

Fund access to public preschool education for all children



Why the Commonwealth Government should contribute to funding preschool education:

The Commonwealth Government plays an important role in funding all other sectors of education but since 1985 has taken no responsibility for preschool education. In a rapidly changing world, every Australian child must be given the best start in life. We all recognise the critical importance of early childhood education to our children's development and life opportunities.

The Commonwealth Government must fund preschool education because:

- C a quality preschool education provides lasting benefits for children's development and futures;
- C tens of thousands of Australian children cannot access preschool education and children who are disadvantaged are most likely to miss out;
- C Australian needs a national approach and vision for preschool education.

What is the money needed for?

- C to ensure *at least* one year of high quality, free public preschool education for all Australian children;
- C the development and funding of a Preschool Equity Program to ensure that all children have access to high quality preschool and that their special educational needs are addressed;
- C the development of national structures and support on a joint basis with the states and territories.

The Commonwealth Government must form a partnership with the states and territories, and take a responsibility for funding and planning public preschool education accessible to all Australian children.

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A CHARTER FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION: FEDERAL BUDGET 2001

Time for a commitment to public schools, preschools and TAFE

The Coalition during its term of office has neglected public education. Funding to public education is in crisis. It is time to reverse the balance and provide a fair share of Commonwealth funds for public schools, preschools and TAFE.

It would take a \$5 billion boost in education expenditure for Australia to restore funding to the level of the early 1980s.

Public education is a key election issue. The Government and Opposition Parties must make clear commitments to:

- **give public schools, which educate 70% of Australia's children, their fair share of federal funds;**
- **restore TAFE funding for a skilled Australia;**
- **fund access to public preschool education for all children.**

The Commonwealth Government must play a fair and responsible role in national education policy. It must invest in the nation's future. It should promote equity and opportunity, and safeguard quality and stability of provision. The Government must ensure that its approach is based on the principle of social justice for all Australians and is informed by the goal of a prosperous future. This entails an active part for the Government in protecting, enhancing and advancing Australia's public education provision.

The Government must invest in the nation's future.



Give public schools their fair share of federal funds



Funding to public schools must be increased:

- the 1970s Karmel settlement for schools, gave public schools nearly 70% of Commonwealth funding;
- the proportion of federal funding to public schools which was 42% in 1996, will be only 32% by 2004;
- in 2001 the Federal government will spend under \$1.8 billion on public schools and over \$3.2 billion on private schools;
- in 2004 the Federal government expects to spend just over \$2 billion on public schools and over \$4 billion on private schools;
- by 2004 the Howard government will have increased private school funding by 84%.

What is the money needed for?

Public school systems need the money to create greater equity and a fair go for all Australian children, especially the most disadvantaged. The money would be used to provide:

- enhanced literacy and numeracy programs;
- reduced class sizes;
- an increased emphasis on educational disadvantage;
- fee free public schooling;
- adequate levels of guidance and welfare services;
- modernisation of old school buildings;
- access to technology skills and understanding;
- professional development for all teachers.

It is time to restore the balance.

The 70% of students in public schools must receive their fair share of federal funding.

Restore TAFE funding for a skilled Australia



TAFE funding must be restored and increased:

Australia's TAFE system must produce a highly skilled and competent workforce, for a prosperous, economically sustainable and culturally diverse society.

The Commonwealth Government's policy of "growth through efficiencies" has resulted in:

- increasing levels of unmet student demand for TAFE courses;
- reduced opportunity and greater inequality of access to TAFE particularly in regional areas;
- a threat to the quality of teaching and learning;
- a reduction in the capacity and capability of TAFE to meet Australia's diverse education and training needs.

What is the money needed for?

A strong vigorous public TAFE system driven by goals of quality and equality needs extra funding:

- for enrolment growth and quality improvement;
- to build a sound system of apprenticeships, delivering high-quality training and outcomes;
- for better access and support for disadvantaged students, including those students in rural and remote areas;
- to build consistent, high quality vocational education and training programs leading to portable national qualifications.

The Commonwealth Government must allocate an additional \$310 million for 2001 in order to ensure quality, equality and enrolment growth in TAFE.