

Budget Abandons Students With Disabilities, Cuts & Ends Gonski Funding



Budget abandons promise to students with disability, confirms real cuts to schools by ending Gonski funding.

Students with disability have been let down again by a Federal Budget which fails to deliver funding for a vitally-needed 'disability loading' for schools, the AEU said today.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said the lack of increased funding for disability – a pre-election promise by the Abbott Government – would leave more than 100,000 students with disability without funding support in schools.

"Schools are struggling to provide a quality education for students with disability, because they do not have the resources to do so."

"How can we expect students with disability to find jobs if we cannot give them the opportunity of a quality education?"

"Students with disability need in-class support, equipment and individual learning plans to achieve, but this requires funding.

"It is a national shame that students with disability are being denied the chance to participate fully in schools and achieve their potential due to a lack of support.

"As well as failing students with disability, this Budget also confirms the Abbott Government will entrench disadvantage in Australian schools by failing to honour the last two years of the needs-based Gonski funding reforms," Ms Haythorpe said.

"Two-thirds of extra funding was due to be delivered in the last two years of the Gonski agreements. By failing to honour them beyond 2016/17 and cutting indexation of schools funding beyond that, the Abbott Government has hit the most disadvantaged students the hardest.

"This will cut approximately \$3.8 billion from schools in 2019 and 2020. For public schools alone this is the equivalent of cutting 20,000 educators from schools.

"Gonski's needs-based funding is a chance to lift overall student performance and close achievement gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged students which are some of the highest in the developed world.

Ms Haythorpe said the Abbott Government had yet again failed to set aside the necessary additional funding for the promised "loading" for students with disability, which was a key part of the Gonski reforms.

"The Abbott Government promised before the 2013 election that it would implement the full disability loading in 2015.

"All this Government has done so far is roll over a temporary loading which only covers students currently receiving funded support and does nothing to address the huge unmet need in the system.

"Minister Pyne's boast that 2015/16 will see record funding for disability simply reflects indexation of the current interim loading, not the genuine boost to disability support in schools that we need.


"They have used the excuse that National Data Collection on students with disability has not been completed, but the Education Department has confirmed this project will be finished this year.

"Minister Pyne said through a spokesman on April 4th this year that: more targeted funding would flow as a result of the first nationally consistent data collection for students with a disability, expected to be finalised at the end of the year.

"There are now no excuses for failing to deliver much-needed support to schools which educate students with disability from 2016. Minister Pyne needs to explain where this funding is to come from.

"State Premiers who have signed Gonski agreements have to make Tony Abbott accountable for delivering the extra

funding schools and students with disability are relying on,” Ms Haythorpe said.



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