

# Major breakthrough on public school funding



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Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has delivered an historic commitment for full funding of Australia's public schools.

Australian Education Union (AEU) Federal President Correna Haythorpe said the AEU welcomed the announcement that the Commonwealth Government will lift their commitment to a full 25 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) by 2034, with states expected to get rid of the four per cent accounting trick brought in by the Morrison Government in 2018.

The Albanese and Malinauskus Governments have signed the first heads of agreement under the new offer, providing \$1 billion in additional funding for South Australian public schools.

The Prime Minister also announced an agreement has been signed with the Allan Government for Victorian public schools.

"This heralds a major breakthrough on full and fair funding negotiations for public schools," Ms Haythorpe said.

"With the signing of these agreements, public schools in South Australia will see guaranteed funding increases every year, allowing them to employ more teachers, more education support staff and to provide more help for those students who need it.

"That is life-changing for students and for the teachers and support staff who give 100 per cent every day.

"Teachers, students and parents will finally see their public schools funded to the level needed for every child to reach their potential."

AEUSA President Jennie Marie Gorman welcomed the announcement, and the benefits it will bring to South Australian teachers and students.

"As a former principal, I know the realities facing schools everyday and I understand the value of what this funding deal will

bring for schools across our state,” Ms Gorman said.

“For students who need support with their learning, for teachers who need resources to address escalating workloads and to provide high quality learning programs, this announcement will be welcome news indeed.”

AEUVIC President Justin Mullaly said the Victoria agreement will see teachers and students better resourced in public schools.

“Additional Commonwealth funding for Victorian public schools means dedicated and hardworking teachers, education support (ES) staff and principals will have more of the resources they need to better meet the learning and wellbeing needs of all students,” Mr Mullaly said.

“The commitment to increase funding means it will be easier to attract and retain school staff and better address teacher shortages.

“Public schools will be able to employ extra teachers and ES so that every student gets more of the individual support they need and that school staff workloads can be managed.”

This announcement ends the practice of states artificially inflating their SRS share by four per cent through the inclusion of non-school spending and sets a precedent that must be followed in new agreements in every state and the NT.

“[This] announcement provides all state governments the opportunity to ensure that public schools are genuinely on the pathway to 100 per cent SRS funding. We urge all state governments to finish negotiations and deliver full funding for their public school communities,” Ms Haythorpe said.

“Further delay means that public schools will be denied the vital resources that they need to deliver high quality teaching and learning programs.

“We welcome South Australia and Victoria signing on to this historic agreement and look forward to the other states signing. We call on the states not to delay.

“Teachers know the importance of this funding and the need for it to be rolled out as quickly as possible because of the difference it will make in classrooms, and parents understand the importance of teachers being supported to do their jobs well.”

The AEU now calls on all political parties to support this full funding, for the future of Australian public schools.

“With a federal election looming, all political parties must back the Albanese Government’s offer in,” Ms Haythorpe said.

“Further, the Leader of the Opposition Peter Dutton must give an iron clad guarantee to public school communities that he will honour all school funding bilateral agreements in full should he become Prime Minister in any future election.

“Australia’s students cannot afford further delays in negotiations. It is time to get the deals done so that public schools have certainty.”