



Thursday 8 February 2024

Dear Prime Minister,

Giving every child every opportunity to succeed requires fully funded public schools in every community.

But only 1.3% of public schools are currently funded at 100% of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS).

As representatives of public school principals, parents, teachers and education support staff across Australia, we acknowledge and welcome your election promise to end this underfunding through new agreements with State and Territory governments. We are united in our resolve to secure full funding for public schools across the nation.

This is an opportunity for an historic, nation-building investment from all governments that will help achieve the national goals of excellence and equity in our school system.

The biggest beneficiaries will be the children who face the greatest barriers to their participation and success in education: children who live in rural and remote areas, First Nations students, children with disability, children from language backgrounds other than English and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

It will also help address the worrying decline in student wellbeing and mental health and the teacher shortage crisis which is affecting schools and student learning in every corner of the nation.

We urge you to reach agreements this year that deliver 100% of the SRS for public schools by 2028 at the latest, with a minimum Commonwealth contribution of 25% of the SRS.

As the Expert Panel, convened by education ministers, reported in December, full funding of public schools is “*urgent and critical*” and a prerequisite for learning and wellbeing improvement across the nation.

We agree with the Expert Panel that all jurisdictions should fully fund public schools “*within a comparable timeframe*” to ensure that there is a level playing field for students, wherever they live and whatever their needs.

To achieve full funding, it is essential that your government does not include in new bilateral agreements the same unacceptable loopholes inserted by the Morrison Government into the current agreements.

These loopholes allow states and the NT to count, for public schools only, additional expenditure items within their recurrent SRS funding share that are not directly related to costs of educating students in schools.

This runs counter to the design and legislated intent of the SRS and artificially inflates the state and territory SRS shares by 4%, or more than \$2 billion every year.

The challenges we face right now in education are too great to deny public schools this \$2 billion investment.

It is also critically important that every student learns in inclusive, modern and safe school classrooms and facilities.

To this end we would urge you to make a national investment in school infrastructure as part of the new bilateral agreements.

Your government's \$216 million one-off allocation for public schools in 2023/24 will make a real difference.

But the demand for new and upgraded schools requires a significant, ongoing national investment.

As Prime Minister for our nation, you have a unique opportunity to ensure that every child in every school across Australia has access to a fully funded high quality public education.

We, the undersigned, urge you to be the Prime Minister that our children need right now.

Correna Haythorpe  
AEU Federal President



Pat Murphy  
President, AGPPA



Andy Mison  
President, ASPA



Dianne Giblin AM MICDA  
CEO, ACSO



Matthew Johnson  
President, ASEPA



Angela Falkenberg  
President, APPA



Dyonne Anderson  
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