State Election 2025 political party statements: WA Labor Party

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The SSTUWA invited the following parties to send submissions answering key questions about their education policy platform for the upcoming state election: Greens WA, WA Labor Party, Liberal Party of WA and The Nationals WA. Each party was contacted in the same manner, with the same follow-ups. We received replies from Greens WA, the WA Labor Party and The Nationals WA. These are those responses. The information is as supplied by the parties and correct at time of publication. No response was received from the Liberal Party of WA within the required timeline.

The Cook Labor Government has the experience and track record to continue delivering for Western Australian schools, TAFEs, lecturers and teachers. WA Labor understands the value of education, the critical role of educators, and the importance of making sure every child - no matter their background - has access to world-class education. We want to ensure every public school is a great public school.

Accessible, inclusive and equitable education is a right for all. We believe educators have the right to work in a safe environment and we genuinely value the input of educators and their union in guiding education in this State. The State School Teachers Union has a key role to play alongside government, working to deliver the education system our young people deserve.

We are the only party that can be trusted with the TAFE system. We have spent the past eight years restoring TAFE after it was decimated under the Liberal-National Government. We have partnered with the Albanese Government to deliver Fee Free TAFE courses across a range of key industries. There are also now over 160 high priority courses that have had their course fees reduced by up to 72 percent through our *Lower fees, local skills initiatives*.

If re-elected, I expect the SSTUWA to continue to be a partner in developing and delivering the State's education policies, as well as continuing its strong advocacy for the teaching workforce. I am pleased with the increased level of collaboration between my Government and the union and want to build upon this in a new WA Labor Government.

Our track record is already strong. I am delighted we were able to secure a new agreement last year that delivers wage increases, new attraction and retention initiatives and significant measures to reduce teacher workload. It is a well-deserved outcome and one that recognises the continued and emerging demands on our educators.

The agreement boosts the graduate allowance, improves professional learning opportunities, and enhances long service leave, personal leave, and compassionate leave entitlements. Importantly, the agreement includes robust measures to reduce workload and provide genuine support to teachers.

It includes improved career pathways, with the creation of a new Senior Teacher Level 2 classification and trial deployment of experienced teachers and school leaders to regional schools. A graduate teacher's starting salary has risen to $88,178, and a senior teacher's salary to $132,557. Experienced Level 3 teachers earn up to $147,077 and senior school principals up to $206,662. In a global shortage of teachers, we want to ensure Western Australian teachers are among the best paid in the country.

100 per cent School Resourcing Standard funding

My Government is proud to have been the first in Australia to achieve the full and fair 100 per cent School Resourcing Standard through the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement (BFSA). This historic deal, achieved alongside the Albanese Government, will deliver the support students and educators have long deserved.

Under the BFSA, an additional $1.6 billion in combined State and Commonwealth funding will be invested in Western Australian public schools over 2025 to 2029. Additional funding will be tied to reforms focused on improving equity and excellence in our schools, supporting student wellbeing for learning and engagement, and providing a strong, sustainable and supported workforce of teachers and other school staff.

Recently we have reached further agreement with the Albanese Government for an increase in Commonwealth funding to

25 per cent of the Schooling Resourcing Standard over the next 10 years – up from the current 22.5 per cent. This will incrementally increase the Commonwealth's contribution from 2030 to 25 per cent of the SRS by 2034, and provides hundreds of millions of dollars of Commonwealth funding to the State over this period.

As part of this agreement we will remove the Morrison Government provision that allowed the State to claim four per cent of public school funding for indirect school costs such as capital depreciation and replace it with four per cent of recurrent funding on eligible expenses, while also maintaining our 75 per cent share of the SRS for public schools.

This is something only a Labor Government could deliver. WA Labor understands education and the need for proper resourcing. I am particularly pleased that the 100 per cent School Resourcing Standard includes a record level of individual support for students. Educators understand how crucial direct one-on-one support is and these additional resources will make a real difference to student outcomes.

