

BUDGET 1999:

TIME FOR A FAIR GO FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

Australian Education Union

Federal Office

120 Clarendon Street

Southbank VIC 3006

Copyright © Australian Education Union

April 1999



Contents

1	Preamble	1
1.1	Revenue Base	1
1.2	The GST	2
2.	Schools	3
2.1	The Needs of Government Schools	3
2.2	Education Resource Guarantees	3
2.3	Schools Advisory Council	5
2.4	Enrolment Benchmark Adjustment. (EBA)	5
2.5	Free Education	6
2.6	Non-Government School Funding	6
2.7	Program Priorities - Government Schools	7
2.7.1	Equity	7
2.7.2	Gender Equity	8
2.7.3	Literacy and Numeracy	8
2.7.4	Class Size	9
2.7.5	Technology	10
2.7.6	Indigenous Education	10
2.8	Australia's Youth	11
2.9	Health and Welfare	12
2.10	Professional Development	12
2.11	Demand and Supply	13
2.12	Standards and Innovation	14
3.	Pre-School Education	15
4.	TAFE	18
4.1	The ANTA Agreement	18
4.2	Staff Development	19

Summary of Proposals	i
----------------------------	---

Attachments

1. An Educational Resource Guarantee for the New Millennium (**not available**)
2. AEU's Information Technology Benchmarks for Schools
3. Towards a National Plan for Preschool Education (**not available**)

1 Preamble

1.1 Revenue Base

The AEU believes that the current revenue base is inadequate to provide the resources necessary to support the quality of community services such as education and health which Australians deserve, and which are necessary for the future health and well being of Australian citizens and Australia as a nation. The following extract from the 1997 policy entitled “Raising the Revenue Base”, clearly states this position.

The Importance of an Adequate Revenue Base

Revenue raising is a vital basis for the functions of government and is fundamental to its capacity to carry out its responsibilities. Properly administered, it is the foundation of an equitable, fair and civil society, and is an investment by Australians in the future of their country.

Through providing essential services and benefits and enabling governments to more fairly distribute wealth and income within our community, it can play a key role in maintaining a socially cohesive and fair nation.

It enables governments to fund and deliver necessary public services such as health, education, welfare, and child care.

It should also help create the conditions for responsible economic growth and development.

It is regrettable that governments have adopted an attitude in which they are seeking to divest themselves of responsibility for the provision of public services, and that achieving “small government” has become more important than the welfare of society and its citizens. They have been too willing to leave the provision of services to the market in a way which does not ensure their adequacy and which has undermined fundamental democratic principles.

As a part of this move, governments have tended to cultivate an attitude that taxation is inherently undesirable and to be resisted. It is continuously portrayed as an onerous and largely unnecessary burden. The major political parties have been too willing to commit themselves not to raise taxes as part of election platforms, and consequently have severely limited their capacities to address major social issues and ensure the necessary social infrastructure in society.

Often governments have resorted to the selling of publicly owned assets as a way of raising revenue and/or diminishing government debt. This has been to society’s detriment.

Governments also have placed a greater burden on users of government including community services by introducing user pays principles. This has greatly affected the social wage of many ordinary citizens who can ill afford these imposts.

The AEU condemns governments and politicians for the poor level of the debate on revenue raising and calls on them to encourage a much greater depth of understanding of the relationship between taxes and services.

Despite this poor leadership Australians have generally shown a more sophisticated understanding of the need for taxation, and the relationship between taxation and the services it provides. Research shows that the majority of Australians want higher taxation in order that better services can be provided. They have been poorly served by the contest between the major political parties to be the party offering the lowest taxation and consequently the most inadequate services.

As a result essential services such as education, which should be viewed as a public good, are being deleteriously affected. The gap between needs and resources is growing, and there is increasing impetus towards private resourcing, fees, levies, user pays, sponsorship and other commercialisation. Inequities are increasing, and the quality of teaching and learning is being seriously affected by the inadequate resources and the diversion of energy to fundraising and money collecting.

Later sections of this policy consider the principles of a good taxation system, the problems with the current system, and the areas in need of reform.

Within this context, the AEU rejects government policies which seek to reduce government expenditure and lower taxation. It also believes there is widespread public support for increased revenue raising to support valued services such as education.

We have every confidence that the community supports increased funding for public schools. This should be put to the test with a restructuring of taxation arrangements to provide for direct taxation in regard to education.

Education funding should be made transparent by the introduction of an EDUCARE levy.

A direct tax by the Federal Government should be complemented by agreements with the State/Territory Governments

1.2 The GST

The AEU is opposed to a goods and services tax (GST). It believes that such a tax is intrinsically regressive, will boost inflation but not employment, and will do nothing to stop the 'black' economy and in fact may stimulate faster growth in illegal economic trade.

Further AEU concerns with the GST are detailed in its submission to the Senate Inquiry, including the view that education should be a partnership between the levels of government.

The real costs of the GST, and the inadequacy of the compensation package in regard to education are outlined in "Increasing the Burden", which was tabled as part of the Senate submission.

The AEU calls upon the government to increase the compensation package within the GST by \$200 per school age student to cover the GST cost to schooling.

Educational institutions should be compensated for the administrative burden which the GST will impose by the allocation of .2 support personnel per institution, to be costed within the GST.

2. Schools

To date, the Coalition has shown a preoccupation with the needs of non-government schools. It has instituted a series of measures and inquiries designed to deal with the problems which non-government schools perceive they have. It has vastly increased funding to these schools. Increasingly, its thinking about funding in general is being framed on the feedback it has obtained by consultation only with the non-government sector.

