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Federal Government should rule out misleading education advertisement plans

The Australian Education Union has called on Federal Education Minister Julie Bishop to rule out any plans to run misleading television advertisements to counter the union's campaign for more federal funding for public schools.

Julie Bishop has confirmed in the Australian newspaper that the Government is considering options on how to counter the AEU's advertisement campaign, which informs viewers that the Federal Government has decreased the share of federal funding going to public schools to only 35%.

AEU Federal President Ms Pat Byrne said any Federal Government advertisements of this type would be blatant political campaigning and a waste of taxpayer funds.

"The only come-back the Federal Government has for our campaign is to hide behind the funding that the states are giving public schools by combining federal and state education funding figures together.

"Any Federal Government advertisement linking state and federal education funding would be a further attempt to hide their own record on education.

"The last thing John Howard wants people to know is that he has cut the share of funding to public schools. Now it appears he is prepared to spend millions in taxpayer dollars to magnify the deception.

"It's the ultimate insult to the Australian public to deceive them on education and to do so spending their money.

"The Howard Government has made no legal attempt to challenge the AEU ad because they know it is right.

"Their own record clearly shows that federal education funding share has declined from 42 to 35 per cent over the 11 years the Howard Government has been in power.

"The latest federal budget will only make the situation worse – while federal funding for private schools will rise by \$1.7 billion to \$7.5 billion over the next five years, public school funding will rise by only \$300 million to \$3.1 billion.

"Based on the latest federal budget, by 2011, private schools will be getting 69% of federal funding while public schools get only 31%.

"A recent poll of coalition held marginal seats found people overwhelmingly agree the Federal Government has under-funded public schools and as a priority want money spent on public education to lower class sizes.

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