



Australian Education Union - Federal Office

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Homeless Children Need Education

The Australian Education Union today called for greater government action to reduce the number of homeless children not attending school.

AEU Federal President Angelo Gavrielatos said with Anti-Poverty Week underway it was important to highlight the disturbing fact that one in 50 Australian children will access a homelessness support service this year.

More than 20 per cent of these will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

“With such a high rate of homelessness it is critical that support for families and children helps to keep them in schools,” Mr Gavrielatos said.

“But the Federal Government’s Green Paper on Homelessness shows that the majority of children aged between five and seventeen accessing a Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) are not in education.

“Along with more resources for homelessness services, we need better processes put into place to improve cooperation between schools and the agencies delivering support services.

“Keeping these children in school must be an absolute priority. Everything must be done to minimise the distance that children and families have to travel to access accommodation so they can stay connected to their local school.

“Research shows children who experience homelessness are less likely to attend school, more likely to leave school early and to achieve less. The long term costs of this are seen in reduced work and life opportunities and higher rates of unemployment, disadvantage and mental and physical health problems.

“Education is the best chance these children have to try and improve their lives. We must do everything we can to ensure they have that chance.”

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