It has done nothing to improve teaching and learning conditions in government schools. It regularly denigrates and seeks to create public hysteria about the performance of public schools whilst depriving them of money through the Enrolment Benchmark Adjustments.

It is time it corrected its bias towards non-government schools and restored the balance by giving a fair go to government schools.

2.1 The Needs of Government Schools

The single biggest problem facing government schools remains the gap between resource needs and available funding.

Two recent reports by the Senate Employment Education and Training References Committee, “Not a Level Playground” (June 1997) and “A Class Act” (March 1998) have highlighted this situation. Most schools will raise it very early in conversations, even those conversations not directly related to a discussion of funding.

The level of hypocrisy amongst governments and education bureaucrats on this issue is astounding. Whilst frequently rebuffing claims for further funding with the argument that there is no established link between resources and outcomes, and dismissing needs on the basis that a problem cannot be solved by “throwing money at it”, many of them send their own children to private schools which operate at resource levels well above the average government school.

The AEU has argued that for government schools to adequately meet the demands that are being placed upon them requires in the region of an additional \$2 billion p.a. This would not lead to excessive public expenditure by comparison with other OECD countries. In the latest OECD figures (Education at a Glance, OECD, 1998) Australia ranks only twenty-second out of twenty nine countries reporting in terms of public expenditure on schools, and spends only 3.3% of GDP compared to the OECD mean of 3.5%. Improving on this poor record is an essential prerequisite to maintaining Australia at the forefront of educational standards. This additional expenditure should be jointly funded by Federal and state/territory governments.

Public funding of schools should be increased to at least the OECD average.

2.2 Education Resource Guarantees

In its pamphlet “An Educational Resource Guarantee for the New Millennium” (Attachment 1), the AEU stressed:

A rational modern approach to education must specify not just inputs and not just outputs, but both the outcomes expected and the inputs which will underpin their achievement...

Only by combining both expected standards of achievement and the agreed level of resource provision necessary to achieve those standards can the focus be put upon the outcomes for students rather than arguments about responsibility, and a downward spiral of scapegoating be avoided.

The AEU called for Australian governments to guarantee that in the new millennium every child in a public school shall:

- be a member of a class no larger than 20
- have access to a comprehensive curriculum which includes each of the curriculum areas detailed in the National Goals of Schooling
- be taught by teachers qualified in the subject and in teaching the subject and have access to specialist teachers of Physical Education, Music, Art and Craft and LOTE
- be taught by a teacher who has guaranteed access to opportunities to maintain their knowledge and skills
- have the assistance of appropriately skilled support staff
- be provided with a range of cultural and sporting opportunities such as learning to play a musical instrument, take part in dramatic activities, and participating in individual and team sports
- experience structured learning programs in the world of work
- understand their learning progress through rich and authentic assessment and reporting mechanisms
- have access to a personal computer, the Internet and a personal email address
- have access to adequate levels of guidance and welfare services.

It also explicitly laid out the role of the Federal Government in this:

The AEU calls on the Federal Government to make Education Resource Guarantees a key plank of their educational agenda in negotiations with State/Territory governments.

A real commitment to the National Goals requires more than rhetoric and the odd band-aid program. If we are to meet the needs of Australian students as we enter the next century it is vital that there be a major commitment to meet the shortfalls. Australian schooling needs a cohesive and coherent approach to resource provision, not prevarication, excuses, and exaggerated claims for minor expenditures.

This process should start with a major Commission of Inquiry into all aspects of Australian schooling.

Such an inquiry, however, must be seen as the start of an ongoing process. It should lay the foundations for major initiatives, including the establishment of Resource Guarantees to an acceptable standard.

The AEU calls upon the Federal Government to begin this process by the allocation of \$1m p.a. for at least two years to a National Inquiry focussed on establishing the real costs of quality schooling.

2.3 Schools Advisory Council

In its publication "Creating an Education Nation" (1995) the AEU called upon the Federal Government to take the initiative in establishing a partnership between the Federal Government and the states/territories. It argued that such a partnership should be:

... based on negotiation and common objectives, and with the absolute minimum of friction, competition and buck passing between them. It is vital that schools are financed on a stable, predictable basis, and removed from the short term political temptations either of excessive increases or damaging cuts. The issues at stake are too important to be left to the arbitrary behaviour of some State governments...

A Schools Advisory Council (SAC) should be established as the principal forum for advice on national schooling policy. This Council could provide advice both directly to the Prime Minister and Premiers or through MCEETYA which is the representative ministerial council of COAG.

The AEU reiterates its call for a Schools Advisory Council to be established as a natural progression from the Costs of Schooling Committee above. It would continue to research and monitor school costs, participation and equity, performance, and innovation and provide general advice on schools. It should be allocated \$1m p.a. from the year 2001.

2.4 Enrolment Benchmark Adjustment (EBA)

The EBA was introduced in the 1996 budget in a context of extreme budget constraint and an expectation that enrolments in government schools would decline.

In fact, enrolments in government schools have grown in each of the years since that budget. Between 1996 and 1998 government school enrolments have increased by 17,818 students (ABS Figures). They are expected to rise a further 12,754 by 2001. However, in 1998 government schools lost \$11.9m due to the EBA, and are likely to lose over \$20m in 1999. The EBA is predicted to rise to at least \$51.3m in 2000-01, making a total loss between 1996 and 2001 of almost \$128m.

What was at first invidious has become downright discriminatory. Government schools must not be expected to continue to educate more and more students with less and less Federal Government assistance. The Federal Government must demonstrate the even handedness it claims in rhetoric, and abolish the EBA, particularly in the light of changed budgetary circumstances. This should include abolition of the repayment of the 1998 EBA and non collection of the 1999 amount.

