MEDIA RELEASE

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STATE GOVERNMENT MUST NOT CUT EDUCATION BUDGET FURTHER TO MAKE UP KINDY FUNDING SHORTFALL

Principals, teachers and parents have called for the State Government to commit to not ripping more money out of the education budget if it has to make up a funding shortfall for kindergarten students.

The State Government has committed to making up the $48 million dollar shortfall if the Commonwealth abandons a national partnership agreement on early education.

The Federal Government currently funds 4 hours of kindergarten per week, while the State Government funds 11 hours.

However, the Commonwealth has refused to commit to its part of the funding, meaning from next year the State Government may have to fund the full 15 hours.

The State School Teachers’ Union, the WA Council of State School Organisations Inc. and the WA Primary Principals’ Association said it was imperative the State Government committed to sourcing the funding from somewhere other than the education budget.

SSTUWA President Pat Byrne said most schools could not afford to fund the extra 4 hours themselves, given they had already suffered almost $200 million in budget cuts over the last year.

“The Premier has said if the State Government has to fund this extra 4 hours, then it will have to make cuts from somewhere else,” she said.

“It would be absolutely unacceptable to take another $48 million out of the education budget.

“Schools are already struggling because of the last round of funding cuts, they cannot absorb any more.

“We need the State Government to be up front about where it would take this money from, and so far they are refusing to do this.”
WACSSO President Kylie Catto said there would be about 30,000 kindergarten students in WA in 2015.

“We are very pleased the State Government has recognised the importance of funding a full 15 hours of kindergarten,” she said.

“However, parents have been telling us all year how much financial strain their schools are already under, with many P&Cs being asked to provide an increasing amount of funding for basic school resources.

“Schools cannot afford to lose another dollar, let alone over $48 million.”

WAPPA President Stephen Breen agreed many schools were already under financial pressure.

“School budgets can simply not afford to absorb these cuts in any way,” he said.

The SSTUWA, WACSSO and WAPPA have called on the State Government to be transparent about where the money to fund the extra kindergarten hours would come from.

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