



Tuesday, September 6, 2016

New analysis shows Turnbull's plan will favour private schools and abandon needs-based funding

The Turnbull Government's claims it will deliver need-based funding to schools after 2017 have been exposed as completely false by a new analysis showing their funding plan would see 62% of extra federal funding go to private schools, which educate fewer disadvantaged students than the public system.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said the analysis, by education funding expert Dr Jim McMorrow, made it clear the Coalition had no commitment to needs-based funding and its plan would deny students they help they needed at school.

"The next Education Ministers Council is on September 23' and we need State and Territory Governments to stand up to any attempt by the Coalition to end Gonski, and to fight to ensure that schools funding remains based on need," Ms Haythorpe said.

"Malcolm Turnbull wants to take us back to a system where schools are funded by sector, not need, which will leave our children worse off.

"He went to an election promising to deliver needs-based funding but his own budget shows he will deliver nothing of the sort.

"This failure to invest in our schools and students would do long-term damage. Students from disadvantaged schools would miss out on the help they need to succeed at school.

"It makes no sense to try and abandon Gonski just as schools and students are beginning to benefit from the extra resources it is delivering.

"Dr McMorrow found there was 'no educational rationale' for the Turnbull Government's education funding plan and it had 'abandoned the Gonski schools funding model without any rational alternative'."

The analysis shows that:

- The Coalition's plan would see schools a total of \$5.28 billion worse off from 2016/17 to 2019/20, compared with the full six years of Gonski funding.
- Of the extra \$1.2 billion the Coalition has promised over four years under its model, only \$450 million (38 per cent) would go to public schools and \$750 million (62 per cent to private schools)
- Per student funding to public schools would increase by just 1.8% in 2018/19 and 2.1% in 2019/20

"The Gonski Review made clear the overwhelming majority of additional funding should go to public schools because these schools had been short-changed by previous funding arrangements and because the level of need in public schools was higher," Ms Haythorpe said.

"Dr McMorrow's research confirms that if the full six years of Gonski funding was fully implemented around 80% of additional funding would be delivered to public schools.

“The Gonski model will be better for all schools, but will deliver the biggest funding increases to public schools, which educate higher proportions of low-SES students and students with disability,” Ms Haythorpe said.

"The Turnbull Government claims it is delivering a higher rate of increase to public schools, but the research reveals that, after inflation is taken into account, public schools will get an increase of \$183 per student over three years and private schools will get \$309 per student.

“The analysis found this tiny amount is not enough to pay for a single extra teacher in a public school with 500 students.

“The Coalition has said that ‘funding goes where it is needed most’ under its plan, so how does it explain delivering the bulk of extra funding to private schools?

“The 2015/16 Budget Papers also show they will actually cut funding to public schools in the Northern Territory (by \$28.9 million) and Tasmania (by \$1.8 million) after 2017 – despite these schools having the highest needs of any part of Australia.

“We know that needs-based Gonski funding is already making a difference, so why does Malcolm Turnbull want to stop it?”

"A few months ago Mr Turnbull wanted to stop funding public schools altogether. That was overwhelmingly rejected by the States and Territories but he clearly remains intent on denying children in those schools the resources they need.

“The single biggest problem in Australian education remains the unacceptable gaps in achievement between students from different backgrounds and locations.

“The evidence shows that delivering the full Gonski funding is our best chance to ensure all kids get the support they need to reach their potential and close these achievement gaps.

“The Gonski Review was the most thorough examination of schools funding in a generation, yet the Coalition wants to replace it with a funding model that is not based on need, and where key details are unknown.

“Education Minister Simon Birmingham has already admitted in Senate Estimates he does not know where the \$1.2 billion to fund the Coalition’s plan is to come from.

“He has also admitted he does not know what would happen if States and Territories do not agree to the conditions he wants to impose on funding.

To see the research in full visit

<http://www.aeufederal.org.au/application/files/8814/7245/1146/McMorrow2016.pdf>

Media Contact: Ben Ruse: 0437 971 291