



New South Wales  
Aboriginal Education  
Consultative Group Inc.



7 August 2024

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The Hon. Anthony Albanese,  
Prime Minister  
PO BOX 6022, House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

The Hon. Jason Clare  
Minister for Education  
PO BOX 6022, House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

## JOINT STATEMENT ON SCHOOLS FUNDING

Dear Prime Minister and Minister

For years, our respective organisations have sounded the alarm about the chronic underfunding of NSW public schools. As such, we were shocked and appalled to learn that last week the federal government has issued an ultimatum to its state and territory counterparts over schools funding.

A 'take-it-or-leave-it' offer to the NSW government is unconscionable given the entrenched pain our schools are feeling after decades of failure at all levels of government to properly resource public education. Holding our kids' future ransom is completely unacceptable.

NSW public schools face a staggering \$1.9 billion funding gap this year alone. Over the next four years, NSW departmental analysis shows the federal government will provide \$24.2 billion to the state's 970 non-government schools, but only \$14.3 billion to the 2200 public schools.

Before the last election, the Australian Labor Party made the welcome promise to fix the funding gap and ensure NSW public schools will be funded to 100 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS).

The overall shortfall is primarily a result of the federal government's failure to meet its funding obligations. The federal government currently provides only 20 per cent of the SRS. While they have offered a paltry increase to 22.5 per cent, this still falls short of the 25 per cent share that NSW is rightfully demanding.

But now we are seeing public school funding – the cornerstone of a healthy democratic society – being used once again as a political football in a morally bankrupt game of blame shifting.

Many public schools face overcrowding and excessive reliance on demountable classrooms, inadequate climate control, and aging infrastructure in need of urgent upgrades. It is with grave concern we note the May Federal Budget confirmed the Albanese Government will no longer provide any form of capital works for public schools, while private schools will receive almost \$1 billion over the next four years.

Chronic underfunding is having a corrosive impact on our entire public school system. Schools are being forced to merge classes, run classes without teachers and cut specialist programs. In NSW, we are seeing the highest teacher shortages in the country. Nine out of ten teachers report a decline in teacher wellbeing and morale. Just one in six teachers say they are committed to staying until retirement. And perhaps most alarmingly, more than two-thirds of principals and teachers have seen a decline in student wellbeing and engagement.

As we approach another federal election, principals, teachers, students and families are urging the federal government to finally end decades of neglect. No more excuses, threats or ultimatums. Our society's future depends on you fully funding our public schools.

Yours sincerely

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NSW Aboriginal Education  
Consultative Group Inc

**Yvonne Hilsz**  
President  
Federation of Parents &  
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NSW

**Robyn Evans**  
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Association

**Denise Lofts**  
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**Henry Rajendra**  
President  
NSW Teachers Federation