

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF STATE SCHOOL ORGANISATIONS (ACSSO)

The national voice of parents of children in Australia's public schools and their school communities

Australia's public school parents applaud Prime Minister's extension of education tax break for families doing it tough

ACSSO National President Peter Garrigan confirmed today that the parents of the some 2.4 million young people attending Australia's public primary and secondary schools have put their full support behind Prime Minister Julia Gillard's pledge to extend the education tax break in ways that will provide significant and much-needed assistance to those families doing it tough, in their efforts to provide their children with the best possible educational opportunities.

"We see this as a further practical step in Julia Gillard and the government achieving the pledge she made to Australia's families – 'to make sure that every student – in every community – can achieve their potential'"

"All parents want the best for their children, have strong aspirations for their children's progress, are committed to supporting their development and take joint pride with the school in their achievements. But there are very many parents who, through no fault of their own, find the financial pressures that go with this commitment are hard to manage. They need and deserve a helping hand, a fair go, in carrying out their vitally important role as the first and continuing educators of their children," Mr Garrigan said.

"This government has a driving commitment to nation building. And this Prime Minister understands that the starting point for real nation building is in the learning skills and positive personal qualities, attitudes, values and aspirations of all our young people – who are our future."

"We know that every child's personal development and learning readiness is enhanced when parents, families and schools work together in partnership. And if you are shaping an education revolution, then you not only have to resource the schools to provide the high quality learning opportunities – but also to recognise the need to resource some families to be able to seize those opportunities."

"When this government was elected, they recognised the need to make it easier for those families finding it hard, with the tax break on some of the key tools of learning that every learner must have – books, stationery and computer items. That was a first big step forward in levelling the playing field for families in need of a helping hand."

"Today's announcement sets in place a no less significant and resonant means of support and encouragement for those families and students. One that provides not just as a very important direct financial support - but also as a great deal more"

"When schools set dress codes for their students, that certainly takes some pressure off parents in relation to unhealthy and divisive 'have and have not' fashion competitions among the students, and that is a positive for the families and the student community."

"Then we note all the research which shows that when young people have a positive self image, sense of belonging, feel good about themselves and their appearance, then they are in a better position for effective learning and social interaction. This helps those families to ensure that their children look smart – and feel smart."

"This also promotes community cohesion and social inclusion."

"So, we think it's a great initiative!" he noted in conclusion.

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