Turnbull must deliver on Gonski

The AEU has welcomed new Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's announcement that the Federal Government is "considering" implementing the 5th and 6th years of needs-based Gonski funding.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said Mr Turnbull's approach was a change from the blanket refusal of former Prime Minister Tony Abbott to consider extending Gonski and his dismissal of the importance of needs-based funding.

"Mr Turnbull today has also expressed his support for needs-based funding, saying that everyone agrees we need more resources to go into education, and that this must be needs-based," Ms Haythorpe said.

"This is exactly the point of the Gonski reforms, which recognise that we need to invest more in the schools that educate disadvantaged students.

"The Federal Government must deliver the full six years of Gonski funding and we will be waiting to see how the new PM, and Education Minister Simon Birmingham, progress this issue.

"Schools that have got Gonski funding are already using it to make a positive difference for their students.

"This may be through reduced class sizes, extra literacy and numeracy programs, support staff like speech therapists or more one-on-one support to students. All of these things are lifting results.

"But we need the Federal Government to deliver the full six years of Gonski, not just four years, because the majority of the extra funding is to be delivered in those last two years.

"Since becoming Prime Minister Mr Turnbull has talked about the need for Australia to lift its productivity and be more innovative and competitive.

"He needs to back that by stepping up and funding the full six years of Gonski – so that all schools have the resources they need to give their students the education they need for the 21st century.

Research released by the Mitchell Institute this week confirmed the strong effects of disadvantage on student performance and the need to fix this through targeted funding. It found these effects started the moment children began school and continued right through to beyond their school years.

The research found that students who fail to succeed at school were: 'disproportionately likely to be from disadvantaged backgrounds', and suggested schools with higher numbers of disadvantaged students get more resources to address their needs.

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