OECD report highlights unmet need for Australia's public schools

The latest Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) *Education at a Glance* report shows that Australia significantly underperforms against most OECD countries when it comes to investing in public schools.

The report, released in mid September, also finds that Australian teachers on average have much higher workloads, higher than average class sizes and confirms that the salaries of Australia's teachers plateau much earlier than they do in most OECD countries.

Additionally, the report also notes that private schools in Australia receive some of the highest share of government funding in the cohort.

According to the report:

- Australia spends only 1.5 per cent of total government expenditure on upper secondary school education, 28.6 per cent lower than the OECD average of 2.1 per cent.
- As a share of GDP, Australia spends only 0.8 per cent on upper secondary school education, 27 per cent lower than the OECD average of 1.1 per cent of GDP.
- Australia's expenditure on teaching staff per student is below the OECD average and below the investment made in many comparator countries including Belgium, Germany, Norway, France, United States, Canada, United Kingdom and Denmark.
- Australian teachers have the third highest average instruction times amounting at over 1,000 hours each year, compared to an average of 805 hours in primary schools and 916 hours in secondary schools across the OECD.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said that the OECD's report was yet another indicator pointing to the urgent need for full and fair funding of public schools across Australia.

"This report makes it clear that Australia is a global outlier in its failure to fully fund public education," Ms Haythorpe said.

"The chronic underfunding of Australia's public schools has led to a chronic teacher shortage and a situation where schools struggle to provide our students with the individual support they need. This must change.

"The Albanese Government must address the crisis facing our nation's public education system with the urgency it deserves.

"Australia's public school teachers are some of the most dedicated and hard-working across the world, yet they continue to be left unsupported.

"Currently only 1.3 per cent of Australian public schools are funded to meet their Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) entitlements. That means over 98 per cent of our public schools are not funded to meet the most basic student requirements.

"Years of inaction and underfunding of Australia's public education system has resulted in a situation where our students risk falling behind compared to their peers globally."
Ms Haythorpe said that as part of the new *For Every Child* campaign the AEU has released a national plan setting out the case for full funding and the top priorities for additional investment. For more information visit bit.ly/3ZOSYSt

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