Based on government predictions for EBA collections, this requires \$32m for 1999, (including 1998), \$45m for 2000 and \$51.3m for 2001.

2.5 Free Education

It is clear that Australian public schools are suffering a financial crisis. The very concept of free schooling is under threat, and there is an increasing reliance on private sources of funding. As a result, the concepts of fairness and equity are in turn suffering, and the quality of education is becoming more variable and dependent on a range of factors which can only be solved by applying government resources, not those of individual institutions and communities.

Many government schools, part of the supposedly “free” school system, are now dependent upon the money raised through “voluntary levies” and other fundraising activities to provide essential resources in key learning areas. Increasingly, principals and school communities are calling for the powers to make such fees compulsory. A decision between increased government resources or turning our back on the principle of free education appears imminent.

Whilst it is understandable that schools should seek such a course in the current situation of government parsimoniousness, it is totally undesirable that Australia should abolish its commitment to free schooling. It is contrary to a number of international treaties to which it is party, noticeably the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child. It will lead to greater inequities and disparities between schools and individuals, and push even further towards a situation in which students get the education their parents can afford.

It is imperative that the Federal Government take the initiative to ensure that Australia reasserts the right of all to free schooling.

Based upon the finding of the Senate Inquiry expressed in “Not a Level Playground” that “the proportion of total system expenditure on government schools represented by privately raised funds is between approximately 5 and 7 per cent” (p. 29), the AEU estimates that to eliminate all fees on current provision requires in the order of \$720m p.a.

The AEU therefore calls for \$70m to be allocated in 1999 to eliminate fees in the poorest 25% of schools, growing to \$270m (in 1999 prices) by 2002 to cover all government schools.

2.6 Non-Government School Funding

It is understood that funding for non-government schools for the quadrennium from 2000 will be introduced as part of the 1999 budget. It is regrettable that there has been no process of open consultation with the education community prior to this time which will allow the Government to seek a consensus approach to this funding. Whilst understanding the need of the non-government school sector to know its funding situation well in advance to allow adequate planning, the AEU therefore calls for a delay in announcing the funding arrangements in order that a short but thorough consultation can take place. It is understood that DETYA has developed a number of internal papers which could rapidly be developed into public discussion papers in order that the process may be facilitated.

Government school systems are suffering from a lack of resources and this should be the first priority of all governments. To the extent that there is significant disparity within the non-government sector, then the Government should redress this situation by re-allocating the funding it currently gives to those non-government schools operating above the AGSRC.

Current government policy on the funding of unlimited choice at the expense of more urgent and pressing educational needs is leading to waste, duplication and mis-management of resources within and between both government and non-government schooling.

Any policy of funding to non-government schools should be constructed on the following principles:

- a primary obligation to fund free public schooling
- a context of planned educational provision
- be based on school needs
- recognise that opting out of the government system should incur a cost which means that maximum government assistance can only be a proportion of operating costs.

Any changes proposed as a result of the ERI Review should be cost neutral and based on a re-allocation of resources within the non-government sector rather than additional money.

Government school funding must not be determined on the basis of considerations of the funding problems in non-government schools.

The AEU does recognise that current category designations are frequently inappropriate in relation to school financial capacity such that schools on the same category may be in completely different financial circumstances. This requires an inquiry of both schools and systems within the non-government sector to establish the real financial situation of each school, including accumulated reserves.

The costs of the consultation and inquiry will be minimal and absorbed within the above funding.

2.7 Program Priorities - Government Schools

2.7.1 Equity

There is growing evidence that Australia is becoming a more inequitable society. There is also growing evidence that inequities between schools are growing. Increased devolution of financial responsibility and increased dependence on private funding are creating a situation in which there are wide disparities between government schools.

Whilst the restoration of free public education outlined above will begin to address some of the disparity, there is also a need for an equity program which specifically addresses the need of the socio-economically disadvantaged. This program should target school communities most in need, and include provision of case management support for students at risk into post school pathways, increased allied staff with support for training, and support for school based research and reform.

The first priority is to establish targeted funds to support initiatives in the poorest 25% of schools, based on socio-economic disadvantage. This should be alongside the implementation of other initiatives such as the eradication of fees and technology funding in these schools.

Tackling equity in the poorest 25% of schools requires a program funded at least \$75m p.a.

2.7.2 Gender Equity

The AEU is concerned that gender is continuing to have an impact on the educational outcomes of both boys and girls and specifically, particular groups of boys and girls. The essential frameworks for monitoring this impact and for developing strategies and action to overcome negative outcomes were dismantled when the Federal Government refused to continue to fund the MCEETYA Gender Equity Taskforce.

Issues of gender are fundamental to all areas of schooling. This was recognised in the publication of the above MCEETYA Taskforce entitled *Gender Equity: A Framework for Australian Schools*. The principles, strategies and actions set out in this document were endorsed by the Federal and each State and Territory Government.

Since the dismantling of the MCEETYA Gender Equity Taskforce the mechanisms to monitor the implementation of the Framework and to provide expert assistance to systems on gender issues has disappeared. There is now no systematic approach to alleviating the negative impact and limiting effects that cultural, social and historical constructions of gender may have on our children's educational outcomes.

The AEU calls for the re-establishment of a national advisory body on gender equity (in lieu of the now disbanded MCEETYA Gender Equity Taskforce). This body should:

- allow for the documenting and sharing of professional practice across the country;
- influence key directions in education;
- promote ongoing research and data collection at a national level; and
- ensure that systems are made accountable, and their performance can be assessed against, the key indicators in the National Framework.

The make-up of this advisory body should reflect the organisations and systems represented on the MCEETYA Gender Equity Taskforce.

