



Australian Education Union - Federal Office

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Poll Shows Budget Focus Must Be Public Education

The Australian Education Union said today the results of an exclusive new poll shows that today's budget should focus on increasing spending on education and public schools must be the big winner.

AEU Federal President, Ms Pat Byrne, said the national poll by research firm, MarketMetrics, found that education (73 per cent) and health (73 per cent) were the areas people wanted the budget surplus spent in ahead of reducing taxes (31 per cent) and paying off debt (18 per cent).

"People were also asked where any new money for schools should be directed. Ninety per cent said new money should go mainly to public schools and only 4 per cent said private schools. (*see page 2 for poll details*)

"This result shows clearly that the overwhelming majority of people want new funding for schools to go to public schools.

"That is contrary to the position the Federal Government has adopted for the last ten years where it has provided more money for private schools at the expense of public schools.

"It cannot continue with its funding policy which will see an ever-increasing amount of federal funding going to private schools and leave public schools as the poor relative.

"The fact is that the Government now spends more of its federal education budget on private schools than any other area including tertiary education and vocational education.

"The overwhelming bulk of Australia's children are educated in public schools and that is where the greatest need is."

Ms Byrne said the budget should also include a substantial extra amount for TAFE colleges which have been starved of funds by the Federal Government and extra funding for Indigenous education.

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MarketMetrics Poll.

Conducted nationally by telephone April 20-26. 400 respondents.

Question 1:

The Federal government has a big surplus this year. Do you think that surplus should be retained or should it be used to pay off debt, reduce taxes or should some be used to increase funding to education, health or other areas?

Retained	7%
Pay off debt	18%
Reduce taxes	31%
Increase funding to education	73%
Increase funding to health	73%
Increase funding to defence	25%
Don't know	2%

Question 2:

If the Federal Government increased funding for education, should it go mainly to:

Public schools	90%
Private schools	4%
Don't know	6%