Labor's public schools plan a significant step forward



The Australian Education Union has warmly welcomed Federal Labor's commitments to invest in education during the COVID-19 recovery, with new targeted funding for public schools.

"Today's policy announcements represent a significant step forward for our members who have been campaigning long and hard for public school investment," Ms Haythorpe said.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the deep inequality that has long existed for students across Australia. Labor has recognised that education is the most powerful tool we have in addressing systemic inequality and disadvantage for students.

"Ensuring public schools have 100 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard will mean more teachers in classrooms, smaller class sizes, greater individual attention and more support to assist students to achieve to their full potential. This is critically important to cater for the educational needs of all students post COVID-19.

"There is clear evidence that COVID-19 has had an impact on students' well-being. We welcome Labor's planned investment in well-being initiatives for schools and students. These measures, such as psychologists, counsellors and specialist staff and programs, will assist schools to help students overcome the challenges of the pandemic.

"Our members have been raising the urgent need for air filtration and ventilation in schools for many months now. Labor's commitment of $50 million for COVID-19 related capital works, including air purifiers, improved ventilation and outdoor classrooms, will help ensure students and staff can be as safe as possible," Ms Haythorpe said.

In 2017, the Turnbull Government abandoned funding for public school capital works. Today, the Morrison Government makes no contribution to capital works for public schools, while providing $1.9 billion for private schools.

"Labor's commitment of $188 million for public school capital works in 2022-23 will start the process of restoring the joint Commonwealth and state responsibility for capital works investment, helping to ensure students can learn in modern, COVID-safe and fit for purpose facilities.

"The AEU has been campaigning for fair and proper funding for public schools for many years. Our members are deeply committed to ensuring every school has the resources required to ensure every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

"Our members have also been calling for a national plan for schools during the pandemic and to ensure schools have the guidelines and resources required for the recovery period.

"It is clear that Anthony Albanese and Tanya Plibersek have heard our members' strong message about the critical need for investment in public schools and for a national plan for recovery from the pandemic.

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