\$500 000 should be allocated for the activities of a national advisory body on gender equity

2.7.3 Literacy and Numeracy

The AEU shares the Government's concern for literacy and numeracy standards and the need to ensure adequate foundations in these areas. We reject the negative and unproductive way the government has gone about public pronouncements on this issue. The AEU would be pleased to work with the government in constructive and meaningful programs designed to ensure the highest standards of literacy and numeracy.

Tackling literacy and numeracy problems requires resources not rhetoric. In particular, the early years are critical for the acquisition of these basic skills. Despite this, class sizes in the early primary years remain well above recommended standards. The latest OECD figures show Australia is sixth worse out of twenty one countries reporting in terms of the expenditure on primary education compared with

secondary, spending \$1.57 on secondary for every dollar in primary, (OECD mean \$1.38). Comparison with tertiary figures are even worse, with \$3.39 spent (OECD mean \$2.52).

As part of its election platform the Coalition promised programs of \$72 m over 3 years and \$40m over 4 years in the area of literacy and numeracy. This is a worthwhile initiative, although to date it is still far from clear how these promises will be implemented. However, the amounts involved are insufficient and are out of balance with government rhetoric in the area.

There is a need for a concerted program of identification, diagnosis and support based on classroom teaching.

The AEU calls on the government to take a major initiative in the area of literacy and numeracy focusing on:

- the early years of schooling
- major reductions in class size (as outlined below)
- a concerted attack on the problems associated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, including an extension of bi-lingual programs
- a review of ESL and first language provision.

In order to seriously tackle these issues, Federal Government expenditure in this area should be increased by \$200m p.a. to approximately double current efforts.

2.7.4 Class Size

Any survey related to how teachers believe they can most be supported to improve learning outcomes, particularly in areas such as literacy and numeracy will highlight the professional view of the importance of reducing class size.

Calculating the amount needed to reduce class sizes requires data not readily available at present.

However, the AEU has data which suggests that over 80% of Junior Primary classes are above the Commonwealth Standard of 20 students. There are approximately 20 000 Junior Primary classes. Therefore at least 16 000 are likely to be oversize. (In fact the data suggest over 40% are over 25).

How many extra classes this requires would be dependent upon individual school demographics which are not available. However, it seems reasonable to hypothesise that at least 5000 extra teachers would be required. At an average salary of \$40,000 p.a. this would then cost \$200m.

It should be emphasised this is only to deal with Junior Primary classes and does not include increases in support personnel or any resulting capital needs.

\$200m should be allocated to reducing class sizes in Junior Primary to 20 students.

2.7.5 Technology

Although most states and territories have introduced some technology programs over the past few years and there is growth in both the quality and quantum of technology in schools, all schools continue to struggle to find the money to meet the demand and need. Many have entered into forward commitments to achieve what they have, and the problems of simultaneously replacing, upgrading and maintaining current equipment have been added to that of initial purchase.

Without a major Federal Government initiative, Australian schools will find it increasingly difficult to maintain the initiative or gain impetus towards the full integration of information technology into the curriculum. The Federal Government in partnership with the states and territories must fund a program to ensure that all schools are able to meet minimum standards.

Those schools which are reasonably advanced are finding it very difficult to obtain appropriate Australian made software. Such software needs to be developed by a partnership between appropriately experienced teachers and experienced software developers. The Federal Government should take the initiative, through MCEETYA, to fund the Curriculum Corporation to undertake a major project involving identification of need and the development of appropriate software packages in all key learning areas and in line with the National Statements and Profiles.

It is becoming increasingly important for education workers to have developed basic, and in some cases, advanced competencies in using technology in teaching. To date, much of the development has been ad hoc, left to individual workers, and relied upon the goodwill of colleagues and a few schools. Increasingly, state/territory governments are realising the need to ensure all education workers have basic levels of technological competence and are introducing competency standards to which education workers should aspire. These standards need to be backed with a concerted program of professional skill upgrading which is beyond the means of state/territory governments.

The AEU's Information Technology Benchmarks for Schools are attached (Attachment 2)

The Federal Government should support state/territory effort in technology with a National Technology Strategy. This should include:

- **\$50m for upgrading existing out dated equipment**
- **\$150m p.a. for at least five years for infrastructure development**
- **\$20m p.a. for at least three years for software development**
- **\$60m p.a. for at least five years for professional development**

2.7.6 Indigenous Education

Statistical evidence emerging on the state of Indigenous Education up to and including TAFE only adds to the concern and alarm which surrounds this area. For instance, the National English Literacy Survey showed that indigenous students fall far below their mainstream peers in literacy achievement. Attendance rates, retention rates, literacy levels, and youth and adult employment data paint a picture of racial inequality of horrendous proportions. It is no wonder that Community Aid Abroad is extremely concerned about the access of indigenous peoples to education and developing a campaign which acknowledges that many of the outcomes of Indigenous Education are more in line with those of third world countries than the rest of Australia.

This appalling situation must become the first priority of all levels of government.

In the short term, in addition to the funding already called for under literacy and numeracy programs, the Federal Government must take a lead by:

- restoring funding to ABSTUDY as a separate and customised program
- guaranteeing that funding for all programs under IESIP will be renewed as they expire for at least the next four years. (This means maintaining funding of \$118.5m at 1998 prices, an increase of \$31m over forward estimates in 2001-02)
- reviewing educational expenditure by the states and territories, and particularly the Northern Territory, on Aboriginal Education and assessing it against the disabilities measures in the Commonwealth Grants Commission relativities calculations to ensure that grants are going where they should
- conducting community case studies of need in indigenous communities to more specifically target need.

