Federal budget: full funding for central Australian public schools represents what's possible



One of the Federal Budget's smallest commitments, $40 million to ensure every school in Central Australia is fully funded, potentially represents one of the most important steps forward for the future of Australian public schools.

Australian Education Union Federal President Correna Haythorpe welcomed the commitment.

"While $40 million may not be much compared to other Federal Budget commitments, it's important that we're clear about what it represents.

"For public school students in Central Australia, it represents full funding to 100 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) in the region. That funding will help deliver more teachers, more education support staff, and more one on one individual attention for students.

"For public schools across the country, it is the first, albeit small, step towards the delivery of Federal Labor's 2022 election commitment - to get every public school on the pathway to 100 per cent of the SRS.

"But it cannot be the only step. The Northern Territory has the highest level of student need; 44 per cent of students are First Nations and 26 per cent of students have a disability and receive educational adjustments. However, right now the education of one in five public school students in the Northern Territory is effectively unfunded.

"It's one in ten public school students across the nation. That is a national shame.

"For Federal Labor to truly deliver Prime Minister Albanese's vision for Australia, where no one is held back and no one is left behind, this Government must deliver 100 percent of the SRS funding needed for every Australian public school. That is the minimum benchmark agreed to by all governments.

“AEU members will not accept anything less than full and fair funding for public schools,” Ms Haythorpe said.

The AEU also welcomed the Federal Government’s commitments to TAFE.

“This Budget represents a huge step forward for the nation’s TAFE institutions. The Government has made a $4.1 billion commitment, including $3.7 billion for the next national skills agreement, a life-changing document for our members as it sets up the framework for a strong and vibrant TAFE system for the future.

“We welcome the spirit of collaboration between the Commonwealth and the states and territories that is evident in the negotiations for the next national skills agreement and the Albanese Government’s commitment to ensuring TAFE is at the heart of vocational education, and that it’s supported by long-term, sustainable and stable funding.

“We were disappointed that this Federal Budget does not include funding to extend universal access to preschool to three-year-olds. This flies in the face of all available evidence that shows two years of high quality, play-based early learning delivered by a qualified teacher helps set children up for a lifetime of benefits in education, health and wellbeing.

“This funding must be provided for the benefit of all Australian children and their families.”

Authorised by Sally Dennis, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.
ABN 54 478 094 635 © 2026