

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 645#

AEU Emphasis on Gonski Funding only a Short Term Solution For Public Education

The 2016 Federal Election may be an Education Election'. But will it be a Public Education Election?

The AEU -Australian Education Union's unquestioned emphasis upon the full implementation of the 'sector neutral' Gonski funding policy at their annual conference indicates an unquestioning acceptance of Gonski's voucher system of education funding. It can only be a short term, insufficient solution at best. At worst, it indicates a reversal of their once strongly held 'No State Aid ' policy.

The AEU will launch a \$2 million on a TV advertising campaign in support of the full six years of Gonski funding. AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe told the AEU's Annual Federal Conference a \$2 million TV Advertising campaign in support of the full six years of Gonski funding would begin in March and be supported by print and digital advertising. She claimed that the six years of Gonski funding were a once-in-a-generation chance to properly resource disadvantaged schools, and there needed to be bi-partisan political support for Gonski.

The AEU have entered the 2016 Education Funding auction with some support. Labor Leader Bill Shorten addressed the recent conference and confirmed that, if elected, Labor would deliver the full six years of the Gonski agreements. This involves an extra \$4.5 billion to schools in 2018 and 2019. Mr Shorten claimed that Labor's policies would deliver an extra \$2 billion in funding to low-SES schools in those two years.

Greens Leader Senator Richard di Natale also addressed the conference and expressed his support for Gonski funding. See <http://www.aefederal.org.au/news-media/news/AEU-launches-2-million-Gonski-ad-campaign> and <http://www.aefederal.org.au/news-media/news/how-gonski-getting-results>

But nobody is seriously questioning the continuation of public funding of sectarian institutions which select children and create ever greater division and disadvantage in the Australian society and body politic. Is pleading for crumbs from the tables of wealthy religious education systems good public policy? We now have completely unacceptable levels of disadvantage and waste of ability in our next generation because of the diversion of billions of dollars from the public into the private sectors of education. Gonski merely represents a few band aids on more of the same.

**DOGS CONTEND, AS WE HAVE DONE FOR THE LAST HALF CENTURY, THAT
THE ONLY GOOD PUBLIC POLICY FOR AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION IS PUBLIC
FUNDING FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS ONLY**

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