AUSTRALIAN GREENS
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

1.1 The Australian Greens commend the Australian Education Bill 2013 and the Australian Education (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2013 to the extent that they establish a framework for needs-based funding of schools in Australia.

1.2 We believe an enduring schools funding model, where public money is equitably prioritised according to need, is necessary to ensure a universally accessible schooling system. While this legislation may not go as far towards establishing that model as we believe is necessary, it is a step in the right direction.

National Schools Resourcing Body

1.3 The Gonski Review of Funding for Schooling (the Gonski Review) concluded that an independent and expert National Schools Resourcing Body should determine the applicable schooling resource standards, and the framework that this legislation provides is incomplete in this regard.

1.4 Such an independent body would provide the core of the governance necessary to ensure that funding for schooling is provided in a way that maximises its education impact. It would develop, maintain, review and index the Schooling Resource Standards, and associated loadings, for currency and effectiveness.

1.5 The framework put forward by this legislation does not adequately provide for such a body.

Recommendation 1

1.6 The Australian Greens recommend the framework established by the Australian Education Bill 2013 be amended to establish a National Schools Resourcing Body to develop and maintain the Schooling Resource Standards.

Capacity to pay

1.7 A key recommendation of the Gonski Review was that in the case of non-government schools, the assessment of a school’s need for public funding should be based on the anticipated capacity of the parents enrolling their children in the school to contribute financially towards the school’s resource requirements.

1.8 Such an approach needs to be implemented carefully, as there is considerable diversity in the existing private contribution among non-government schools. However, the Gonski Review concluded this is achievable in developing a new framework, such as that established by this legislation, subject to other funding parameters and transitional arrangements.
Recommendation 2

1.9 The Australian Greens recommend that the framework established by the Australian Education Bill 2013 should provide that a school community’s ability to contribute financially towards the school's resources is a factor relevant to its need for public funding.

Senator Penny Wright
Australian Greens