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New Report: Education Funding Key to Success of Federal Intervention in NT

A new report into the impact of the federal Indigenous intervention in the Northern Territory finds that at least \$1.7 billion over five years in additional funding is needed to deliver a high quality education to all NT children.

Education is the key: An education future for Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory by the Australian Education Union calculates as many as 7500 Indigenous children are missing out on preschool or school, and up to 5000 potential students under the age of 18 in remote areas have no access to secondary or vocational education services.

On the ground research reveals enrolments have surged in some community schools as a result of the intervention but schools have been left to struggle without additional support.

Other findings include:

- Reports from at least one community of teachers being asked to identify students by age and family, fuelling community perceptions that teachers are responsible for the quarantining of welfare payments.
- Fears of increased teacher resignations on top of already high turnover rates as a result of the additional pressures created by the federal intervention.
- Significant problems with current funding systems that are based on school attendance rather than enrolments. This means when additional children do come to school there are not enough teachers, desks or other facilities.

To ensure a high quality education for all students the report recommends at least 1360 extra teachers are needed, along with up to 585 additional school staff, including bilingual Indigenous Assistant teachers, costing around \$264 million. It also recommends up to \$440 million for one-off infrastructure costs including new buildings.

"Now the Federal Government has taken the step of intervening it must show leadership and back up its actions with resources," said AEU Federal President Ms Pat Byrne.

"For the intervention to be successful education must be a priority and the Federal and NT Governments must work in partnership with local communities.

"At least \$1.7billion is needed over the next five years to ensure every child can access and participate fully in high quality education,"

"Anything less than this will leave NT Indigenous students at a disadvantage to the rest of Australia and perpetuate the problems we see today.

"Aboriginal children in our country are entitled to the same right as all other Australian children – to access high quality public education in their home communities."

For further information, please contact:

Pat Byrne
AEU Federal President
0411 693 244

Erin Farley
Media
0409 510 879