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AEU WELCOMES LABOR'S FEDERAL-STATE AGREEMENT

The Australian Education Union today welcomed the announcement of a proposed agreement for schools funding between state and territory Premiers and Mark Latham as leader of a future Labor federal government.

"If this Agreement becomes the policy of federal and state governments after the next election, it will represent a great step forward for school education in Australia," said Pat Byrne, Federal President of the AEU.

The proposed Agreement declares public education to be a national priority for state and federal governments and establishes the principle that schools should be funded to achieve a national resource standard. This standard is based on the level of resources required to allow all students the opportunity to reach national goals. The key component is an agreement that state and territory governments would work with the federal government to ensure that this occurs.

"Obviously, just how the benchmark is established is critically important, and this has still to be announced. However, the principle of funding schools to enable them to achieve a resource benchmark would mean that those schools in most need would receive the largest increases, establishing equity as a funding principle."

"This would end the current practice of each level of government blaming the other for failing to take responsibility for the proper funding of schools. It will also end the current SES funding model of the Coalition, which is a policy of privatization by stealth and gives the largest increases to the most affluent private schools."

"Parents are sick of governments neglecting our schools and blaming each other. They do not care whose fault it is – they want the problem fixed, and in this instance the problem is adequate funding of public schools. An agreement which produces a more open and transparent funding process is something we would all support," Ms Byrne said.

In addition, the agreement would impose more consistent accountability requirements for all schools in receipt of public funding, a move welcomed by teachers who have been calling for this for some time.

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