



MEDIA RELEASE

Australian Council of State School Organisations Limited

BUDGET STATEMENT

Disappointing budget for Australian government school families

Last week's budget tackled some short-term funding measures to reset the economy following the previous two years experiences with lockdowns, bushfires and floods.

The elephant in the room was the failure to address the widening inequity in our nation's education system and the ever-increasing gap of access and opportunity for millions of young Australians.

This was the response by Sharron Healy, President of the Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO).

"In short, while education funding appears on the rise, the real decline in funding is realised by our government schools – we see no real response to the inequity failing our young people," she said.

"And it comes at a time when the world has struggled through a global pandemic locally we have as a nation experienced bushfires and endless flooding – leaving our young people with interrupted, inconsistent and fragmented access to education and no real long term plan or resourcing to assist them re-engage and reconnect.

"ACSSO's surveys were very clear over the past two years and correlated with those surveys conducted by other organisations in a number of responses that include:

- Huge concern for student mental health and well-being
- Limited support for families to assist with engagement
- Student disengagement from school learning
- Student disconnection from friends and family
- Extensive variation with IT access both of hardware and connection
- Increase of responsibility to family over school education

"While the budget did offer some additional funding to support a number of priority measures we cannot be confident it will reach our young people in a fair and equitable manner, that is, based on need.

"We welcome the \$7.2 million that will be invested in measures that support inclusive classroom environments to assist teachers improve student engagement.

"Our concern is that it is over four years, which makes it less than \$2 million per year – can it be effective? Can it become sustainable?

Will it reach the staff that need the most support?

"Having been active in the work of respectful relationships, we are somewhat delighted that an additional \$6 million dollars has been to support the continued delivery of evidence-based and age-appropriate respectful relationship education materials for primary and secondary school students that align with the Australian Curriculum.

"However, this budget fell short for education, and in particular government education - disappointing."

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One voice for every child in government education