



SELF-CARE FOR TEACHERS

South Toowoomba, QLD, 4350
www.selfcareforteachers.com.au

hello@selfcareforteachers.com.au

October 18, 2024

Committee Secretary
Senate Education and Employment Committees
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary,

I write to you today regarding the Better and Fairer Schools (Funding and Reform) Bill 2024.

I'm a former Queensland state school teacher and the founder of Self-Care for Teachers, a wellbeing & career support hub for Australian teachers.

I'm also a former public school student myself, and a parent of 2 small children who will enter our public school system in just a few short years.

This bill matters to me personally, as a future public school parent. I want my own children to have great educational outcomes and I want them to have great educational experiences at our local public schools, as I did growing up.

Even more than that, it matters to me as an Australian citizen, because I know the indirect benefits to all of us of strong public education, and because I deeply want other people's children to have excellent education options too.

Locally, I want my next door neighbour's kids, who go to our nearest state school, to have the educational support they need as refugees and CALD students.

Nationally, I want everybody's kids to have excellent education, because research shows us that strong public education systems that are funded based on need have the best impact on our whole society long term, allowing pathways out of poverty and breaking cycles of disadvantage that would otherwise not be available to many children.

As Nelson Mandela wrote, 'education is the most powerful tool that you can use to change the world.'



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It also matters deeply to me professionally, as a former teacher and a teacher advocate. I have worked in disadvantaged public schools in my years as a teacher and I know the extra challenges that poses on the day-to-day work, compared with teaching in better resourced schools or with more advantaged student populations.

For the last 10 years I have been working with teachers all over Australia, many of whom work in public schools, in my role at Self-Care for Teachers.

For a decade I have been having conversations with Australian teachers about the increasing challenges they face professionally and personally as teachers.

Lack of adequate resourcing is not the only challenge of course, but it's a very big one. It's a contributing factor to negative wellbeing and career outcomes for many teachers, making the job harder than it has to be and adding to an already extensive workload.

This in turn has led many teachers to make the heart-breaking decision to leave a profession they once loved, as the job is demanding too much from them personally and they can no longer continue to watch students fall through the cracks.

The worsening workforce shortages the education sector is currently facing across Australia are compounded by lack of adequate needs-based public school funding.

The gap between the Albanese Government's offer to states of 22.5% of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) and the full 25% is worth an additional \$1000 per student.

While increasing the SRS share to 25% (an additional \$1000 per student) will not solve the teacher shortages that every state is facing, it will go some way to mitigating further negative impacts on teachers from underfunding, which in turn may have a preventative effect on the career choices of teachers who are considering leaving the profession.

The Albanese Government's legislation is proposing to lock in an SRS floor of only 20%, which any future government could revert to, resulting in funding cuts to schools.

The Commonwealth government should be setting a floor of at least 25% SRS share as opposed to 20%.

The benefits if full funding is delivered for public schools are far reaching, from cost of living benefits to parents and families, to workload benefits to already overworked teachers due to better resourcing, to the long-term benefits to society from better support and educational outcomes for disadvantaged students.



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Education is a nation building investment. Our education system is in dire need of extra investment right now, not less.

I call on the Albanese Government to lock in a Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) floor of 25% and invest in the students and teachers of Australia today, and in the years to come.

Best regards,

Ellen Ronalds Keene

Founder, Wellbeing & Career Coach

Self-Care for Teachers