# Government needs to resource priorities

The State School Teachers' Union WA (SSTUWA) has welcomed the state government's announcement of its priorities in WA but warns any initiatives are meaningless if a clear strategy is not outlined.

In relation to education, to ensure student outcomes are improved the government must clarify how initiatives will be properly resourced.

As a first step it should immediately commit unequivocally to maintain the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) at 105 per cent in WA. Late last year the state government signed off on a bilateral education funding agreement with the Commonwealth which could result in a shortfall of $6 billion over the next 10 years.

SSTUWA President Pat Byrne said "Recent funding agreements with the federal government allow the state government to drop its portion of funding to 75 per cent of the SRS, leaving WA's schools funded at 95 per cent when the federal government's share is added. Taking inflation in to account this is well short of the investment required to deliver existing educational outcomes, never mind improve on them.

"Increasing student literacy and numeracy in NAPLAN as stated in the government's target is reliant on regular student attendance if it is to be successful. However, staff who assisted in family support and community liaison to do precisely this, were lost as a result of state government budget cuts in 2017.

"Because of those cuts teachers and school leaders will be cynical about this initiative given that no additional resources are apparent. We need to see both teaching and support staff reinstated to provide the programs necessary to improve literacy and numeracy, particularly in remote and regional areas.

"Asking agencies to work better together without a clear strategy and adequate resources is not going to change anything. The government needs to be specific in relation to the priorities and their resourcing," Ms Byrne said.

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