Abbott’s post-Gonski funding plans will entrench inequity

New research finds Abbott’s post-Gonski funding plans will entrench inequity, abandon public schools.

The Abbott Government’s plans to abandon needs-based Gonski schools funding will entrench inequity and disadvantage public schools, new research published by the Australian Council for Educational Research has found.

The research, by funding experts Lyndsay Connors and Jim McMorrow, finds that schools funding in its current state is

"politically, financially and educationally unsustainable."

It found 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.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said that the research showed the damage that would be done to students from the Abbott Government’s schools funding policies.

"This analysis shows that the Abbott Government has no interest in properly funding schools so all students can receive a decent education," Ms Haythorpe said.

"The Federal Government’s Green Paper on schools funding last week raised the options of cutting all Federal Government funds to public schools or means-testing parents.

"Mr Abbott promised to honour the Gonski funding agreements, but every proposal he has put forward moves us further from the goal of ensuring that all schools across Australia have the resources they need to educate every child to a high level."

"The Abbott Government will abandon the last two years of the Gonski agreements and index schools funding to inflation after 2017, stripping funds from disadvantaged schools," Ms Haythorpe said.

"This is despite the fact the Gonski Review found the majority of schools needing extra resources were public schools.

"Public schools educate around 64% of all students but a higher proportion of disadvantaged students. They take 30% of their students from the most disadvantaged quartile of the population, compared to 15% in Catholic schools and 9% in independent schools.

"Ripping up Gonski agreements means that some schools will never meet minimum resource standards and students will continue to be denied the resources they need."

The research found that:

"Abandoning progress towards the level and distribution of funding recommended by the Gonski Report would be to preserve the status quo, which as the Gonski Report showed, operates at the expense of many of those students currently undertaking their schooling in the government school sector."

"The Abbott Government must abandon any plans to withdraw from funding public schools, and instead deliver funding based on need, not political ideology," Ms Haythorpe said.

For the full research visit: http://research.acer.edu.au/aer/14/

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