New funding model leaves schools worse off



A clear majority of voters in the Coalition's 20 most marginal seats want Malcolm Turnbull to reverse his cuts to Gonski funding and believe it is far more important for Australia's future than his plan for a $48 billion corporate tax cut.

Malcolm Turnbull's new funding model announced yesterday will still leave schools $2 billion worse off in 2018 and 2019 than funding the Gonski agreements in full.

The polling, taken for the AEU in late April, also found 71% of voters see Malcolm Turnbull as out-of-touch, 67% say he does not understand the needs of working families, and only a quarter were confident he would properly fund public schools.

Voters strongly supported increased resources for schools, with voters preferring Gonski funding to Malcolm Turnbull's company tax cuts by a two-to-one margin.

AEU Victorian Branch President Meredith Peace said that the polling showed the majority of Australians wanted better funding for schools but did not trust Malcolm Turnbull to provide it.

"Malcolm Turnbull's new funding model will not deliver schools the same resources as the full six years of Gonski, and will mean that many will never reach the minimum resource standard Gonski recommended.

"His plan to spread extra funding over 10 years, instead of delivering it in 2018 and 2019, will mean students currently in Year 4 will have left school by the time the full funding is delivered.

"It's no surprise that a clear majority of Australians believe Malcolm Turnbull is out of touch, when he has refused to properly fund schools in their communities. He is even less trusted on schools funding than Tony Abbott was.

"Schools and parents know that Gonski resources are already getting results across Australia. They understand that properly educating all Australians is the best investment we can make for our future.

"Delivering these extra resources to schools would ensure that more students can get one-on-one support or extra literacy and numeracy programs."

The polling, of 1500 marginal seat voters shows an overwhelming majority sees Malcolm Turnbull as favouring wealthy Australians, and being out of touch with ordinary people.

It showed that 44% per cent of voters would feel more favourable to Mr Turnbull if he funded Gonski in full, compared to just

13% who would feel less favourable.

“Funding schools is a key issue for voters, and it is clear that Malcolm Turnbull’s lack of action is hurting him,” Ms Peace said.

The polling also found that:

- 56% of voters said Australia is on the wrong track, compared with just 33% who said it was heading in the right direction.
- 62% said Malcolm Turnbull favours “wealthy Australians”, compared to just 7% who say he favours “ordinary Australians” (24% said both equally).
- Only 27% said he ‘understands the needs of working families’, compared to 67% who said he doesn’t.
- Only 25% said he was ‘in touch with ordinary Australians’, compared to 71% who said he isn’t.

The polling also shows a wide level of concern around funding of public schools, with 67% of people concerned about the level of public school funding.

82% of Australians believe it is important to increase government funding to public schools, yet only 26% said they were confident Malcolm Turnbull would provide enough resources to public schools.

The polling also shows voters would prefer the Federal Budget to fund Gonski in full to the $48 billion in company tax cuts which Mr Turnbull wants to make his priority.

When asked to choose between the two, 58% of voters wanted Gonski, while only 26% wanted company tax cuts.

“Malcolm Turnbull continues to ignore the evidence that Gonski is working to lift results. He has no plan to lift results, just a plan for cuts that will hit hardest the children who need help the most,” Ms Peace said.

“State governments do not support his new model because it will still cost their schools hundreds of millions of dollars in resources.

“Malcolm Turnbull needs to admit his plans have failed, and give our schools the funding they need.”

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