

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Press Release 1029

LABOR AND THE COALITION SELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS OUT – AGAIN

[On 26 November 2024 the Better and Fairer Schools \(Funding and Reform\) Bill 2024 passed through the Australian Parliament.](#) The Act amends the Australian Education Act 2013 to turn the current 20% maximum contribution for Commonwealth funding of public schools, instead into a minimum and allows this contribution to increase for states and territories signed up to the BFSA, putting their schools on a pathway to full and fair funding at 100 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard. The new legislation also increases transparency and accountability for how school funding is spent by establishing it as an object of the Act, and requiring the Minister for Education to prepare an annual statement to Parliament on progress made in relation to the BFSA.

The AEU welcomed the ‘funding floor’ but saw the Act as ‘weak kneed incrementalism’. The Act kept the legislated Commonwealth share of public school funding at 20 per cent – not the 25 per cent teacher unions and experts have called for.

[So the Teachers unions are gearing up for a federal election](#)

Save Our Schools have accused the Labor Government and the Liberal-National Coalition of colluding to prevent full funding of public schools. SOS National Convenor, Trevor Cobbold, said that Albanese Government and the Opposition are on “a unity ticket to defraud public schools of billions in funding over the next five years”.

Mr. Cobbold said that Government and Coalition Senators on 26 November voted down amendments moved by the Greens education spokesperson, Senator Allman-Payne, to ensure that public schools will be fully funded at 100% of their Schooling Resource Standard (SRS).

“The amendments would have set a floor to the Commonwealth share of the SRS of public schools at 25% of their SRS and prevented the use of accounting tricks by the states and the Northern Territory that have defrauded public schools. Under the funding agreements, the states and the Territory are allowed to claim non-SRS expenditures such as capital depreciation, school transport and regulatory costs as part of their share of funding the SRS of public schools.

“These accounting tricks have defrauded public schools of \$13.1 billion over the last six years. They will defraud public schools of at least \$13.3 billion over the next five years.”

“Labor has gone from promising to end the accounting tricks prior to the [2019](#) and [2022](#) election to [denying they exist](#) in government.”

“The continuing fraud means that public schools will still be under-funded by billions by 2029, 18 years after the Gonski Report recommended full funding of public schools. Meanwhile, private schools are over-funded in every state and territory except the Northern Territory and will remain so until at least 2029.”

“This is an unconscionable betrayal of public school students and their parents, particularly those most in need of learning support. It will be felt by students, parents, teachers and principals across Australia. Hundreds of thousands of low SES, Indigenous, disability, regional and remote area students will have their learning restricted by the lack of full funding. Schools will face ongoing teacher shortages, teachers teaching out-of-field and daunting workloads.”

“Public school parents and teachers will remember this betrayal right up to the next election”.

“To their credit, Senators Lambie, Payman and Pocock supported the Greens amendments to ensure full funding for public schools”.

DOGS POSITION:

The cause of public education in Australia has been put back one hundred and sixty years to the 1860s when public schools had to beg for meagre public funding while the denominational, sectarian system was favoured by colonial politicians. The cause was only secured when public funding was withdrawn from sectarian schools and provided for public schools which were free, secular, compulsory and universal in the years 1872- 1964. The consequences of the diversion of public funding in ever greater amounts to sectarian schools is blatantly evident in the growing social inequalities and fragmentation of our society with cultural, ethnic, and gender discrimination.

Public funding should be for public schools only

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