Federal budget sets the standard for TAFE funding

The Australian Education Union (AEU) has welcomed the investment in public education in the budget handed down by Treasurer Jim Chalmers today.

“This is the beginning of the investment in the public education system Australia desperately needs,” AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said.

TAFE

“It was refreshing to see TAFE made the key priority in today's budget after over a decade of cuts.

“The Federal Labor Government’s $921 million investment in fee-free TAFE places and TAFE technology fund has laid the groundwork for TAFE to lead the nation’s skills recovery over the next five years.

“This investment over the forward estimates confirms the government’s commitment to ensure TAFE is the anchor institute of vocational education in Australia.

“However, we need to secure the future of TAFE with renewed infrastructure, new and improved workforce and policy settings.

“With a greater share of dedicated funding, TAFE can continue to offer high quality vocational education to every Australian.”

Investment to address national teacher shortages

The AEU has welcomed the $124.5 million investment in strategies to address the ongoing teacher workforce crisis, including the additional 4,036 university places for education.

“These additional university places in teaching and early childhood education are an important step to addressing the growing teacher shortages across public schools and preschools.

“It is particularly welcome that these places will be allocated to students from disadvantaged backgrounds and marginalised communities.

“However, this step alone does not solve what is an escalating national crisis.

“The Federal Government must continue to develop new initiatives to address the shortages and we look forward to working with Education Minister Clare to do so in a way that protects and enhances the hard-won rigour and quality in teacher education,” Ms Haythorpe said.

Public schools

The AEU is pleased to see the $350 million funding boost for capital work upgrades and student well-being in public schools.

“This budget restores the Commonwealth’s responsibility to deliver capital works funding for public schools after the former Coalition Government dismantled it in 2017.

“This is undeniably a good starting point, but public schools need greater funding so students have the most up-to-date resources and facilities they need.

However, there is one election commitment that has not yet been realised - that is the delivery of a pathway to delivery of 100 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard for all public schools in Australia.

“The upcoming negotiations for a new National Schools Reform Agreement must be a turning point for the Labor Government. They must scrap the 20 per cent funding cap on the Commonwealth’s share of funding to public schools across Australia and lead negotiations with states and territories to deliver the investment students in public schools are entitled to.

“For our society to be truly egalitarian and be able to realise every child’s potential, Australia can no longer turn a blind eye towards the inequitable funding system that plagues our public schools.

"We are disappointed to see that this federal budget has failed to deliver funding for preschool education to three-year-olds so that every child can access the lifelong benefits of two years of early learning in the years before starting school,” Ms Haythorpe said.

A more detailed analysis is available here.

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