



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

23 January 2007

EDUCATION REVOLUTION MUST ADDRESS UNEQUAL FUNDING SHARE

The Australian Education Union has welcomed a new directions paper on education that calls for a substantial increase in education funding, but emphasised that any new policies must address inequity in public school funding.

AEU Federal President, Ms Pat Byrne said the paper, *The Australian economy needs an education revolution* recognised a range of issues the union would be campaigning on in the lead up to this year's federal election.

"Mr. Rudd is right when he says that every Australian must have the opportunity to realise his or her full potential. But without adequate funding for public education, this is not possible."

"Mr. Rudd has recognised that public funding for education in Australia in real terms has declined substantially over the last ten years," said Ms. Byrne.

"Since the Howard Government was elected, the share of Federal funding for public schools has declined until now the 68% of Australian students attending public schools receive only 35% of Federal funding."

"If the funding share had been maintained at 1996 levels, Australian public schools would be receiving around \$1 billion more per year than they do now."

"The Ministerial Council on Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs calculated that Australian public schools require an additional \$2.9 billion recurrent in today's terms in order for their students to achieve national education goals."

"Achieving those goals would mean the opportunity for all Australian students to fully develop their talents and capacities – not only those who can afford to pay."

"Mr. Rudd is also right to highlight the continuing consequences to the prosperity of Australia if there is not increased investment in skills and training. Our TAFE sector is in urgent need of significant long term investment in skills, training and infrastructure if it is to meet present educational and economic demands. Underfunding of TAFE by this government has meant hundreds of thousands of potential students have been denied access to TAFE courses."

"Teachers, students and parents around Australia will now be looking forward to contributing to the development of Labor plans to address this shortfall."

For further information, please contact:

Pat Byrne
AEU Federal President
0411 693 244

Erin Farley
Media
0409 510 879