

Better and Fairer Schools (Funding and Reform) Bill 2024,

As a teacher of 20 years, I am appalled at the lack of education funding as per the Gonski Review.

This lack of funding impacts teachers' workloads and students' outcomes.

The promised equitable distribution of resources, intended to ensure all students—regardless of background—receive the support they need to thrive, has not been realized. The shortfall has resulted in increasing class sizes, insufficient access to specialist staff, and limited resources for students with additional needs. This is particularly felt in lower socio-economic areas, where schools often lack the basic infrastructure to provide quality education.

The burden on teachers has become overwhelming. Many are stretched beyond their capacities, taking on additional roles such as counsellors, curriculum designers, and even administrative staff due to the reduction in support staff. The burnout rate for teachers is alarming, with many leaving the profession early, unable to cope with the strain.

For students, the consequences are severe. Limited funding means fewer opportunities for individualized learning and fewer classroom resources to support diverse learning needs. The gap between students in well-funded schools and those in underfunded schools continues to widen, undermining the principle of fairness that the Gonski Review championed.

In the long term, this chronic underfunding not only affects students' academic outcomes but also has significant implications for our society as a whole. The strength of our education system is directly tied to the future success of our workforce and our nation's global competitiveness. If we continue to underinvest in education, we risk perpetuating inequality and limiting opportunities for future generations.

I urge the government to fully implement the funding reforms as outlined in the Gonski Review. Doing so is not just an investment in our schools, but in the future of our country. Teachers should be empowered with the resources necessary to provide high-quality education to every child, regardless of their background or location.

It is time to prioritize education funding and lock in a higher 'floor' for public school funding of 25%, to make sure funding can never drop below that level and give our students the best possible chance to succeed.

To whom it may concern,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I work as a Teaching Aide on a fixed term contract at the \_\_\_\_\_ College in Melbourne's outer northern suburbs. The endemic, entrenched underfunding of public schools in our country impacts my daily work, student wellbeing, student outcomes, and the financial and emotional wellbeing of my family. At our school we have many students with high needs, however many of these students do not qualify for Student Support Funding to be supported by an aide in the classroom. This means there is not enough funding to employ aides on an ongoing basis, and therefore many aides are employed on insecure fixed term contracts from other parts of the school's budget. Aides are spread very thinly across the school in order to support not only funded students, but also high needs, high risk students without funding who would not be safe or able to learn without additional support. This places stress on school staff, students, and their families. In addition to this, the pay for teaching aides is widely inconsistent across state jurisdictions. It is very difficult to make a living wage and stay out of poverty as a teaching aid in many states while providing a vital service and supporting a small family. The above represents only a fraction of the impact of underfunding on our school from my perspective as an aide - the problems extend much deeper than this.

The Albanese Government has offered the states 22.5% of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS), yet their legislation is proposing to lock in a minimum of 20% that any government could revert to, resulting in effective funding cuts to our schools. This is without considering that even 22.5% is below the 25% required to adequately fund the sector. Indeed, the gap between 22.5% and 25% amounts to \$1000 per student. It is vital that the Commonwealth government provide a minimum of 25% of the SRS as backed by the Greens, Independents and Union groups. This would go some way to ameliorating the unjust underfunding of public education in this country, and the inequitable divide between public and private schools. On a personal level, I hope it would allow schools to more securely employ aides with a living wage, so that at risk students don't miss out on the vital support that they need.

Underfunding of public education harms students and staff. On a personal level, it makes the job I do unsustainable while trying to provide for a family. If my role is vital to education systems - as the icing on the cupcakes on ES Appreciation Day suggest - then I should be paid in such a way that allows me and my family to live with dignity. Essential workers should not live in poverty while the government intentionally and consistently underfunds the public education system.

Thank you for your time in reading this submission.

Dear government in power.

"Knowledge is power" so why not always make access to knowledge accessible to all.  
Please do everything in your power to allow all public schools in Australia FULL funding for education.

## Submission addressing the Better and Fairer Schools (Funding and Reform) Bill 2024

I am a Victorian casual relief teacher teaching in Melbourne.

