Pyne’s IPS failure shows he has no vision for public schools

Education Minister Christopher Pyne needs to admit the failure of his Independent Public Schools policy and shift his focus to equity and properly funding disadvantaged schools, the AEU said today.

NSW became the latest state to accept funding from Minister Pyne’s $70 million IPS fund, without agreeing to create a single Independent Public School.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said IPS was bad policy and a distraction from the real issues of inequity in schools funding and the Abbott Government’s abandoning of the full six years of Gonski funding.

“There is no evidence that Independent Public Schools do anything to improve results, and huge amounts of evidence that directing funding to disadvantaged schools and students can improve outcomes and change lives,” Ms Haythorpe said.

“IPS is Minister Pyne’s flagship policy and yet another State has politely rejected it.”

“NSW will get funding from the IPS program for autonomy programs, but won’t create Independent Public Schools.

“Public schools will get an average of $9500 each – a far cry from the $944 million they will lose if the Federal Government does not honour the last two years of the Gonski agreement with NSW.

“Prior to the election Minister Pyne announced that his goal was for 25 per cent of schools to become Independent Public Schools by 2017, operating outside of State education systems, and that the Federal Government would fund schools directly to achieve this.”

“This goal is in tatters because a majority of the States have realised that IPS will do nothing to lift standards and have rejected the program.

“NSW has today joined Victoria, SA, Act, and Tasmania, in saying ‘thanks but no thanks’ to the IPS concept, accepting money for autonomy programs without actually creating Independent Public Schools.

“Minister Pyne now has no vision to improve the performance of public schools beyond cutting their funding. He needs to act immediately to remedy disadvantage in schools, especially for the over 100,000 students with disability currently getting no support funding.

“The pursuit of Independent Public Schools has always been a distraction from the urgent funding issues facing disadvantaged schools, and the recommendations of the Gonski Review.

“There is no evidence that IPS lead to improvements in schools performance.” The OECD’s PISA Report for 2012 found that: “greater responsibility in managing resources appears to be unrelated to a school system’s overall performance.

“What does matter is equity, and directing funding to disadvantaged schools and students to close gaps in achievement,” Ms Haythorpe said.

“A new OECD Report “OECD Policy Reforms: Going for Growth” released yesterday has warned that Australia has high levels of social inequity and says that providing “broader and more equal access to quality education at the primary and secondary levels is also a priority”.

“This report praises the introduction of needs-based Gonski funding as a measure to reduce inequity, something Minister Pyne should take note of.”

Authorised by Sally Dennis, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.
ABN 54 478 094 635 © 2026