



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

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### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Howard Government continues to neglect public education.**

The Australian Education Union Federal President Pat Byrne expressed regret that the Federal Government would continue to disproportionately fund wealthy private schools at the expense of needy government schools.

"In announcing the schools funding legislation which will provide federal government education funding for the next four years, John Howard and Brendan Nelson both indicated yesterday that they were not prepared to change their position on funding for public schools.

"What Australians want to see is a system of complementary government funding and policy making rather than ultimatums at the point of funding; ultimatums which impose an unprecedented level of interference in the running of schools, both public and private," said Ms Byrne.

"While the Labor Party, Democrats and Greens have all stated that public education must be a national priority it seems that all this Government is prepared to do is to threaten schools by making funding dependent upon absurd levels of micro-regulation in the education sector.

"Some of what is being proposed in this Bill is absurd - concerned more with appearance rather than substance. Much is related to matters already agreed by the states and in practice in schools across the country.

"It's time that public education was put on the agenda as a national priority by the Howard Government. The public education system educates two thirds of Australia's students – it's time that the Federal Government's funding policy reflected this fact," Ms Byrne said.

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