



The IEUA  
speaks on...

Authorised by Lynne Rolley, Federal Secretary Independent Education Union of Australia

## SCHOOL FUNDING

The Independent Education Union of Australia has long argued for a federal funding regime for schooling that is transparent and accountable.

The IEUA believes that not only are there genuine concerns and indeed demonstrable problems with the current federal funding arrangements but there is a need for a transparent and open review of the policy.

The IEUA believes that since 1996 the Howard Government's education funding policies have exacerbated divisions in the Australian community.

In particular, the IEUA notes:

- The current model of funding non-government schools is flawed. It ignores the actual capacity of individual schools to generate resources and provides substantial additional funds to the most highly-resourced schools in the country. These schools operate well above the general resource levels of most government, Catholic and other community schools.
- There is no principled basis in the current funding scheme for Catholic systemic schools which make up about 65% of all non-government schools.
- There is an absence of policy cohesion between federal and state/territory governments in relation to the principles governing the funding of schools.
- The federal government is using the threat of withdrawing funding around a number of education agendas including the requirement to report in 'league tables' format, despite clear evidence overseas of the inappropriateness of this approach.

The IEUA believes that a more coherent public policy on education funding is essential. It must acknowledge the realities of Australian schools and provide the way forward for a more equitable and less divisive framework of schooling.

The IEUA believes the following principles should underpin a fair and transparent funding policy for schools:

- A national resources standard for schools in order to provide for the educational needs of every Australian student.
- Public resourcing of government schools to the actual benchmark needed to provide quality education for every student.
- Non-government schools to be publicly accountable on the same basis as government schools and to be funded by government on the basis of genuine need, with reference to the national resources standard.
- Modification of the current SES funding model to include a proper measure of the actual resources of all non-government schools and funding to be directed accordingly.
- Development of clear principles to bring the differential funding from state and federal sources into a consistent framework. This would enable public discussion of funding realities to take account of all sources of funding for government and non-government schools.
- The requirement that equity measures target extra funding across all schools where relevant student and/or school needs are identified.