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Radical reform necessary to close the gap in Indigenous education

The Australian Education Union today announced an 8 point plan to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous students in response to what it deemed an inadequate and misguided approach by the Federal Government in its first term.

AEU Federal President, Angelo Gavrielatos said the Prime Minister's goal to halve the gap in achievements for Indigenous children within a decade was worthwhile, but would fail without the development of a comprehensive policy and a solid funding commitment.

The AEU's 8 point plan to improve outcomes for Indigenous students and their communities includes:

The development of different educational structures and models for the provision of public education to Indigenous students that take into account their needs and those of particular communities and include the following characteristics:

- The establishment of programs operating from schools, involving appropriate government agencies, to support parents and their children aged 0 – 4 and establish important links between school and community from an early stage.
- The establishment of education complexes from pre-school, school and post compulsory education (TAFE).
- The establishment of genuine inter-agency programs operating from schools with significant Aboriginal populations, ensuring the school is the centre of community.
- Without compromising the entitlements of employees, the establishment of extended operational hours and days - up to forty eight (48) weeks per year.

The further development and negotiation of new staffing policies that include:

- Strategies to attract and retain experienced teachers in difficult-to-staff schools.
- The early appointment and in-servicing of new teachers including principals, who will teach in schools with significant Indigenous enrolments to ensure continuity of programs.
- Improvements in the recruitment and retention incentives for geographically isolated, difficult-to-staff schools in Indigenous communities.
- Promoting the development and support of local Indigenous teachers and support staff.

"The AEU remains ready to work with the Rudd Government to further develop initiatives to improve the educational outcomes for Indigenous students," Mr Gavrielatos said.

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