



Australian Education Union - Federal Office

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Still no priority for public education

Federal Treasurer Peter Costello's eleventh budget has again ignored the needs of students in public schools and TAFE colleges.

Australian Education Union President, Pat Byrne, said "For too long the Howard government has undermined public schools through its failure to provide them with adequate resources."

"This budget demonstrates, yet again, a lack of regard for the views of the overwhelming majority of Australians who want to see an increase in Federal Government spending for public schools.

"An additional \$2.5 - \$3billion is required in order for every student to achieve the National Goals of Schooling agreed to by all governments. The Federal Government has squandered the opportunity to use its massive budget surplus for the benefit of the 70% of students in Australia's public schools so that this goal can be realised.

In addition, there are no provisions in tonight's budget which will seriously address the skills shortage facing us – the Howard government's response is short term, ad hoc and divisive. What we need is a properly planned and co-ordinated approach that involves co-operation between the Howard government and state and territory governments.

For example, the government's approach to the establishment of Australian Technical Colleges has been one of imposing an ideological viewpoint rather than working with state and territory governments to enhance existing structures and expertise.

The Howard government is awash with cash but continues to neglect children and young people in public schools and colleges. Until investment in public education is increased, Australia will miss out on future opportunities.

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