However, this can only be seen as a holding operation pending a concerted attack by all governments and all Australians on its shameful legacy to the education of Indigenous Australians.

The AEU will itself be undertaking a major policy and research analysis of this area this year, and calls upon the Federal Government to do likewise.

Funding for IESIP should be maintained at current levels, at an additional cost of \$12m in 1999, and \$32m p.a. thereafter.

An additional \$2m p.a. should be allowed for policy and research, including community case studies.

2.8 Australia's Youth

Traditionally, young Australians not entering tertiary education found the transition from school to work relatively easy. This is no longer the case. Too many in the 15-19 year old age group are finding that the step to adult life through paid employment, a step that earlier generations took for granted, is no longer an option.

Youth unemployment levels are unacceptable and job creation alone does not work. Between 1991 and 1997, 272,600 full-time jobs were created in Australia yet during this period, full-time jobs held by teenagers declined by 71,000. The experience in the 1960s 1970s and 1980s tells a similar story.

Current Government policy including the 'common youth allowance', 'work for the dole' and 'New Apprenticeships' have not shifted the opportunity base for Australia's youth and community concern is escalating.

It is time for affirmative action strategies concerning young people and employment.

For increasing numbers of students a necessary foundation for work is quality vocational educational experience. Recent Victorian figures show that some 90% of students who undertook a VET course for the VCE either obtained a tertiary education place or were successful in finding work. To ensure student access it is essential that Federal funding for VET in schools be both continued and expanded on the basis of demonstrated systems need.

Tax incentives should be established for employers who take on young people in either full apprenticeships (four years or equivalent) and/or full time work.

Federal funding for VET in Schools should be maintained at the current level of \$40m with a further increase of \$20m in 2000 for those systems that can demonstrate need against a set of criteria pertaining to access and equity.

2.9 Health and Welfare

Schools cannot exist in isolation from their communities. The conditions for students and their families have significant influence in regard to the effectiveness of any learning environment. Thus, given escalating societal concern for young people and the critical need to provide support for teachers' work, it is increasingly necessary to integrate health and welfare services and related personnel into the work of our schools. These services must include specific support for those students caught in a cycle of drug and/or alcohol abuse, students who are homeless and teenage girls who are pregnant or shoulder the responsibilities of motherhood.

A School Links Program should be established, to build upon the Full Service Schools initiative, as trialed by the ACEE, to pilot the integration of community services through partnerships and inter-agency links of all services concerned with the interests of students, with particular initial emphasis on students at risk, the homeless and parent liaison.

\$20m should be allocated to a School Links Program to expand the pilot programmes of Full Service Schools in partnership with ACEE, and an evaluation for a report to systems.

\$2m should be targeted at the educational needs of homeless students.

\$3m should be allocated to the needs of teenagers who are pregnant.

2.10 Professional Development

In addition to the professional development outlined in the technology section above, there are urgent needs in the areas of curriculum change, the implementation of VET in schools, developments in curriculum and reporting, and in new forms of work organisation, as well as general ongoing development.

The AEU notes the Coalition election policy creating a Quality Teacher Program with \$75 m over 3 years for Professional Development for teachers in literacy, numeracy, mathematics, science, IT, and VET, targeted at those teaching over 10 years, casual teachers, and teachers re-entering the teaching force. The AEU supports such an initiative. However, the amount involved should not be seen as sufficient to cover the needs outlined here and in the technology section above and should be expanded

in line with these figures.

The National Professional Development Program which ran from 1993 to the end of 1996 was funded at \$45m p.a. For such a small amount, it was able to have a quite marked effect on the profession. It encouraged partnerships between different groups, such as teachers, teacher educators, parents, and business. It involved these parties in the development of proposals. Its beneficial effects are still flowing into schools.

The industry standard on employer funded professional development is now around ten days p.a. The Federal Government should initiate discussion with the states and territories with a view to establishing this as the norm in education. In addition, provision should be made for education workers to “bank” this entitlement and take it as a ten week sabbatical after five years.

A new professional development program, similar in nature to the NPDP, should be funded at \$60m p.a.

The Federal Government should initiate discussions with the states and territories to achieve a jointly funded ten day a year professional development bank by 2002.

2.11 Demand and Supply

Young people increasingly look upon teaching as a difficult and unrewarding career. Unless Australian governments co-operate to raise the status of teachers the very future of quality education, and thus Australia’s future, is at risk.

By 2004 the supply of primary teachers will meet only 81% of demand while the supply of secondary teachers will meet only 66% of demand. These figures do not take into account the impact of the Youth Allowance which will force students back into secondary schools or the aggressive recruitment programmes of other OECD countries facing similar shortfalls.

Federal and State Governments must take responsibility for raising the status of teaching in order to retain existing teachers as well as recruiting young people to the profession.

Employers in Britain and the US are offering ‘golden hellos’ with salaries of a minimum of \$US50,000 dollars and re-location grants to attract qualified teachers. Compare \$US50,000 to the average teacher salary in Australia and the shortfall is more than \$35,000 Australian dollars.

Changes to career structure, professional recognition and registration, entrance requirements, remuneration and packaging, training, support and relief from “administrative” and other non-teaching duties are all required if the quantity and quality of teacher recruits is to be improved. However, the problem will not be solved unless the status of teachers is lifted.

Morale in the teaching profession is at an all time low. Dissatisfaction with pay, feeling unappreciated and unrespected, worries about security, excessive workloads, perceived shortcomings in training, reduced professional support, stress and teacher-bashing by the media and politicians are felt to contribute to this.

(Research by ‘AMR Qantam Harrison’ 1999)

In this context it is critical that both State and Federal ministers take responsibility for recruitment and retention strategies.

