



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

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Government Spending Millions on Cult Schools

Revelations today that the Federal Government is handing more than \$70 million to the Exclusive Brethren cult for its schools shows the flaws in the current federal schools funding system, the Australian Education Union said today.

AEU Federal President Angelo Gavrielatos said it was difficult to comprehend how so much money could be given to an organisation which the Prime Minister described as an "extremist cult and sect".

"In Opposition Mr Rudd called for a review of schools funding for the Exclusive Brethren but in Government he has massively increased its funding," Mr Gavrielatos said.

"Not only that, the Exclusive Brethren has manipulated the funding set aside for rebuilding schools to spend \$2 million on a tiny school in Swan Hill.

"These revelations come only weeks after it was revealed that millions of dollars in taxpayers' money is being spent on schools linked with the Church of Scientology.

"How can the Federal Government justify handing over tens of millions of dollars to an organisation it believes is a cult like the Exclusive Brethren while public schools, which educate the vast majority of our children, are struggling for funds?

"Why are they enriching a cult rather than using the funding to improve the education of young Australians in public schools?

"This is another example of the ramifications of maintaining the Howard Government's unfair and inequitable schools funding system under which huge amounts of money are given to private schools regardless of need, income or resources.

"True equity in education can only exist when government schools set the standard for high quality education.

"The Federal Government has said it will review its funding of schools this year. That review needs to begin as a matter of urgency to allow for a proper public debate on where school funding should be directed and for what purpose."

"The primary obligation of governments is to properly and adequately fund government schools."

More information:

Angelo Gavrielatos
AEU Federal President
0488 012 045

Mark Robinson
Communications & Campaign Coordinator
0403 043 151