



Australian Education Union - Federal Office

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LABOR'S FOCUS MUST BE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Australian Education Union said today that the ALP must commit to increasing funding to public schools as its first priority in its new education policy.

AEU Federal President, Ms Pat Byrne, said ALP president Warren Mundine was wrong to suggest there needed to be tax breaks on private school fees and direct subsidies for parents using the private school system.

"Since it came to office the Howard Government has provided more money for private schools at the expense of public schools," she said.

"It has under-funded public schools for the past ten years and Labor's focus should be on addressing that.

"Extra funding for the education system should go to public schools. That is where the overwhelming bulk of Australia's children are educated and that is where the greatest need is.

"Labor needs to turn away from the user-pays mentality of the Howard Government which wants parents to send their children to private schools.

"It is not about a class war on schools. It is about putting money where it is most needed.

"Mr. Mundine should remember that almost 90 per cent of Indigenous children go to public schools.

"Instead of tax breaks for parents for children at private schools we should be providing additional funding to ensure that Indigenous children have access to quality public education within their own communities.

"The best way to support all Australians is to strengthen the public education system," said Ms Byrne.

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