



## **Australian Education Union - Federal Office**

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### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **AEU launches its Charter for Public Education**

The Australian Education Union today launched its Charter for Public Education.

Pat Byrne, Australian Education Union Federal President, explained that the Charter has been developed by the Australian Education Union to outline its plan for public education.

"This is a plan for a dynamic, high quality education system that aims to provide the opportunities that all our children deserve. It is a plan that meets the challenges of the knowledge society and will enhance the comparative social and economic advantages that this country has developed through its education systems.

"Our Charter is a blueprint that is designed to reverse the policies of the last few years where education is being treated as a product rather than a birthright and where the 'user pays' funding model is creating a 'two tier' society.

The AEU's Charter addresses the main issues confronting public education such as increasing access to places in preschool and TAFE education; reducing class sizes to improve the quality of education in our schools; and addressing the looming teacher shortage across the country.

"What we need to see is an increase in funding. The AEU estimates that \$430 million is needed to provide access to preschool education, \$222 million to provide 4,500 teachers to reduce class sizes, \$50 million to assist with discipline and student well being, \$50 million for Indigenous education and \$400 million for the TAFE sector.

"This increase in funding would ensure that Australia's public education system would be properly resourced and the best education system accessible to all Australians.

"Currently the Australian public education system provides for 70% of Australian students, but the Federal Government only provides one third of its funding to the public system," Ms Byrne said.

Australian schools continue to perform very well on the world stage. The latest OECD data shows that Australian students aged 15 rated second for literacy, second for numeracy and third for scientific literacy among the 29 OECD countries.

"This data is a reflection of the good work of the public education system. Public education discriminates against no one and is open to all. But, public education continues to be hamstrung by governments that will not commit the resources to maintain and improve current standards," Ms. Byrne explained.

The Charter can be viewed at [www.publiceducation.org.au](http://www.publiceducation.org.au)

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