National reform summit must recognise Gonski is essential for our future

National Reform Summit must recognise Gonski funding for schools is essential for our economic future.

Equitable funding of schools through the needs-based Gonski funding model is the key to continuing economic growth in Australia, the AEU said today.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe, who will participate in today's National Reform Summit in Sydney, said that properly resourcing schools and ensuring all students received a quality education would increase economic growth in the long-term.

"Today's summit must recognise that education is the key to Australia's future competitiveness and that this requires resources to be directed to schools," Ms Haythorpe said.

"Investing in schools, in particular those that educate disadvantaged students, will lift our productivity and deliver economic benefits in the long-term.

"If we continue to have one-in-seven students leaving school without the basic literacy and numeracy skills to find work, then we will struggle to compete economically with the rest of the world.

"The Abbott Government needs to commit to the full six years of the Gonski agreements, which is what is required to lift all schools to the resource level required to give all students a quality education.

"We also need to ensure that there is a commitment to guaranteeing funding to TAFEs to ensure that vocational training is available to all.

"Studies prepared for the OECD and European Commission in the past 12 months identify increasing educational inequality as a drag on productivity and growth.

"Children from lower-income households being denied the opportunity to acquire the education and skills levels of their more advantaged peers has serious consequences for economies, not just individuals.

"This is a serious issue for Australia because we are one of 13 countries that posted both declining results and declining equity over the four PISA surveys 2003-2012.

"The Gonski Review recognised that we need to change our funding system and direct resources towards the schools which teach the most disadvantaged students, because those are often the most under-resourced schools.

"Needs-based funding is the way to close gaps in resources and break the link between disadvantage and poor results.

"The Abbott Government's plans to abandon needs-based Gonski schools funding after 2017 will entrench inequity. This is not only unjust, but it is economic folly."

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