Retention of current employees must be a first priority and national strategies are necessary to ensure success in all systems. This means:

- T comparable market rates for teacher salaries
- T guarantee of professional standards;
 - S teacher registration or licensing
 - S accreditation of teacher education courses
 - S teacher access to professional development and sabbatical leave
 - S innovative strategies for renewal of the profession including early retirement programs funded by the savings from employment of beginning teachers.

Recruitment strategies must be supported by increased funding for teacher education and re-training courses designed for re-entry students.

A joint working party should be established between MCEETYA, the AEU and other appropriate authorities to develop a strategy plan to manage the emerging teacher supply crisis and renewal of the teaching profession. This working group should have at its disposal a pool of \$10million p.a. of Federal funding to enable systems to introduce agreed strategies.

2.12 Standards and Innovation

The Federal Government has a key role to play in supporting and stimulating action research and innovation in schools. It should initiate projects around:

- S Teaching and learning in middle schooling
- S the creation of an education foundation which allows business and industry to make a contribution to education. This fund should be administered by a joint business/education stakeholders group and distribute donations on the basis of equity, thus avoiding problems created by sponsorship of individual schools.
- S support for the National Schools Network. This has continued to exist despite the withdrawal of Federal Government funding through the support of systems, universities and teachers. The Federal Government should recognise this manifestation of its value and relieve some of its current financial woes by restoring funding of \$300 000 p.a.

\$2m should be allocated for innovative projects and research.

3. Pre-School Education

In response to the increasing recognition being given to the importance of the early years of education in late 1998 the AEU launched “Towards a National Plan For Preschool Education” (Attachment 3). This work outlines the importance of the Federal Government, working collaboratively with the states and territories, taking a responsibility for ensuring that a quality public education preschool is available to all children. The publication outlines a plan for Commonwealth and state/territory funding to the area. The following is extracted from the final chapter of this book:

A national funding plan

The framework established by this paper is predicated on the expectation that the Commonwealth Government will accept responsibility for preschool education, as it has done for all other sectors of education and for child care.

Given that this paper has argued that preschool education must be seen as an integral part of early childhood education, responsibility for its management must rest with the states and territories, given their prime responsibility for school education.

The development of a partnership between the Commonwealth Government and the states and territories is the starting point for a national policy and funding plan for preschool education.

Given that this paper proposes the maintenance of any existing provision for children over and above the year before school, the appropriate starting point is the current total expenditure on preschool education, \$351.8m in 1996-97, which includes the resources currently expended on 3 year olds. It recognises that \$450m is a very rough ball park estimate of the additional costs (in 1996-97 prices) involved in providing a quality preschool education for all 4 year olds in Australia. Total estimated costs would thus come to around \$800m, including existing provision for 3 year olds on an unchanged basis.

While there are clearly a range of options for the parameters of a possible funding agreement between the Commonwealth and states and territories, it is reasonable to expect at least a base level contribution from the states and territories, knowing that some systems will need to provide a greater amount to redress past under-funding.

One possible framework for the first three year funding arrangement is:

- © provision by the Commonwealth Government of a block grant to the states and territories, of 22% of total preschool funding, comprising:
 - a 15 % base block grant allocated on the basis of the proportion of 4 year olds enrolled in preschool education
 - a 7% grant within the framework of a national Preschool Equity Program based on the numbers of children identified as disadvantaged or having special needs targeted both at increasing participation and at redressing disadvantage/ meeting special educational needs.
- © a commitment by the states and territories to maintain existing funding and to increase their total funding by a minimum of 5% in each of the 3 years, with the contribution from each state/territory negotiated on the basis of the gap between their current provision and the proposed national standards /average funding levels. Of this, the states would be required to make a contribution to national projects and infrastructure.
- © negotiated commitments to form part of the funding agreements in relation to movement towards the proposed national standards and frameworks and for the achievement of additional places and enhanced participation rates.

C an additional 3% of funding by the Commonwealth Government to provide for [on a cost share basis with the states/territories providing 1%]:

- National Centre for Research in Early Childhood Development, Education and Care
- inclusion of preschool education within the framework of early childhood education as part of the brief of a representative Education Commission
- inclusion of preschool teachers in a re-established National Professional Development Program
- development of Early Childhood Education networks to provide all early childhood educators with a forum for information sharing, advice, support, and innovation
- inclusion of preschool education within the role of MCEETYA.

Clearly the concept of growth is built into such as model, given that it will be in the interests of the states to meet their part in order to receive a larger contribution from the Commonwealth. In order to provide for Commonwealth financial planning, the parameters of the Commonwealth contribution under such a model would be based on the planned funding increase including up to 5% growth per annum in funding by the states and territories.

Development of national goals, policies and data bases during this three year period will be of assistance in the development of a perhaps more refined funding plan for the following three year cycle.

Costs of such a funding model are estimated to be:

	Commonwealth base grant (15%)	Commonwealth grant for Preschool Equity Program (7%)	Total Commonwealth contribution to the states/ territories	State/ Territory contribution(4%)	Total funding
1999	\$52.8m	\$24.6m	\$77.4m	\$14.1m	\$443.5m
2000	\$66.5m	\$31.0m	\$97.5m	\$17.7m	\$558.7m
2001	\$83.8m	\$39.1m	\$122.9m	\$22.3m	\$703.9m

The additional 2% of Commonwealth funding and 1% of state and territory funding would go to the establishment of national projects and structures, providing something like \$14m for these purposes.

