Coalition's new funding model a distraction from its Gonski cuts



AEU

The Coalition’s calls to shift funding between States as part of their new schools funding system are an attempted distraction from their refusal to honour the full six years of the Gonski agreements, the AEU said today.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said that the Coalition would abandon needs-based funding and cost schools $3.9 billion in 2018 and 2019 alone by failing to fund Gonski in full.

“Pitting one state against another will do nothing to lift results in schools – what is needed is to lift our overall investment in schools and target the extra funds to addressing disadvantage,” Ms Haythorpe said.

“The Coalition’s funding plan, as outlined in the Federal Budget, will still see schools $3.9 billion worse off in 2018 and 2019 alone.

“It will still see 62 per cent of federal funding increases distributed to private schools, whose needs are far less than public systems.

“Now Education Minister Simon Birmingham is saying he wants to take funds from some States and give them to others. How will that improve results for students?

“We know that Gonski funding is already reaching the most disadvantaged schools and improving results for students.

“Minister Birmingham needs to come out and tell us which States he thinks should lose funding under his proposed deal. We know from the Federal Budget papers that he expects Tasmanian and NT public schools to have their funding cut.

“States and Territories need to fight plans to abandon Gonski and resist Minister Birmingham’s divide and conquer tactics.

“No State has yet reached the minimum resourcing standards for schools that were outlined in the Gonski report. That is because under the Gonski agreements, two-thirds of the extra funding to schools was to be delivered in 2018 and 2019. We don’t need to reinvent Gonski, we need to fund it in full.

“Without the final two years of Gonski, no State will be able to fully fund its schools on the basis of student need.

“That means there will be students who will miss out on the support they need because their school hasn’t got the resources to provide it.

“The Gonski agreements were for a six-year transition period to get all schools to a minimum resource standard, with a focus on directing extra funding to disadvantaged schools.

“The different agreements reflect the fact that all States began from different points, for historical reasons, and have different capacity to raise their own funds.

“Calling the agreements a ‘corruption’ of Gonski is ridiculous. They are a way for all schools to eventually reach the minimum resources standard that the Gonski Review recognised our students need.

“What is a corruption of Gonski, is trying to return to a system where the biggest increases in federal funding are given to schools which do not need them, and where needs-based funding is abandoned.

“Ensuring that States and Territories maintain their own spending on schools in return for increased federal funding should be a cornerstone of any funding agreement.

“But it is the Federal Government’s failure to enforce this in the past which has allowed WA and the NT to fail to increase their funding to schools since 2014, and for Victoria to only begin delivering Gonski resources under the Andrews Government in 2016.”

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