Workload reduction and class sizes

My Government acknowledges the continued and emerging demands on educators, and is strongly focused on reducing teacher workload by putting in place innovative measures to reduce pressure on teachers.

To this end, the Cook Labor Government is progressing a number of important workload reduction initiatives, including establishing the Workload Intensification Taskforce. The Taskforce comprises members from the SSTUWA and the Department of Education, headed by an independent chair. It is working to identify opportunities and evaluate initiatives that support the management of school leader and teacher workloads. Effective oversight is essential in addressing workloads.

We have also introduced a series of initiatives using digital technology and artificial intelligence to reduce red tape and ease workloads. This includes testing appropriate and sensible AI tools to assist teachers, piloting digital solutions to lessen paperwork and administration, and introducing Complex Behaviour Support Coordinators to help assist students with disabilities.

Importantly, the 'Connect and Respect' program is working to limit after-hours contact with public school staff. These resources support school leaders with a consistent message to parents on expectations of behaviour, as well as a clear approach on managing adult behaviour that negatively impacts our schools and student learning. We have also updated documentation for exclusions, which has reduced the workload associated with the recommendation for exclusion process for schools and regions.

Maximum and recommended class size limits are already included in the agreement and I'm pleased class size averages for Western Australian public schools in 2024 continued to be below these, however I recognise workload is an issue on which we must continue to work. The agreement includes a focus on small group tuition, student documented plans and professional learning. The Cook Labor Government recognises the importance of face-to-face teaching by registered teachers and is progressing a series of initiatives to increase the supply of teachers for Western Australian public schools.

Teacher attraction and retention

The attraction and retention of teachers, particularly in remote and regional areas, is a primary focus. Despite global workforce shortages, we have continued to attract and retain high-quality teachers across all locations, including those that have proven harder to staff.

Teacher and school administrator mobility trials agreed to in negotiations have already been implemented for 2025, providing permanent metropolitan staff with experience living and working in regional locations. In addition to other location-driven incentives, this is an opportunity for eligible staff to take a three-year appointment at a regional school, with a right of return to their substantive position.

We also understand housing is a major consideration for attracting and retaining education employees across our vast State. We remain committed to ensuring housing is available, affordable, liveable, safe and secure. Since 2021-22, my Government has committed nearly $300 million for new Government Regional Officer Housing (GROH) and to refurbish existing stock. We have also continued to freeze rent increases for teachers occupying GROH dwellings to assist regional towns to continue to attract teachers.

New schools, TAFEs and upgraded infrastructure

The State Government has opened more than 30 new schools and delivered major

upgrades at many more, including early childhood learning facilities, performing arts centres, sports halls, and more than 330 new science labs to prepare our young people for the jobs of the future.

We are investing in the biggest TAFE capital works program in WA history with 15 major upgrades of TAFEs across the

State to create world-class learning facilities.

Since 2017, our commitment to public schools has been demonstrated through a $4.8 billion investment in building new and improved schools across the State. This included $200 million as part of our Maintenance Blitz.

We recognise that many of WA's schools are ageing and require refurbishment. A government that I lead will ensure our hundreds of State schools have the support they need to provide quality facilities, with good conditions for leaning for both teachers and students.

2025 State Election

The coming State election offers Western Australians a choice between stable, responsible, experienced government – and the chaotic, risky and divided Liberal and National parties.

Education and training are always better looked after under Labor governments. WA Labor understands the pressures educators face, and the need to genuinely engage teachers and their union on policy and how best to educate our kids. Continued improvement demands collaboration.

This principle is a vital part of WA Labor's approach to education and training – and the SSTUWA and our workforce will continue to play a strong role alongside government in guiding education in Western Australia.

Over the course of the election campaign WA Labor will be announcing a series of commitments to further improve our schools and TAFEs. I am asking for your support on March 8 so we can continue to deliver great outcomes for educators.

ROGER COOK MLA
PREMIER OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



By Roger Cook MLA, Premier of Western Australia
WA Labor Party

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