

Australian Education Amendment (Direct Measure of Income) Bill 2020

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Prepared by: Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations
of New South Wales

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Introduction

Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of New South Wales (P&C Federation) is thankful for this opportunity to contribute to this Bill. P&C Federation supports the position of individual educational and developmental needs met by a range of differential services expressed through appropriate and well-planned curricula, programs and environments conducted by sensitive and well-trained personnel in conjunction with parents¹ and families.

The core belief of P&C Federation is that the education of our children and youth is the most fundamental means of ensuring individual and collective success and, as a result, our greatest national resource. We also support the concept that it is primarily the responsibility of governments to ensure education is well rounded and fully funded. Our submission is focussed on local road safety as it relates to public schools.

Feedback

We note that the single biggest inequity in Federal education funding remains unaddressed, which is the persistent underfunding of government schools and overfunding of non-government schools.

Under current arrangements, public schools in New South Wales will never be funded the full Schooling Resource Standard (SRS), in part because the NSW Government may allocate up to 4% of the SRS for government schools to non-school expenditure such as to regulatory agencies and capital depreciation. Private schools, by contrast, will receive their full SRS, and will also receive an additional \$4.6 billion over the next decade, including a \$1.2 billion Choice and Affordability Fund. Private schools may also be eligible for Federal capital grants, whereas no Federal capital grants are available for public schools, which further brings Federal funding for private schools over the SRS.

In non-metropolitan areas, this amendment would also benefit non-government schools while continuing the underfunding of government schools, the largest education sector in these areas. In very remote areas, government schools comprise 84% of all schools.²

Moreover, the most recent Report into Government Services (ROGS) revealed that the average growth rate in recurrent expenditure per fulltime equivalent student in 2008-09 to 2017-18 was over twice as much for private schools as for government schools. In New South Wales, from 2008-09 to 2017-18, combined Federal and State expenditure per student has grown on average by almost twice as much in private schools as in government schools.³

Considering about 65% of school students are in public schools, and public schools are expected to absorb most of the surging enrolments in the coming decade, we see no defensible reason for this favouritism towards private schools. Education funding should prioritise the schools and students who most need it, and it is difficult to see why most funding growth is experienced by a school sector with more resources and less students.

¹ "Parent" refers to anyone with legal care of a child, such as a parent, carer or legal guardian

² Halsley. 2018. *Independent Review into Regional, Rural and Remote Education*. p.25

³ Productivity Commission. *Report on Government Services 2020*. Child care, education and training. pp. 4.20-4.21

We see this amendment as another move by the Commonwealth Government to benefit families in the non-government school sector, while making no such effort for families in government schools.

