Analysis shows funding gaps between public and private schools

New analysis shows funding gaps between public and private schools and need for Abbott Government to fund full six years of Gonski.

A new analysis of schools funding up until 2013 shows the clear need for the full six years of needs- based Gonski funding to close gaps in resources between schools, the AEU said today.

The analysis, by Save Our Schools national convenor Trevor Cobbold, showed that government funding to private schools increased from 2009-2013, while funding to public schools dropped across Australia.

It found that total government (combined federal & state/territory) funding for public schools in Australia fell by $224 per student between 2009 and 2013 while funding for Catholic schools increased by $716 per student and by $574 per Independent school student.

The changes represent a cut in real funding for public schools of 1.9% and an increase of 8% for private schools in the years before the Gonski agreements began in 2014.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said the figures showed that the Abbott Government needed to work with the States to overcome inequity in our schools, and abandon the proposal in its Green Paper on funding to remove all federal funding from public schools

"The Abbott Government must fund all schools on the basis of need, not political ideology, and that means honouring the full needs-based Gonski agreements.

"This research shows that prior to the Gonski reforms we had a flawed system which did not direct funding increases to the neediest schools and students.

"At the end of 2013 we were left with a system where independent schools had, on average, 50 per cent higher income per student than public schools.

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

"We need Gonski to close those gaps in resources and ensure all students attend a school that can meet their needs.

"Public schools educate around 64% of all students but a higher proportion of disadvantaged students. The SOS research found disadvantaged students comprise only 14% of Independent school enrolments and 23% of Catholic schools compared to 46% of public school enrolments."

"We know that students from low-SES backgrounds are four-to-six years behind high-SES students in learning, regardless of which schools they attend, and that Gonski funding is already beginning to close this gap.

"However we need the Abbott Government to commit to funding the full six years of the Gonski agreements if we are to continue to keep making a difference.

"A student's chance of success at school should not be determined by where they grow up or their parents' income.

"Research released last week showed the Abbott Government's plan to abandon Gonski funding after 2017 would see federal funding for private schools increase by $2.8 billion by 2019, nearly double the increase of $1.5 billion for public schools.

"We also need State Governments to follow the lead of NSW and SA and commit their share of the full six years of

increased investment in schools.

"In States where the Gonski agreements have not been delivered, it is highly likely that we have not begun to close the gaps in resources between advantaged and disadvantaged schools since 2013."

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