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CALL FOR NEW STANDARD AND TIMELINE TO REBUILD SCHOOLS

New report finds \$2 billion annual shortfall

The Australian Education Union is calling on the Rudd Government to establish a new standard for buildings and facilities in public schools after an independent report found a \$2 billion annual shortfall in capital investment.

A national audit of all public schools is required to assess the state of buildings, heating and cooling, sports, art and music facilities and maintenance, says AEU Federal President Angelo Gavrielatos.

“An independent report commissioned by the AEU found that between 2002 and 2005, public schools, on average, missed out by about \$1.2 million each when compared with private school capital investment,” said Mr. Gavrielatos.

“This shortfall is being felt right across the country and the Rudd Government must set an urgent timetable to renovate and rebuild run-down schools.

“Every Australian child deserves to be taught in a school with quality learning environments and modern equipment.

“Eleven years of under-funding by the Howard government has created a huge shortfall in investment for public school infrastructure.

“While state and territory governments have a role to play, the Rudd Government must now take the lead in addressing the neglect of Australian public schools.

“The Federal Government must establish a new benchmark for school buildings and facilities and make sure every school has the resources they need to meet it.

“The Government’s \$20 billion Building Australia Fund should be used for this purpose. When it comes to investment in infrastructure, investing in our public schools and students is the most important infrastructure investment a government can make.

“This is our opportunity to create quality buildings and resources that could be used by the whole community.

“As well as improving the quality of education for our children, rebuilding and upgrading schools across Australia would also improve environmental performance.”

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