



Australian Education Union - Federal Office

Ground Floor, 120 Clarendon Street, Southbank, Victoria, 3006
Phone : +61 (0)3 9693 1800 Fax : +61 (0)3 9693 1805
Email : aeu@aeufederal.org.au Website : www.aeufederal.org.au

20 July 2009

Coalition Must Rule Out School Vouchers

The Australian Education Union today called on the Liberal/National Party Coalition to rule out the introduction of a policy that would cut public school funding and replace it with vouchers for individuals.

AEU Federal President Angelo Gavrielatos said a new report by the Liberal-aligned Institute of Public Affairs advocated the replacement of school funding with vouchers.

"Introducing school vouchers is the policy of the radical right-wing designed to undermine public schools and increase the privatisation of education," Mr Gavrielatos said.

"Vouchers are a recipe for disaster in education. Even John Howard was not prepared to introduce vouchers acknowledging they '*undermined the fundamental value and strength of public education*'."

"It is time for Malcolm Turnbull to show whether he is prepared to support public school parents, teachers and students or turn his back on them. Already he has opposed the Federal Government's \$14.7 billion program to rebuild schools across the country – a program which is allowing the construction of vital new facilities in public schools.

"Mr Turnbull must show he will not be captured by the far right on education.

"A school voucher system would deny basic guaranteed funding for schools and undermine a public education system that is a foundation stone of our society and has delivered for Australian students for over 150 years.

"It is a fundamental responsibility of governments to ensure there are well-resourced public schools for the pursuit of individual excellence and the common good.

"Only well-resourced public schools can ensure every child has the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

"The international evidence shows the introduction of vouchers has increased the privatisation of education and failed to increase the overall quality of education being delivered. Our students and schools are not a marketplace and no place for a radical right wing agenda to be rolled out.

"The fact is Australian public schools were under-funded by the Howard Government for over a decade. That neglect is only starting to be addressed now and there is still a long way to go."

For further information, please contact:

Angelo Gavrielatos
AEU Federal President
0488 012 045

Mark Robinson
Communications & Campaign Coordinator
0403 043 151