

Union calls for Fair Funding for Public Schools



The State School Teachers' Union of WA says a Liberal-National Government capital grant fund only offered to private schools to upgrade school facilities is unfair and not needs-based.

The \$300 million fund was established by the Liberal-National Government last year as part of its federal schools funding package. It has now seen more than \$20 million in capital works funding go to WA private schools for facilities such as seminar rooms, food studios, landscaping and sporting complexes.

The union is calling on the Morrison Government to provide a capital grants fund for public schools that is needs-based and reflects the fact the majority of students in Australia attend public schools.

The capital funding scheme is on top of recurrent funding and over the next ten years will build \$1.9 billion worth of projects for private schools across Australia.

SSTUWA President Pat Byrne said there was no capacity for federal capital funds to be used in public schools meaning WA public school students were missing out.

"There are public school facilities across WA that are dilapidated to the point where students safety is at risk," she said.

"WA public school children are being educated in un-air conditioned demountables and transportables because there is no equivalent fund for our public schools. In fact, at last count, 582 WA schools had students learning in 2241 transportable classrooms.

"We have heard that boys are using the girls' showers at some high schools because there are no individual cubicles for the boys' privacy in their bathroom. Meanwhile private schools are enjoying upgrades such as food studios and new soccer pitches. It's simply not fair and definitely not needs-based.

"Some private schools are diverting millions in recurrent funding to capital works because in many cases they are getting more than 100 per cent of their SRS.

"The union is calling on our state and federal Governments to work together to reduce educational inequity. There needs to be a new capital funding stream for public schools. All students deserve safe, comfortable learning facilities," Ms Byrne said.