While this total outcome would take us some considerable way towards the additional \$450m estimated as the requirement to provide all 4 year olds with access to a quality preschool education, the reality is that costing was a rough guestimate, and failed to factor in all possible contingencies. For example, expansion of enrolments is likely to require the development of additional capital works, and the reality of higher numbers of groups is not built into the model. The development of a national focus on preschool education may also lead to increased demand for preschool education for 3 year olds, clearly a growing trend in some systems. Moreover, use of the existing total funding level as a base does not address the need to change some of the resource parameters for existing 3 year olds groups, even if current levels of demand were to remain unchanged. Some of these issues will be clearer in the planning of the second funding triennium.

Such a framework provides the basis for the negotiation of defined Commonwealth and State and Territory roles within a new partnership aimed at delivering universal, free, public preschool education of the highest quality for all Australian children.

Defined Commonwealth and state and territory roles should be negotiated within a new funding and policy partnership aimed at delivering universal, free, public preschool education of the highest quality for all Australian children.

Funding arrangements for the next triennium should be:

C provision by the Commonwealth Government of a block grant to the states and territories, of 22% of total preschool funding, comprising:

- a 15% base block grant allocated on the basis of the proportion of 4 year olds enrolled in preschool education
- a 7% grant within the framework of a national Preschool Equity Program based on the numbers of children identified as disadvantaged or having special needs targeted both at increasing participation and at redressing disadvantage/ meeting special educational needs.

C a commitment by the states and territories to maintain existing funding and to increase their total funding by a minimum of 5% in each of the 3 years, with the contribution from each state/territory negotiated on the basis of the gap between their current provision and the proposed national standards /average funding levels. Of this, the states would be required to make a contribution to national projects and infrastructure.

C negotiated commitments to form part of the funding agreements in relation to movement towards the proposed national standards and frameworks and for the achievement of additional places and enhanced participation rates.

C an additional 3% of funding by the Commonwealth Government to provide for [on a cost share basis with the states/territories providing 1%]:

- a National Centre for Research in Early Childhood Development, Education and Care
- inclusion of preschool education within the framework of early childhood education as part of the brief of a representative Education Commission
- inclusion of preschool teachers in a re-established National Professional Development Program
- development of Early Childhood Education networks to provide all early childhood educators with a forum for information sharing, advice, support, and innovation
- inclusion of preschool education within the role of MCEETYA.

Such a model would generate total funding of just over \$700m by the year 2001.

4. TAFE

4.1 The ANTA Agreement

Funding for TAFE has been a shared responsibility between the states/territories and the Commonwealth Government since the mid seventies. The establishment of the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) in 1992 created the opportunity to cement the shared objectives of the states/territories and the Commonwealth of developing a national system of vocational education and training.

The foundation for this arrangement was the ANTA Agreement growth funding initiative under which the states/territories would maintain their pre ANTA Agreement share of funding to TAFE in exchange for Commonwealth 'growth funds' of \$100m in 1992, the first year of the Agreement and \$70m per year thereafter for the life of the Agreement (1992-1997). These funds were to be used to satisfy the increasing demand for vocational education for workers and people preparing to enter the workforce based on each states'/ territories' 'training profile'.

By 1997 the Labor Government had committed over \$400m in growth funds to the states resulting in nearly \$1 billion of Commonwealth funds going to the states/territories annually.

However since the 1996 election the Howard Government has abolished 'growth funds', cut \$20m from TAFE funds to the states and \$1.8 billion from Labour Market Programs.

Under the new ANTA Agreement (1998-2001) not only will the states/territories not receive Commonwealth growth funds but they will now have to meet enrolment increases from their own declining budgets under the 'growth through efficiencies' agreement. With almost no room for further efficiencies the states/territories will in effect have to substitute their own funds for Commonwealth TAFE funds or reduce the quality of training provision through staffing reductions, higher class sizes or reduced educational resources such as libraries, computers and on-line facilities.

The Commonwealth Government has withdrawn from the funding partnership established through the ANTA Agreement in 1992 and thereby relinquished its authority and right to speak about national vocational education and training issues. Increasingly there will be a tendency for states/territories to go their own way on training issues and to duplicate effort rather than see the financial advantage of cooperating within a national vocational education and training system.

Unfortunately the people most likely to miss out on vital vocational education are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders students, women and people with disabilities particularly those in regional and remote areas.

Capital expenditure allocation of \$200m will assist in building a modern infrastructure for TAFE. However, the needs of rural and remote students depends on a combination of on-line learning and traditional learning settings in partnership with industry and enterprises. Allocation of additional infrastructure funds of \$20m to develop partnership arrangements with schools and universities including co-location with public educational institutions could assist in widening access to tertiary education. Estimates of unmet demand exceed 50,000 for TAFE places in 1998. These numbers are likely to rise in 1999 unless additional funds are provided to TAFE Institutes from the Commonwealth.

Restoring a genuine trusting partnership through reinstatement of Commonwealth growth funds and guarantees of TAFE funding will enable TAFE to build a world class national vocational education and training system. As a start this Federal Budget should increase funding to TAFE by \$100 million for the 1999/2000 on top of the \$890m allocated through the ANTA Agreement.

Funding to TAFE should be increased by \$100m in addition to the \$890m allocated through the ANTA Agreement.

In addition to the \$200m capital funds for this year, there should be an additional allocation of capital funds of \$20m to develop partnership arrangements between TAFE's, schools and universities, including co-location, to assist in widening access to tertiary education.

4.2 Staff Development

The formation of a national vocational education and training system with TAFE as the benchmark training provider will be unsuccessful unless adequate staff development funds are provided in addition to funds under the ANTA Agreement topped up with growth funds as outlined above.

