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AEU Calls on ALP to Demonstrate a National Priority for Public Education

While the proposals by the Opposition Leader Mark Latham to strengthen transparency and accountability measures for Federal funding to the Catholic school system are welcome, the Australian Education Union believes that what teachers and parents of students in public schools want is evidence that the ALP will provide the necessary funds to make public education a national priority.

"While catholic parents are again assured of ALP support the majority of Australian parents are still waiting," said AEU Federal President, Pat Byrne.

The AEU first raised the issue of the lack of accountability and transparency in the Government's private school funding legislation in May when the report prepared by the Australian School for Government Studies was released.

This report found that internationally Australia stands alone in that it provides high levels of financial assistance to private schools but has minimum regulatory oversight.

"Specifically we were concerned about how the money was being spent, any hidden discriminatory student enrolment and exclusion policies and the need to apply national curriculum and teaching standards. This policy begins to address those issues.

"The ALP's Schools funding policy is yet to be released and until we see whether the policy translates into increased funding for public schools, the AEU cannot make an overall assessment of the Opposition's schools education policy," Ms Byrne said.

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