

Committee Secretary  
Senate Select Committee on School Funding  
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## Submission to the Senate Select Committee on School Funding

I am a state primary school teacher with 30 years experience. I am currently teaching at Geographe Primary in Busselton, a country region in the south west of Western Australia. Our school currently has 670 students from K- Y7. During my 30 years teaching (24 in Western Australia) I have seen a decline in the skills that children enter school with and it is my concern that these entry skills will continue to decline.

Six years of Gonski funding would mean \$2,389,000 to Geographe Primary.

I feel schools are the best place for children to receive the skills and knowledge that they are no longer getting from the home environment. I am proud of the job state school teachers do preparing students for life and I feel Australia until now, has done a great service to its people by supplying a high standard of free education to all children.

Unfortunately, however, Australia is falling behind other developed countries in its educational standards. We need this Gonski funding to address this failing. We need this Gonski funding to ensure that education in Australia does not become only available to the wealthy! Every Australian child should enjoy the opportunity to meet their full potential.

The ACARA curriculum to ensure consistency of national standards currently being adopted asks teachers, particularly in Western Australia to raise their expectations of students. Our students have not been performing as well as those in other states. The Gonski funding would allow us to continue to access professional development

and networking to enhance our teaching skills and adapt to the new national curriculum. Lack of funding will be detrimental to students and may even lead to further reduce standards.

The Gonski reforms will provide faire funding across the board. We do not want more and more middle income families to chose private education for their children because they judge the state schools to be inferior and not able to deliver a decent standard of education. We want all Australian children, regardless on their families income, to be able to benefit from a decent education. Families without employment and limited income have no choice of private versus state education. Often these are the children who enter early childhood ill prepared for learning. Our Early Childhood centres need continual funding to address the needs of these impoverished students. Unfortunately, it is also the case that these students have limited attention and difficulty controlling their frustration which leads to behavioural problems in the classroom. State schools need the Gonski funding to address the imbalances that exist between the state versus privat school cliental.

With the recent state cuts to funding that Western Australian schools have suffered Geographe Primary has had to discontinue several effective programs. One of these being the incentive scheme to improve our student attendance. During 2013 we had a very successful attendance reward scheme operating for targeted students which resulted in lifting the overall school attendance from 92% to 95%. Funding cuts have led to our school not being able to contine this scheme. Gonski funding could allow us to reinstate this successful program, which in turn delivers education to students who most need it.

Geographe Primary is a very proactive school and prides itself on its educational initiative. During 2012 and 2013 we operated 'Reflective Practice'. This was an opportunity for colleagues of the same year level to meet frequently to reflect on their teaching practice. This collaborative planning and reflection time often included upskilling and coaching. Teachers improved their knowledge base and teaching skill through being given the time to reflect. Due to state funding cuts we have been unable to continue this practice. Gonski funding would invest in iour teachers. The

funding would support ongoing coaching and mentoring, planning and professional development, in turn delivering better quality education to our students.

Excellence in education is essential to elevating educational, social and economic outcomes for all Australians. If we only offer sub standard education, due to lack to funding, we are denying our children the opportunity to reach their potential. If our resources, on going professional knowledge and the opportunities we can offer are limited then our children are going to leave educational facilities ill prepared for life. We will not have a pool of motivated, capable, resilient and confident individuals from which to select our future leaders. In future years Australia's government will be staffed only by the products of private schools. These adults will have a skewed, one sided view of life and its opportunities and difficulties. Protect our state schools by ensuring we get the Gonski funding and recommendations.

Submitted by Carol Merrifield, Teacher regarding Geographe Primary School  
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