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13 August, 2010

Less Funding, Less Opportunity Under the Coalition

Public schools and students will be worse off under an Abbott Government, the Australian Education Union said today.

AEU Federal President Angelo Gavrielatos said the Coalition's new initiatives failed to offset the \$3.1 billion it was planning to rip out of education.

"There would still be a shortfall of almost \$2 billion in education under the Coalition," Mr Gavrielatos said.

"Instead of all students getting computers tens of thousands would miss out under the Coalition which would spend \$120 million compared to the \$700 million still to be spent by Labor.

"Under the Coalition 1.2 million students in 1,800 secondary schools would miss out on getting access to trade training centres.

"As we saw last time the Coalition was in Government, stand alone colleges are a costly and unnecessary duplication of existing school and TAFE training facilities.

"It takes at least three years to develop them, delaying any response to skill shortages which would only get worse. The colleges teach only a limited number of courses and a limited number of students, limiting opportunities for students.

"In polling done earlier in the election campaign, voters overwhelmingly rejected the idea of spending money on separate training colleges and said additional funding for trades training should be directed to schools and TAFE.

"Only 25 per cent of people, and 25 per cent of those who intended to vote for the Coalition, supported separate training colleges in the poll conducted by Auspoll.

"It appears also that TAFE will be neglected again under the Coalition which is more interested in privatising education than providing adequate funding.

"The Coalition has correctly identified the need for better pay for teachers but, like Labor, has adopted a bonus pay approach that will not keep the best teachers in the classroom.

"What we need is a better career structure and a professional pay scheme that further rewards senior, accomplished teachers who are assessed against national teaching standards.

"Teachers reach the top of the salary scale in around nine years and the only way for them to earn more is to leave the classroom. Bonus schemes will not address this problem."

“Public schools would also be worse off due to the Coalition’s decision to keep in place the inequitable and unsustainable SES funding system until 2016.

“That funding system is blind to the real needs of schools and students and the public school share of funding would be cut even further.

“Private schools by 2016 will get enough money to pay for 8,300 extra teachers and public schools enough for only 1,670 extra teachers.”

Angelo Gavrielatos
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