski funding, and where the AEU has had local campaign co-ordinators on the ground since last July.”

“It is also clear that school funding was a key issue in the massive swings against the Coalition in Tasmania, where public schools will be hit by a real cut to funding after 2017, and where the AEU ran a targeted advertising campaign on the cuts.

“There is no alternative to Gonski’s needs-based funding model on the table. The Coalition has said they will renegotiate funding with the States but has not given any details of how the new funding model will work.

“No State Government has backed the Coalition’s proposal, and independent and Catholic schools also support the full Gonski.

“Whoever forms Government after this election needs to back the full six years of Gonski funding, and move away from Malcolm Turnbull’s short-sighted cuts to the funding our schools need.”

“We know that Gonski funding is making a difference in States where it is being delivered directly to schools, but two-thirds of the extra funding is due to be delivered in 2018 and 2019.”

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