



ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations  
*The parent voice on public education*



15 February 2024

The Hon. Jason Clare MP  
Minister for Education  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister Clare,

We the undersigned represent the parents and carers of over 2.4 million government school students in 7 States and Territories, and the Parents Associations through which these parents and carers contribute time, energy and funding to Australian government schools. On behalf of government school parents and carers, we write to urge your government to fully fund our government schools now. We also request a meeting of our representatives with your office to discuss the urgent need for government schools to be 100% funded.

We commend this Government for its commitment to ensure all government schools receive full and fair funding, finishing the work that David Gonski started. Bringing our government schools up to the minimum level of needs-based funding is vital for our children, particularly those affected by disadvantage. We acknowledge that for these children in particular, access to high-quality, well-resourced education is life changing.

The Australian Education Act 2013 obligates the Australian government to provide needs-based funding to schools that is fair. As you have acknowledged, Australian government schools have been underfunded for decades. We assert that it is time to correct this deficiency, and we believe that the Commonwealth government is in the best position to drive this result.

We urge the Australian government to commit to three core principles in your funding negotiations with our respective States and Territories:

1. Bring the Commonwealth share of funding for government schools up to not less than 25% of the School Resource Standard (the "SRS") and guarantee that all agreements get government schools to 100% of the SRS expeditiously;
2. Omit accounting concessions like the 4% charge against State and Territory contributions (to cover things like capital depreciation, State and Territory standards authorities, transportation and other charges) that are not applied equally to non-government schools; and
3. Create an Australian government school infrastructure fund outside of the SRS to address the historic under-investment in government school facilities.

These commitments will allow the Government to address the findings of its own Expert Panel's *Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System* that the current under-funding of government schools is "critical" and requires "urgent action." We believe these core principles should drive the funding negotiations for the next National School Reform Agreement.

In the more than a decade since Gonski, our member organisations have worked to fill the gap in government school funding with volunteer efforts that raise money for schools. We hold sausage sizzles, school fetes, cake stalls, and colour runs, all to raise funds to support government schools. Our donations help our schools to purchase books, computers, play equipment, library renovations, air conditioning, more modern and hygienic toilets, and even capital construction projects. The average parent expects that these things would be paid for as a part of basic school funding, but often they are not because our schools are working with only a fraction of the funding that the Gonski reforms were designed to deliver.

For too long parents and carers, principals, and teachers have made heroic efforts to ensure that these funding gaps do not deprive children of a high-quality education. It is time for the Federal and State and Territory Governments to work together and honour the efforts of parents, carers and school staff by finally delivering 100% of SRS funding.

Australian government schools are proud to educate the majority of our nation's children. Government schools also serve the majority of students with more complex educational needs. They educate more than 80% of children from families considered of low socio-economic advantage, more than 80% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and more than 60% of children with a disability and children who come from a language background other than English. The government school system serves these families to the best of its ability while operating under the burden of under-funding. This situation is unsustainable and leads to unfair outcomes for our children.

Full SRS funding for government schools is achievable. Governments have, for years, managed to fund non-government schools at levels well above their calculated need. We are confident your government can achieve full funding for their government school counterparts. We simply call for a fair go for Australian government schools. As the representative bodies for the millions of parents and carers of Australian children in government schools, we urge swift, effective, collaborative action that enables schools to deliver the outcomes proposed as possible by Gonski more than a decade ago. Through proper investment and funding, we can collectively improve outcomes for Australian children and their families.

Thank you.

X 

Yvonne Hilsz  
President P&C Federation NSW

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Krissy McCance  
TASSO President

X 

Pania Turner  
President WACSSO

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Dianne Giblin AM MICDA  
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