The Federal Government promoted reforms in the VET system based on a range of new flexible delivery methods including use of on line technology. However these changes are being implemented in an environment of TAFE staff development funding cuts as a result of the loss of funds arising from the ANTA Agreement funding freeze.

There is a need for an injection of at least \$10m in 1999/2000 to begin to assist in providing staff development for all educational staff in TAFE to learn how to use new learning technologies.

At least \$10m should be allocated to begin to assist in providing staff development for all educational staff in TAFE to use new learning technologies.

Proposal	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02
A National Inquiry focussed on establishing the real costs of quality schooling.	\$1m	\$1m	
A Schools Advisory Council to be established as a natural progression from the Costs of Schooling Committee above.			\$1m
Remove the EBA.	\$32m	\$45m	\$51.3m
Eliminate fees in the poorest 25% of schools, growing to \$270 m (in 1999 prices) by 2002 to cover all government schools.	\$70m	\$140m	\$210m
Tackling equity in the poorest 25% of schools.	\$75m	\$75m	\$75m
National advisory body on gender equity.	\$.5m	\$.5m	\$.5m
Literacy and Numeracy.	\$200m	\$200m	\$200m
Reducing class sizes in Junior Primary to 20 students.	\$200m	\$200m	\$200m
A National Technology Strategy:			
• Upgrading existing out dated equipment.	\$50m	\$50m	\$50m
• Infrastructure development.	\$150m	\$150m	\$150m
• Software development.	\$20m	\$20m	\$20m
• Professional development in technology.	\$60m	\$60m	\$60m
Aboriginal Education:			
• Funding for IESIP should be maintained at current levels.	\$12m	\$32m	\$32m
• For policy and research, including community case studies.	\$2m	\$2m	\$2m

Proposal	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02
-----------------	----------------	----------------	----------------

Youth Strategy:

- | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|
| • Federal funding for VET in Schools. | | \$20m | \$20m |
| • Schools Links Program. | \$20m | \$20m | \$20m |
| • Educational needs of homeless students. | \$2m | \$2m | \$2m |
| • Needs of teenagers who are pregnant. | \$3m | \$3m | \$3m |

Status of Teachers:

- | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|
| • A new professional development program. | \$60m | \$60m | \$60m |
| • A strategy to manage the emerging teacher supply crisis and renewal of the teaching profession. | \$10m | \$10m | \$10m |
| • Innovative projects and research. | \$2m | \$2m | \$2m |

Early Childhood:

- | | | | |
|--|--------|--------|--------|
| • Provision by the Commonwealth Government of a block grant to the states and territories of 22% of total preschool funding. | \$233m | \$233m | \$233m |
|--|--------|--------|--------|

TAFE:

- | | | | |
|---|--------|--------|--------|
| • Recurrent through the ANTA Agreement. | \$100m | \$100m | \$100m |
| • To develop partnership arrangements between TAFE's, schools and universities. | \$20m | \$20m | \$20m |
| • Staff development for all educational staff in TAFE to use new learning technologies. | \$10m | \$10m | \$10m |

Medium Term and Uncosted Proposals

Education funding should be made transparent by the introduction of an EDUCARE levy.

A direct tax by the Federal Government should be complemented by agreements with the State/Territory Governments.

Increase the compensation package within the GST by \$200 per school age student to cover the GST cost to schooling.

Educational institutions should be compensated for the administrative burden which the GST will impose by the allocation of .2 support personnel per institution, to be costed within the GST.

Public funding of schools should be increased to at least the OECD average.

Tax incentives should be established for employers who take on young people in either full apprenticeships (four years or equivalent) and/or full time work.

The Federal Government should initiate discussions with the states and territories to achieve a jointly funded ten day a year professional development bank by 2002.

ATTACHMENTS

1

**AN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE GUARANTEE FOR THE NEW
MILLENNIUM**

(Not available)

2

**AEU'S INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY BENCHMARKS FOR
SCHOOLS**

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY BENCHMARKS FOR SCHOOLS

The purpose of this template is to inform school communities as to the AEU's view of minimum standards in regard to IT resourcing. It will also assist schools to assess their own capabilities and needs.

BENCHMARK

INFRASTRUCTURE

Facilities

- Category 5 UTP cabling to all school buildings and classrooms
- One electronic network connection in each classroom and staffroom
- At least one up-to-date file server
- A personal email address for each student and staff member
- On-line library/information services support for school community
- Ready access to the Internet across the school
- Internet access for teachers from home
- The capacity and support to develop an Intra-net within or across schools
- Free internet access.

Hardware

- One up-to-date computer for every teacher
- One up-to-date computer for every 3 students
- One printer for every five teachers and for every ten students
- Up-grading of computers every four years and printers every five years
- Annual depreciation fund to sustain viability of IT equipment

Software

- Ready access to an up-to-date works package
- Ready access to up-to-date Internet access software
- An up-to-date networking operating system able to handle TCPIP
- Ready access to a program for the monitoring of student outcomes

STAFFING

- All staff with demonstrated expertise in IT (i.e. information & computer literacy)
- At least twenty per cent of teaching involves the use of computing technologies
- An experienced school-based teacher coordinator of IT
- At least one adviser/coach to support staff in teaching with IT
- At least twelve hours per year of PD for all staff on teaching with IT
- Provision of state wide funded IT technical support positions to develop and support community and global projects
- One IT technical support person for every 400 students; pro-rata support for schools less than 400.

NETWORKED LEARNING

- Software usage policy negotiated between home and school
- Policies to support student-centred approaches to learning with IT
- Students able to access school's on-line library from home
- Participation in local, regional, national global networks/learning communities

3

**TOWARDS A NATIONAL PLAN FOR PRESCHOOL
EDUCATION**

(Not available)