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## **New report shows Australia spending less than Britain and the US on public school capital investment**

A new report released today shows that significantly less is being spent on public school buildings and facilities in Australia than in other major nations.

The independent report by Education Economist, Adam Rorris found that between 2002 and 2006, Australian governments spent on average, \$1000 less per student than Britain and the United States.

AEU Federal President, Angelo Gavrielatos said if Australian governments invested as much per student in public schools over the five year period as the UK and USA, each public school would have received an additional \$1.5 million in funds to improve buildings, facilities and equipment.

"This new evidence confirms the extent of neglect of public schools when it comes to vital capital funding," Mr Gavrielatos said.

"Governments must urgently redress the continuing under funding of public education infrastructure.

"We call on the Rudd Government, in partnership with all state and territory governments, to establish a national standard with respect to a high quality teaching and learning environment.

"The report also reveals a major and continued imbalance in the investment in capital works between public and private schools in Australia – to the tune of \$10.4 billion between 2002 – 2006.

The report lists four key reasons for investing in public schools:

- School facilities have a significant impact on student performance.
- Appropriate school buildings allow extended school hours and greater community use.
- The ageing of existing stock means an increasing share of expenditure on new buildings.
- Environmental sustainability can improve school performance.
- School Infrastructure can be a vital part of the nation building agenda.

"Investing in our public schools' infrastructure would provide much needed economic stimulus during this financial downturn.

"Furthermore, investing in public schools and students is the most important investment a government can make," Mr Gavrielatos said.

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