

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

## **SCHOOLS**

### **PRESS RELEASE 790**

#### **PUBLIC EDUCATION AND THE FEDERAL ELECTION**

**18 May 2019**

Advocates of Public Education are attempting to have a say in the extraordinarily loud noise surrounding the Federal election. But none of the major parties is prepared to deal with the elephant in the Education tent : public funding of private schools.

Mr Morrison, and Josh Frydenberg have not even deigned to mention public education in their election priorities. Perhaps they are too shy to do so, given their shameful treatment of our public school students.

A new ad campaign from the Australian Education Union for example, shows that the Morrison Government's \$14 billion in total cuts to public schools will leave 99% of public schools below the minimum level of funding required to meet the educational needs of children.

The new ad campaign is attempting to make education funding a central campaign issue as the Morrison Government prepares to hand down another budget geared towards handing cash to the big end of town at the expense of struggling families.

. The ACTU is supporting the AEU. But with a stroke of the pen, public and private students are lumped together.

#### **Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:**

"We support the AEU in this campaign, and the principle that every child, no matter where they live and regardless of their background should have access to a high quality education.

"We have to change the rules to ensure fair funding for all schools and all students."

But, unlike Mr Morrison, the Labor Party and the Greens have heard the public education voice and are prepared to give public Education funding priority, but there is a deafening silence in their policy statements on the gross overfunding of private schools. But the Labor Party, as always, is determined to have two bob each way. There is no evidence that they will question in any way, the current federal funding of private education.

[The Greens](#) on the other hand have gone half way to bite the State Aid bullet by having a policy of 'Free Education' for all. But there is again, no evidence that they will confront the fee paying private sector.

Their policy is, however, worth a second glance, given their possible occupation of the middle ground in the Senate:

## **GREENS EDUCATION POLICY**

**Everyone has a right to accessible and affordable education, whether you are leaving school, changing careers or looking to gain new skills and knowledge. Education enriches all stages of our lives. The opportunity to learn unlocks our potential, reduces inequality and allows us to live a good life. Guaranteeing universal access to education helps us build a just society and prepare for a brighter future.**

But under the Coalition Government, billions have been cut from school funding. Our childcare services are under pressure and our university and TAFEs are being slowly deregulated and privatised, at the expense of both students and teachers.

If we don't improve our investment in public education, just 13% of public schools will have the funding to meet their minimum needs by 2023 while 65% of non-government schools will be overfunded. That means 2 million young people will miss out on the education they need. And our university & TAFE fees will also continue to rise out of reach of many young people.

It doesn't have to be this way.

The Greens have a plan to ensure everyone, regardless of their bank balance or postcode, is able to gain a world-class education and continue learning and upskilling as their life changes.

### [Fully funded public schools](#)

We're making an unprecedented investment in public schools of over \$20 billion in the next 10 years. Under our plan, by 2023, every public school in Australia will be fully funded to reach the nationally agreed standard and to meet the educational needs of all students. We will expand building and infrastructure funding so that the majority of funds go to public schools, remove the artificial cap on federal funding for public education and stop the special deals made by major parties with private schools.

### [Free TAFE and Uni](#)

Students leaving university or TAFE now face greater pressures than ever before, including high youth unemployment and record high housing and living costs. Being saddled with tens of thousands of dollars in student debt that takes decades to repay is unsustainable and unfair. Our plan will fund unlimited free TAFE and undergraduate university for everyone, increase Youth Allowance by \$75 a week, and boost uni funding by 10% to better support students, teachers and staff, so no one leaves uni with an enormous debt that will take a decade to pay off.

The benefits of our plan:

- Public schools have everything they need
- No school is underfunded
- Free TAFE and undergraduate uni
- Better support for students, teachers and staff
- More funding for universities to improve learning and teaching conditions
- Everyone has access to world class education

So much for the major parties. In coming weeks the DOGS will investigate the policies of the independents and minor groups.

In our compulsory, optional preferential voting system, Australians have many ways of giving a message to our politicians.

Viva our Democracy!

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