How the State Budget really hits education



Despite plenty of bluff and bluster from the Minister, the State Government's supposed 6.5 per cent funding increase is accounted for by student enrolment growth of three per cent, wage commitments and a small increase to maintenance provisions.

The reality is that rather than increasing funding per student, this budget sadly contained significant further cuts to education over the next four years – more than $300m over and above the $247m we have already seen stripped away in the past 18 months.

The new $300m cuts are:

- $257m cut under the workforce renewal policy: a system where the staffing budget for each retirement or resignation from the teaching workforce is replaced at 90 % of the cost of that employee (instead of 100 %) and the budget for each resignation/retirement from non-teaching staff replaced at 60 % of the cost of that employee.
- A $32m cut in ICT funding over three years.
- A 1% efficiency dividend - $9m over four years.
- A 15% cut to the procurement budget - $35m over four years.

There is also another hidden cut - the sale of government
regional housing which will impact on teachers in country and remote

areas.

With regard to the $257m cut caused by the so called workforce renewal policy, it is important to note that the minister has said that this funding will not be cut from schools. If this is the case then, given the size of the cut, it is incumbent on the Minister to explain exactly where this sum of money will be cut from.

The budget also confirmed cuts to schools in 2014 and 2015; the reality is that the true picture on spending per student is:

- $108 less per primary student was spent than what was provided for in the 2014-15 budget
- $620 less per secondary student was spent than what was provided for in the 2014 -15 budget

The government spent $72m less in education during the last financial year than was provided for in the last budget.

It’s important to remember that talk of overall spending going up is not to say that school budgets will be better off. They won’t.

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