I believe the Better and Fairer Schools (Funding and Reform) Bill falls short in providing every child a properly funded education. This bill is proposing only a 20% floor which is concerning. This means any future government could fund at this level resulting in public school funding cuts.

My experience of underfunding in schools include:

- Students not learning the skills and knowledge to get a job.
- Constantly working in an unsafe workplace.
- Covering in classes I'm not qualified to teach - As staff have left or cannot be employed.
- Lack of staff to support struggling and unsafe students.
- Lack of classrooms.
- Lack of tech devices, no laptops or tablets.
- An unengaged workforce

I urge the federal government commits to permanently setting a floor at 25% SRS not 20% SRS in this legislation. This will provide students with the public education they deserve.

To whom it may concern,

I hope this message finds you well. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am a Grade 5 teacher. I am writing to highlight the urgent funding needs of our school and the impact that current underfunding has on our students, particularly those from diverse backgrounds and equity cohorts.

At our school, we have students from a variety of backgrounds. Many of these students face unique learning challenges, and while we strive to meet their needs, we often lack the necessary resources. For instance, our support staff is limited, making it difficult to provide the individualised attention these students require.

Moreover, our school is experiencing workforce shortages, This shortage has negatively impacted our ability to offer a well-rounded education, leaving teachers stretched thin and students missing out on essential learning experiences.

The gap between the Albanese government's offer of 22.5% of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) and the full 25% they should contribute translates to an additional \$1,000 per student. Unfortunately, the proposed legislation sets a floor of only 20%, which poses a risk of future funding cuts. It is crucial that the Commonwealth government commits to a 25% SRS share to ensure that schools like ours can meet the unmet needs of our students and staff.

In summary, the challenges we face are significant, but they are not insurmountable. With full funding of public schools, we can provide the quality education our students deserve and help them reach their full potential. I urge you to advocate for the necessary resources to support our students and educators.

Thank you for your attention to this vital matter.

Good morning,

As a teacher and learning community leader of a public secondary school, I am writing to seek more public funding for public schools across Australia. The lack of funding compared to private schools severely impacts public perception of public education and encourages parents and community members to look down at public education as being lesser, which is 100% untrue and insulting to staff members, parents and students.

The additional funding that goes to private schools not only is an oxymoron (*public* funding for *private* schooling!), it also means those without the means to spend thousands of dollars per year on education are being viewed as second class citizens. With recent changes to school payments, public schools can not require payments for extra curricula activities and reduces the schools ability to run certain expensive programs, such as outdoor education. Full funding for government schools would allow all students the opportunity to receive the education they deserve and are entitled to. It would also allow public schools to provide additional classroom support for our most vulnerable students and improve their ability to develop skills vital for their adult lives.

The government should realistically be providing no funding for private schools and 100% funding for public/government schools. The bare minimum that must be done is to provide the 25% minimum funding for public schools proposed by the Greens and Independents.

Dear Committee

I am a father of 2 kids who have been/are being schooled in the public school system here in . I have been on the t High School ( HS) School Council for 4 years. Our school is in desperate need of a major upgrade. It has demountables school rooms that have been used for years, leaking rooves and buildings falling apart. HS is also struggling to find suitable teachers and the changes to rules (via the Victorian Department of Education) mean any extracurricular activities attended by teachers need to be fully compensated, which impacts heavily on operating budgets.

At the same time , we are surrounded by very rich schools who receive massive yearly payments from both levels of government, but particularly federally. They want for nothing and are a much more attractive option for teachers, noting the wages and conditions they can offer. Nevertheless, our teachers are highly dedicated and we achieve excellent results from our students, despite the difficulties. Better resourcing of HS would lead to Increased resourcing of HS would facilitate all students receiving the support that they need at school and all teachers and staff enabled to do their jobs well. It would also result in enhanced student pathways beyond school and better outcomes for our community.

While the bill is a good start, I am concerned that the gap between the Albanese Government's offer of 22.5% of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) and the full 25% is worth an additional \$1000 per student for our long-suffering public school students. Yet, this bill is proposing to lock in a floor of only 20% which any future government could revert to, resulting in actual funding cuts to public schools. Please ensure the bill mandates at least a minimum federal funding for public schools of 25% (or preferably 30-40%) SRS, not 20%.

Regards and best of luck with your review.