



## **Australian Education Union - Federal Office**

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### **AEU LAUNCHES TV CAMPAIGN ON FUTURE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA**

The Australian Education Union today launched a television advertisement to campaign nationally for more funding for public education. The union will spend \$1.3 million in the lead up to this year's Federal election, airing the advertisement in marginal seats across Australia.

The advertisement shows a class of children at a public school excitedly preparing for a visit by the Prime Minister, only for him to drive straight past without stopping.

The voice-over tells viewers that since the Howard Government was elected the share of funding for public education has decreased to only 35%, despite 70% of Australian children attending public schools.

AEU Federal President Pat Byrne said that by skewing Federal funding away from public schools, the Howard Government was worsening disadvantage for thousands of Australian children.

"This election is crucial. Public schools cannot withstand another three years of attacks on their funding share by the Howard Government," said Ms. Byrne.

"The role of public schools is to provide quality education to every child, no matter what their background is or how much their parents earn."

"But the Howard Government's continuing cuts to the share of public education funding are taking away the right to a quality public education that every child deserves."

"This is the launch of our Federal election campaign that will include letter-boxing and local lobby campaigns in marginal seats across Australia."

"The AEU will be broadcasting this advertisement nationally in the lead up to the Federal election so Australian parents know exactly where the Federal Government stands on funding for public schools."

"A Ministerial taskforce has calculated the public education system needs an additional \$2.9 billion every year so that every school has enough resources to ensure every child in Australia has the opportunity to fully develop his or her talents and capacities."

"John Howard has been the private school prime minister. Australia needs a government that will put public schools first."

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## AEU Public Education Campaign Fact Sheet

### Federal election campaign

- The Australian Education Union has produced an advertisement that will broadcast nationally in the lead up to the 2007 Federal election.
- The union will spend \$1.3 million to air the advertisement in marginal electorates across the country.
- The campaign will include letter-boxing voters, corflutes and disseminating material to parents of public school students in marginal electorates.

### Current Federal Funding

- 70 per cent of students attend public schools and yet the Federal Government has cut the percentage of money it spends on public education from 43 per cent of the total schools' education budget to 35 per cent in a decade.
- The percentage of funding devoted to public schools is forecast by the Federal Government to continue to **decline every year until 2009-10**.

### What Australians Want

- A 2006 AEU national poll of 400 people conducted by Essential Research found 66 per cent of people believe the Federal Government is not providing enough funds for public schools and 67 per cent believe public schools should be the main educational priority for the Federal Government.
- **90 per cent of respondents said extra money spent on education should go to public schools.**
- The number one priority for spending the money is reducing class sizes. 73 per cent of people said they wanted more teachers employed to reduce class sizes. 45 per cent said they wanted special classes for students with behavioural and learning problems.

### What schools need

- The AEU wants at least an additional \$2.9 billion a year spent on public education by the Federal Government.
- The \$2.9 billion figure has been identified in research commissioned by the Federal, State and Territory education ministers to determine the minimum cost of getting all students in public schools in Australia to meet the National Goals of Schooling (covering literacy, numeracy and skills outcomes). *(See note below)*
- The additional \$2.9 billion would be distributed to schools according to a National Resource Standard which takes into account geographical differences in schools as well as differences in student costs.
- Currently only 5 per cent of public schools in Australia are estimated to be receiving sufficient funds to meet the National Goals of Schooling.
- The National Resources Standard is a national funding mechanism which would ensure fairness and equity for all public school students and their families.

*Note: The original work of the Ministerial Council calculated the degree of underfunding to be at least \$2.4billion in 2003 figures. The \$2.9billion figure reflects calculations in today's terms.*

### State by state breakdown

- The table below shows how the additional State and Territory share for projected Australian Government Recurrent Grants for Government Schools, if the \$2.9 billion recommended by MCEETYA was provided.

State	Total for Australia	% Share	Additional State Territory Share
NSW	\$ 1,629,366,508	33%	\$ 954,778,986
VIC	\$ 1,629,366,508	24%	\$ 693,321,316
QLD	\$ 1,629,366,508	20%	\$ 591,775,574
SA	\$ 1,629,366,508	10%	\$ 287,437,547
WA	\$ 1,629,366,508	7%	\$ 210,640,953
TAS	\$ 1,629,366,508	3%	\$ 79,827,328
NT	\$ 1,629,366,508	1%	\$ 36,416,572
ACT	\$ 1,629,366,508	2%	\$ 45,801,723

Source:

[http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school\\_education/publications\\_resources/other\\_publications/reports\\_on\\_grants\\_to\\_states.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/publications_resources/other_publications/reports_on_grants_to_states.htm)