



## Australian Education Union - Federal Office

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### WA PUBLIC SCHOOLS MISSING OUT ON OVER \$200 MILLION FUNDING

Western Australian children are suffering from the decreasing share of Federal funding going to public schools according to the Australian Education Union. Based on joint-Government research, Western Australian public schools need nearly \$300 million in additional ongoing annual funding.

A television advertising campaign by the Australian Education Union to increase Federal funding for public schools will begin in Western Australia today. The union will spend \$1.3 million in the lead up to the Federal election, airing the advertisement in marginal seats across Australia.

The advertisement shows viewers how the share of funding for public education has decreased to only 35% since the Howard Government was elected, despite nearly 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 children in Western Australia.

"This election is crucial. Public schools in Western Australia cannot afford another three years of attacks on their funding share by the Howard Government.

"A Ministerial taskforce has calculated that the public education system needs an additional \$2.9 billion every year so that every school can meet national goals that give every child in Australia the opportunity to fully develop his or her talents and capacities," said Ms. Byrne.

"Based on current funding proportions, there would be approximately an extra \$ 210,640,953 for students in Western Australia if that money was being delivered to public schools," said David A Kelly, General Secretary of the State School Teacher's Union of WA.

"The AEU will letterbox and lobby local MP's in Western Australian marginal seats on the need to make public schools a priority."

Ed Black, Principal of Huntingdale Primary School said that the extra money could help pay for much needed extra resources in Western Australian schools.

"Schools desperately need funds to get support for children with special learning needs, for the extension of school psychology services and to allow for a better student-pupil ratio in upper primary," he said.

"We also need funds for the provision of more education support assistance to better allow for inclusion in our schools," he added.

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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.

<b>State</b>	<b>Total for Australia</b>	<b>% Share</b>	<b>Additional State Territory Share</b>
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)