



Australian Education Union - Federal Office

Ground Floor, 120 Clarendon Street, Southbank, Victoria, 3006
Phone : +61 (0)3 9693 1800 Fax : +61 (0)3 9693 1805
Email : aeu@aeufederal.org.au Website : www.aeufederal.org.au

18 July 2006

AEU Calls for End to Blame-Shifting on Education

The Australian Education Union (AEU) today called for the Federal Government to stop trying to evade its responsibilities for funding public schools.

The Federal President of the AEU, Ms Pat Byrne, said comments from ACT Senator Gary Humphries criticising the AEU's new \$2.9 billion public education campaign were misleading and predictable.

"Senator Humphries believes that the campaign should be directed at states and territories and not the Federal Government which he claims is putting more into public education," she said.

"What he fails to mention is that since the Howard Government came to power in 1996, the proportion of Federal expenditure on government schools has **decreased** from 42 per cent of its schools' education budget in 1996 to 35 per cent in 2006. Further decreases are projected until 2010, when the overall proportion of Federal Government funding to public schools will be a mere 32 per cent.

"Senator Humphries and Education Minister Julie Bishop should explain why they are reducing opportunities for students in public schools by cutting the share of federal funding they receive.

"The AEU is campaigning for an extra \$2.9 billion a year to be spent on public education by the Federal Government. It is the Federal Government which is responsible for the declining proportion of funding which it now directs to public schools." said Ms Byrne.

"The \$2.9 billion figure is based on research commissioned by the Commonwealth, State and Territory ministers to establish the amount of resources required by schools in order to continue to meet the National Goals of Schooling.

"At present public schools do a wonderful job but could do even better with more resources.

"The community wants to see an end to the bickering between different levels of government and an acceptance by the Federal Government that it has a responsibility to make public education its number one priority.

For further information, please contact:

Pat Byrne
AEU Federal President
0411 693 244 – Mobile

Kelly Lofberg
Media
0423 375 833