

Birmingham admits new plan won't give all students the resources they need



Education Minister Simon Birmingham has admitted that there is no guarantee schools will reach the Schooling Resource Standard under the Turnbull Government's new funding model.

He confirmed at the National Press Club today that the Federal Government has washed its hands of the goal of getting state and federal governments to work together to ensure all schools are properly funded.

AEU acting Federal President Meredith Peace said the Federal Government's own figures show that schools will be \$22 billion worse off over the next ten years than they would be under the Gonski agreements.

"Minister Birmingham has repeatedly said the Federal Government can't afford to fund the Gonski agreements. But how can this be the case when Malcolm Turnbull wants to spend \$48 billion on company tax cuts?" Ms Peace said.

"He has now walked away from ensuring all students can attend a school which meets the minimum resources standard outlined in the Gonski Review.

Under Malcolm Turnbull's new funding model, the Federal Government will provide 20 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard to public schools, and 80 per cent of the SRS to private schools.

What states and territories do is between them, their school systems and their electorates."

"Not only does Minister Birmingham have no plan to ensure all students attend a school with enough resources, he doesn't seem to care if they do," Ms Peace said.

"Parents expect the Federal Government to work collaboratively with the states to fund schools, not to evade responsibility.

"This was a key recommendation of the Gonski Review, and the basic principle behind the agreements Malcolm Turnbull wants to tear up.

"Malcolm Turnbull has effectively abandoned the most disadvantaged schools and their students. He is pursuing equity between states at the expense of equity for students."

The government's own figures show that public schools in the NT, which have some of the highest needs in the nation, will see their federal funding increase by just 1.3% per year – far lower than private schools in the NT.

Less than half of additional federal funding over the next ten years will go to public schools, compared to 80 per cent under the Gonski agreements

"There is still no clarity on funding arrangements for next year, and no certainty about what will happen if the Turnbull

Government cannot get its legislative changes through the Senate,” Ms Peace said.

“That means we still have no idea how any school will be funded in 2018.

“Where Gonski funding is being delivered we are seeing students’ lives turned around because they are getting the help they need, when they need it.

“Students are getting more support through smaller classes, extra literacy and numeracy programs and more one-to-one support.

“We need this funding to continue as planned in 2018 and 2019, not a desperate attempt at policy on the run from Malcolm Turnbull.”

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