

# **AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**

**Press Release 1025**

## **DOGS CONGRATULATE THE AEU ON ITS REFUSAL TO COMPROMISE ON ALBANESE'S SCHOOL FUNDING PLAN.**

DOGS congratulate the Australian Education Union and NSW, Victorian, Queensland and South Australian State governments for [placing a 'ban' on enacting Education Minister Jason Clare's new schools agreement, claiming that the funding legislation is 'premature.'](#)

Although the so-called Better and Fairer Schools deal is the cornerstone of an Albanese government's election promise to fully-fund public education, but the union says those claims are misleading.

Their criticism has been backed by [new analysis](#) from the Australia Institute's Centre for Future Work, which warned that between \$3.5 and \$5 billion in economic returns are being "squandered" by the plan.

AEU federal president Correna Haythorpe has declared.

"We cannot stand by while another generation of students miss out on the resources that they need for their education."

The Commonwealth will spend more than \$29 billion on schools in 2024, but according to official departmental data more than half of that (\$17.8 billion) will be spent subsidising private schools.

### **Stand-off over school funding**

Matthew Elmas from the *New Daily* on October 10, reported on the funding standoff between the major States and the federal Government.

He noted that a nationwide backlash from teachers is just the latest headache for Clare, who is embroiled in a stand-off with New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia over the funding deal.

Clare wants funding lifted to 100 per cent of School Resourcing Standards (SRS), which were devised by the 2011 Gonski report as an estimate of what schools need to meet student needs.

Gonski envisaged a 75 per cent (states) to 25 per cent (federal) funding split for education, but the federal government has previously only agreed to fund 20 per cent.

The new deal lifts the Commonwealth commitment to 22.5 per cent in exchange for a like-for-like 2.5 per cent rise (to 77.5 per cent) from states and territories.

But negotiations have hit an impasse, with the biggest states missing a key federal deadline late last month to sign on.

While Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory have agreed to the new agreement, education ministers in larger states hope they will get a better deal from Clare later this year.

The current funding arrangement – which leaves 98 per cent of Australia’s public schools underfunded – will expire on December 31.

But the federal government has warned the existing deal will simply roll over in states that don’t sign up to the new plan, locking in more under funding for most public schools.

[Centre for Future Work director Jim Stanford said the federal government could close the current \\$6.6 billion funding gap at a much lower cost than the estimated \\$9.9 billion economic dividend flowing from better education.](#)

“Gonski was crystal clear that the federal government has to play a bigger role,” Stanford said.

“Neither the states or federal governments have fully lived up to their responsibilities.”

As governments remained deadlocked over school funding, OECD data last month showed that while Australia has the highest level of spending on private schools among developed nations, it is behind New Zealand, the UK and South Korea on public school funding.

In the meantime, high school completion rates have fallen post-COVID and standardised test results show Australian students are falling behind global peers in both maths and literacy.

“The Commonwealth has the best fiscal capacity to do something,” Stanford explained.

“They just declared a very large second [budget] surplus, and the amount of money required to go to the full 25 per cent is not that much.

**SO....it is in everyone’s best interest that public school representatives hold out for a better deal.**

**DOGS position:**

Public school Teacher Unions and parent organisation would not be dealing with the current parlous funding position confronting Australian public schools, their teachers, parents and students if their representatives had not compromised on their inherited ‘No State Aid’ position in the 1970s. They obtained representation on the Whitlam Government Karmel Commission and then the Schools Commission itself. Some even had political careers. So many of their leaders in the past decades have obtained jobs and accolades on Government bodies while religious school leaders laughed all the way to the bank with taxpayer funds.

It is to be hoped that they will at least stand firm in the current impasse as they battle to get even basic resources for our schools.

**LISTEN TO THE DOGS PROGRAM**  
**855 ON THE AM DIAL: 12.00 NOON SATURDAYS**  
**<http://www.3cr.org.au/dogs>**