

## AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF STATE SCHOOL ORGANISATIONS

*The national voice of parents who send their children to Australia's public schools*

MEDIA RELEASE – 13 OCTOBER 2003.

### LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE ON FAIRER SCHOOLS FUNDING

Government school parents have welcomed the announcement of WA's Education and Training Minister, Alan Carpenter, to keep funding for the richest WA private schools at 2003 levels.

Judith Bundy, president of the Australian Council of State School Organisations congratulated the Minister on his positive leadership role – a challenge all other ministers should accept.

'We commend the Minister on taking this step. For too long government funds have been ploughed into rich non-government schools while the needs of students in less advantaged schools have been neglected.

"We now call on Education Ministers in all other states and territories to follow WA's lead. And we call on the federal minister to cease the generous funding of already well-resourced non-government schools. This cannot continue at the present rate when there are students in both the non-government and government sectors who require additional resourcing to achieve educational and social outcomes that equip them for a future which is productive and happy. With the very large majority of students in need enrolled in government schools, a high priority of government must be on properly funding the public education system.

It is of concern to us that it is the federal Minister, alone of all the education Ministers, who has not signed up to the five equity principles of the MCEETYA Schools Resourcing Taskforce. These principles provide an equitable framework for funding schools in order to achieve the national goals of schooling.

Governments have a primary responsibility to address educational disadvantage - not ideological preoccupations. What we urgently need is a coordinated approach by all Ministers to put in place funding policies that close the resource gap between the educationally rich and poor. When total funding for non-government schools is greater than that provided to our universities then it really is time to take a very hard look at the way governments distribute their educational dollars and the accountability required by taxpayers from those receiving that government funding.

Judith continued "Australia's public school parents want all parents, now and in the future, to be able to choose a quality school which meets their child's educational and social needs, within their local community. All we are asking for is a fair system. Australians want to know that their taxes are being spent where they are most needed."

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For further information and comment:

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