Pyne’s teacher funding no substitute for Gonski or workforce planning



Christopher Pyne’s announcement today of $17 million to improve teacher training will do little to address the damage its cuts to Gonski funding would do to schools, the AEU said today.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said Minister Pyne’s announcement failed to address key issues around teacher training and could not compensate for the damage to school budgets if the Abbott Government failed to honour the last two years of Gonski agreements in 2018 and 2019.

"Unfortunately, the real story from this budget will be that the Abbott Government’s failure to honour the last two years of Gonski agreements with the States and Territories will strip over $3 billion from schools," Ms Haythorpe said.

"These cuts to funding are the biggest issues facing Australian schools.

"The loss of literacy and numeracy programs, in-class support and other benefits which are being provided by Gonski funding will put extra pressure on schools from 2018.

"We hope that this Budget contains more than just piecemeal initiatives, and delivers a genuine boost to funding for schools.

"We need urgent action to bring in a funding system for disability which recognises the huge unmet need in the school system, a need which sees over 100,000 students with disability getting no funded support.

"Regardless of how well teachers are trained, they need the support of properly-resourced schools.

"We cannot expect teachers to excel when their schools have high class sizes, inadequate funding for students with disability and no support programs for students.

Ms Haythorpe said that the extra funding to implement recommendations of the Abbott Government’s TEMAG review of teacher training ignored key issues.

"We support better accreditation of teaching courses, but the Abbott Government’s response to the TEMAG review has failed to address the key issues of a surplus of teachers and declining entry standards," Ms Haythorpe said.

"Bringing in a one-size-fits-all literacy test for teaching students is not the only answer to improve the quality of teaching graduates.

"We need to make sure we are selecting new teachers from the top 30 per cent of high school graduates, as high-performing school systems do across the world.

"If we want the best teachers in the classroom, we need to get the best people and give them the best training possible to ensure they are properly equipped for the job.

"Minister Pyne has no plan to address the lack of workforce planning which has delivered an oversupply of teaching graduates, at the same time as shortages of teachers in key subjects like maths and science."

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