State Election 2025 political party statements: The Nationals WA



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The Nationals WA

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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.

1. Successive governments have taken advantage of a loophole to remove an additional four per cent of funding from public schools by counting it as part of the state's 75 per cent funding contribution. Will you commit to restoring that four per cent as an additional payment?

The Nationals WA are committed to adequate funding of public schools and restoring the four per cent of funding withdrawn annually by the current Labor government.

While the *Facing the Facts* Report highlighted the need for a significant increase in public school funding, together with a better distribution of those funds to help teachers narrow the achievement gaps created by socio-economic disadvantage and disability, the Labor government instead cut four per cent from the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement for their own coffers.

The recent Better and Fairer Schools Agreement requires WA to get to 77.5 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard by 2026 and the Commonwealth to 22.5 per cent by 2026.

The current state Labor government has failed to secure adequate funding for our public school students. The agreement actually allows Labor to immediately withdraw four per cent each of the year of the agreement. This brings the true funding amount down to 96 per cent which could be in place for up to 10 years.

By the end of a five-year agreement, the four per cent gap to a true full funding amount of 100 per cent will be worth approximately $275 million per annum.

The Nationals WA in government will commit to restoring the four per cent to our public schools which is the true agreement

to appropriately fund our students.

The Nationals WA will also seek answers from this Labor government to reveal exactly what it planned to do with the four per cent per annum taken from public school students.

2. What is your position on incremental reduction in maximum class sizes?

Maximum class sizes in WA public schools are too high. This does not enable educators to provide for the specific needs of each student.

Class sizes are higher in WA than in other states and have not changed despite the increasing complexity of student needs.

Increasing cognitive and emotional complexities with students means teachers and education assistants are spending more time tackling these issues rather than teaching the broader classroom cohort, and high class numbers only compounds this problem for teachers.

The Nationals WA support the incremental reduction in class sizes to meet the needs of students with complex needs, as well as ensuring other students' education is not compromised.

After 40 years the maximum class size in Years 4-10 is still **32** in WA public schools.

3. What is your commitment to face-to-face teaching by qualified teachers and TAFE lecturers across the state?

The use of Limited Registration Teachers should be a last resort strategy, not the go to plan this Labor Government has for teacher replacement. Fully qualified teachers and lecturers in front of classrooms will be the Nationals WA commitment.

The Nationals WA will increase teacher numbers by providing a more supportive environment to teach. The*Facing the Facts* report clearly outlines the need to reduce the workload for teachers. The Nationals WA will streamline workloads for teachers, increasing their availability to teach.

There are also around 10,000 teachers who aren't teaching in WA. The Nationals WA want to streamline registration processes to make it easier for them to return to teaching and provide relief teaching roles.

4. How will you increase investment in educator attraction and retention in regional WA?

WA schools and students deserve a return to sustainable teacher numbers brought about by increased support for teachers in the classroom and increased incentives for attraction and retention.

Specific to our regional WA teacher workforce The Nationals WA in government will prioritise consistent and increased Country Teacher Program allowances, de-centralise district office support and introduce a consistent approach to regional teacher placement incentives, as well as improving GROH.

The Nationals WA will bring back locally based services for education development, training, administrative support and mentoring.

The Nationals WA will bolster the services of District Offices providing on the ground support for our teachers and principals.

Financial incentives for teacher retention is part of that strategy as well as guaranteeing teachers right of return to their previous, permanent positions (both metropolitan and regional).

5. What is your intent in relation to GROH for teachers, lecturers, school psychologist and school leaders, to improve housing availability, cost, quality, safety and security?

Housing is key to attracting & retaining the teacher workforce, especially in regional WA.

The Nationals WA promise to rebuild the WA teacher workforce in regional areas focuses on housing and regional incentives.

An overhaul of Government Regional Officer Housing (GROH) will improve security, maintenance, vacancy rates and increase the housing stock.

The Nationals WA will increase the GROH annual operating budget by $1.7m to manage housing maintenance, as well as increase the housing stock for education sector by at least 60.

Labor has grossly underfunded GROH in recent years, not delivered on promised increases in housing stock and left houses locked up and empty waiting for maintenance and safety upgrades.

This neglect by Labor especially during a cost of living crisis has failed to attract teachers, principals, education assistants, psychologists and many other critical staff to live, work and stay long term in the regions.

To attract and retain our teachers, lecturers, school leaders and allied health staff The Nationals WA in government will focus on improving the provision of regional housing.

6. How will you address crucial infrastructure and maintenance issues in schools and TAFEs?

The Nationals WA will commit $60 million to funding infrastructure improvements at Como Senior High School and an initial $60 million for Esperance Senior High School.

Critical maintenance and infrastructure requirements will be reviewed by The Nationals WA with priority given to regional schools waiting longer than five years for infrastructure upgrades.

The Nationals WA will review closely the statewide infrastructure audit.

7. What is your plan to improve behaviour and reduce violence and aggression in our schools and TAFEs?

The Nationals WA have a comprehensive plan to change the way violence in Western Australian schools is managed, promising to enhance prevention and intervention strategies to create safer learning environments.

Findings from *Facing the Facts* Report indicate that a small, but apparently growing, number of children engage in aggressive and disruptive behaviour at school and that teachers and school leaders exposed to such behaviour report elevated stress levels and poorer mental health.

The escalation of violence has led to increased stress and anxiety among school leaders, with many considering early retirement.

The Nationals WA in government commit to the following measures:

1. **Increase Specialised Teacher Consultants:** Deploy consultants in each of the eight regions to train and support school staff in preventative and behaviour management strategies.

2. **Enhance Interagency Support:** Strengthen collaboration between agencies to support student outcomes and school staff.

3. **Expand Schools of Alternative Learning (SALS):** Establish two SALS centres in each of the eight education regions, providing targeted support for students at risk of exclusion due to violent behaviour.

The Nationals WA plan to develop partnership agreements with agencies and allied professionals to create a framework for combined service delivery, ensuring a safe and supportive school environment.

8. What new or expanded initiatives do you propose to ensure more children are ready to learn from the commencement of their schooling?

Early childhood programs will be supported and enhanced throughout WA. The Nationals WA will improve paediatric services for children in WA.

This is a complex issue, but by maximising early paediatric assessments, ongoing support structures will help to alleviate specialist educational needs in the future.

The critical role of education assistants in supporting students and teachers can’t be underestimated.

The Nationals WA will ensure the education assistants’ roles are appropriately financially rewarded.

This will help to take the pressure off teachers and provide students who require this support, with the targeted assistance they need to succeed.

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