

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT

SCHOOLS

Press Release 748

PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPPORTERS CANNOT SUPPORT THE COALITION BUDGET

DOGS notes that Australian citizens and taxpayers are being asked to digest figures in billions of dollars and decade long projections. A lot can happen in a week in Australian politics. Do our politicians expect us to believe that things remain economically, socially and politically stable for ten years? God only knows!

It is not surprising that the only new funding for schools in the ScoMo budget is \$247 million over four years to extend the controversial [National School Chaplaincy Program](#). This will allegedly have a new anti-bullying focus.

The mind boggles, given religious opposition to the Safe Schools program.

The Chaplaincy program, twice knocked down by the High Court on administrative, not religious liberty grounds, was resurrected by the Coalition through Section 96 grants to the States. It was first introduced under the former Howard Coalition. It was subsequently dumped by Labor. It's strongly supported [by conservative backbenchers](#). So what minority is imposing their will on our inclusive and open public school system?

The Australian Education Union reacted as follows:

The 2018-2019 Federal Budget has failed to deliver fair funding for public schools, with the Turnbull Government yet again prioritising big business over our children and their future.

Australian Education Union Federal President, Correna Haythorpe said Malcolm Turnbull has blatantly ignored the needs and wants of the public by delivering a budget which benefits big business, instead of delivering fairer funding for public schools.

"Malcolm Turnbull has abandoned students in public schools who need additional support in the classroom," said Ms Haythorpe.

"This is an out of touch budget by an out of touch Government. We know the public reject tax cuts for big business and want money invested into public schools instead.

"A government that can find \$65 billion for corporate tax cuts can surely find the funding required to ensure every child gets a high quality education.

"This is a Government that cares more about big corporations than it does about the next generation.

“We do not support the additional \$250 million funding for school chaplains over the next four years. These funds are desperately needed in our schools to provide professional school counselling services, ongoing professional development for principals and teachers and student well being programs,” said Ms Haythorpe.

The latest Guardian Essential poll revealed 88 percent of Australians want the federal government to either increase education spending or keep spending the same.

“Yet Turnbull has ignored the public and shown his priorities are not with our children,” said Ms Haythorpe.

It was symbolic that Education funding was a mere chaplaincy afterthought in the 2018 ScoMo budget.

Most of the big news happened in last year’s budget, when the federal government, using ten year projections to maximise the amounts, formalised details associated with its [Quality Schools](#) reform package as follows:

Over the next 10 years (2018-2027) and relative to the 2016-17 Federal Budget settings, the Government will invest an additional \$24.5 billion in recurrent funding for Australian schools. This brings total Commonwealth recurrent investment to \$243.5 billion for the same period. Recurrent funding for government schools will grow by 56.6 per cent from 2017, with total funding of \$102.1 billion from 2018 to 2027. For non-government schools funding will grow by 55.6 per cent from 2017, with total funding of \$141.4 billion from 2018 to 2027.

You can use the [school funding estimator](#) to find out what this means for your school.

The package centres on a commitment to align school funding with the Schooling Resource Standard ([SRS](#)) recommended in the 2011 Gonski [report into school funding](#).

To achieve this, the government plans to [progressively raise funding levels](#) for government schools from 17% to 20% of the SRS and for private schools from 76.8% to 80% of the SRS by 2027.

The government argues that this delivers an [additional \\$24.5 billion](#) for Australian schools over the decade, and says it [will be up to states](#) as to whether they wish to fund the remaining amounts so that all schools reach the full SRS.

The government also claims its reform package provides more consistent needs-based funding when compared to the so-called “[special deals](#)” established under the Labor Gillard government.

Labor doesn’t agree, suggesting the Coalition is shortchanging the nation to the tune of [A\\$17 billion](#) (the initial claim was [\\$22 billion](#)) when compared to promises made by the former Gillard Labor government.

Labor has [promised](#), if re-elected, to return to the Gillard model.

Aside from these ongoing Gonski wars, this year’s budget contains a few additional highlights.

- A\$440 million to extend the [National Partnership Agreement on universal access to early childhood education](#) for a further year.
- A\$154 million to promote active and healthy living. This includes A\$83 million to improve existing community sport facilities and expand the [Sporting Schools](#) and [Local Sporting Champions](#) programs.
- A\$11.8 million over three years to expand the [Early Learning Languages Australia](#) program to more preschools and trial the program in 2019 and 2020 from the first year of school through to year two in primary schools.
- A\$6 million over two years (from 2017-18) to continue and update the communications campaign to increase public awareness of changes to the Quality Schools package (aka public relations to sell the government's reform package).
- A\$1.3 million per year until 2020-21 to continued funding the [MoneySmart Teaching](#) program, designed to improve financial literacy education in schools.
- A\$134.3 million over four years to the Northern Territory as part of the children and schooling component of the [National Partnership Agreement on Northern Territory Remote Aboriginal Investment](#).

Finally, the government has signalled its intention to continue exploring ways to deliver new and diverse pathways into the teaching profession, with the view to increasing the supply of quality teachers. This measure builds on previous work associated with the [Teach for Australia](#) program.

To pursue this aim, [the government has suggested](#) it will invite proposals in 2018 from providers to deliver alternative pathways into teaching.

Additional information is available at <https://theconversation.com/budget-2018-whats-in-store-for-education-95510>

LISTEN TO THE DOGS PROGRAM

855 ON THE AM DIAL: 12.00 NOON SATURDAYS

<http://www.3cr.org.au/dogs>