Crossbenchers must back Gonski as polls show public supports it



AEU

The AEU has called on Independent and minor party MPs to stand up for Gonski funding in any negotiations over forming government in the wake of Saturday's election.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said post-election polling showed strong public support for MPs to back Gonski and Malcolm Turnbull had no mandate to end Gonski after 2017.

The AEU is writing to all Independent and minor party crossbench MPs in the new House of Representatives asking them to back the full six years of Gonski funding which Labor and the Greens have already committed to.

"Post-election polling from The Australia Institute shows Gonski funding has strong public support, and opposition to Malcolm Turnbull's cuts was clearly a factor in the Coalition's poor election result," Ms Haythorpe said.

"We know that increased resources are already lifting results for students in disadvantaged schools, and we need the full six years of funding for that to continue.

"Nick Xenophon has already expressed his support for Gonski funding, and we would expect him to carry that into any negotiations around a new Government.

"The polling released by The Australia Institute this morning today that 64 per cent of Australians want the new Senate to vote to retain the Gonski spending commitment.

"This backs figures from SKY News's exit polling on election day which showed 63 per cent of voters rated education as a "very important" issue when they voted – ahead of economic management on 51 per cent.

"AEU polling in marginal seats in the final weeks of the campaign also showed voters clearly supported Gonski and backed investing in schools ahead of Malcolm Turnbull's cuts to company tax.

"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 refusal to fund public services that families rely on has come back to haunt them.

Two winning ALP candidates – Mike Kelly in Eden-Monaro and Emma Husar in Lindsay – have already credited Gonski as a key issue in their victories.

“We have also seen big swings against the Coalition in other seats where the AEU has had local campaign co-ordinators on the ground since last July.

“These seats include Gilmore, Dobell, Lindsay, Macquarie, Forde and Longman. These are seats in regional or outer-suburban areas where schools and students are major beneficiaries from targeted Gonski funding.

“Voters clearly understood the importance of investing in schools so all children can get the help they need.”

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