

Submission

to

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education
References Committee

Inquiry into Commonwealth Funding for Schools

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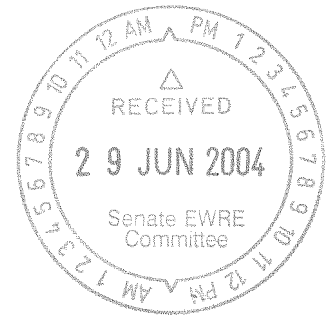
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Australian Government

Department of Education, Science and Training



**Submission to the Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and
Education Committee**

Inquiry into Commonwealth Funding for Schools

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Introduction

The purpose of this submission is to provide information addressing the principles of the Australian Government's Schools and Indigenous Education funding and conditions packages for 2005-2008 and the individual terms of reference for the Inquiry into Commonwealth funding for schools

Principles of the Government's Schools and Indigenous Education Funding Packages

Quality schooling is one of the Australian Government's highest policy priorities. The Australian Government is committed to progressively raising national standards in education, with the aim of ensuring that schools prepare all young people to live, work and thrive in the global environment of the 21st century. The aim is to enhance the educational outcomes of all school students by working cooperatively with States and Territories and contributing support for education systems and schools through general recurrent, capital and targeted programmes and through policy development, research and analysis of nationally significant educational issues.

Every child in this country, whether they are in a government or non-government school, should be able to achieve their own potential, whatever that is, wherever they live, through choice, opportunity and the relentless pursuit of excellence. The Government is committed to ensuring that there are national consistency in standards, that education is founded in strong community.

The Australian Government acknowledges the right of Australian parents to choose the most appropriate schooling for their children. This Government is not only supporting government schools throughout this country, but importantly if parents choose to send their children to non-government schools they will be supported in making the choices that they believe are best for their children. It supports the devolution of decision-making about education to where it belongs, to parents and communities. It will ensure that we have an education system that is responsive to student needs.

The Australian Government's funding proposal for 2005-2008 represents a major investment in the future of our society. The proposed funding packages for schools and for Indigenous education, a record \$33.4 billion over four years, is the largest ever funding commitment to Australian schools and Indigenous students. Through increased financial assistance to schools, particularly schools serving the neediest communities, the Government seeks improved outcomes from schools and a brighter future for Australian students. The Government seeks to ensure Australia will be in a better position to make major contributions to our global future and to continue our tradition of innovation and technical skill.

The Australian Schools Agenda announced by the Prime Minister and Dr Nelson on 22 June 2004, provides a vision for all schools, government and non-government, for the next four years. States, Territories and non-government education authorities will be required to implement the main elements of the Australian Schools Agenda in order to receive funding.

Common school starting age

About 80,000 school age children move across state borders each year and depending on the direction of the move they may be required to either skip or repeat a year. This can significantly impact on their schooling. All Australian children should start school at the same age and there is a condition of funding that states and territories to commit to achieve this by 2010.

Consistent curriculum with common testing standards in English, mathematics, science and civics

Children should be able to acquire similar levels of knowledge and skill regardless of location. This does not mean a national curriculum imposed on all. Rather, school authorities need to provide greater national consistency and testing standards in the key subjects of English, mathematics, science and civics.

Common commitment to physical activity

Obesity and lack of physical activity are major causes of preventable health problems. Schools play an important role in promoting physical activity and a healthy lifestyle. The Government is asking school authorities to provide at least two hours a week of physical activity at school for primary and junior secondary students.

Better reporting to parents

Parents need to receive meaningful information about their children's learning. All parents should receive plain-English reports of their child's progress and be told whether their child has reached national standards in literacy and numeracy. Schools will be required to report to parents from 2005 on their children's progress against Year 3, 5 and 7 national literacy and numeracy benchmarks. Schools will also be required to publish information about key quality indicators, including teacher qualifications and student outcomes, to inform parent choice and to enable funds to be targeted to areas of greatest needs.

Developing the teaching workforce

The quality of teachers is the single most important ingredient of a good education. All young Australians deserve to be taught by highly skilled and dedicated teachers. The Australian Government has invested more than \$121 million in teacher professional learning from the \$159 million Australian Government Quality Teacher Programme over 2000-2005. The National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership has recently been established to provide advice and leadership for the profession.

Commitment to the national safe schools framework

One in six children experiences bullying at school. Australian schools should be safe and happy places, free from abuse. The Australian Government has led the development of a national safe schools framework which must be adopted by all schools as a condition of funding.

National framework for values education

While parents value academic progress and achievement, they also want schools to give their children essential social and life skills. All Australian schools should be teaching values and civics. The Australian Government is providing almost \$30 million for values education, including values forums in every school. State and Territory Education Ministers will be asked to adopt the *National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools*. It will also be a condition of funding for every school to have a functioning flag-pole and fly the Australian flag.

Accelerating Indigenous education outcomes

Although educational outcomes for Indigenous students are better than ever, they still lag behind those of non-Indigenous students. The educational standards of Indigenous Australians should match those of the rest of the community – the divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians must be closed. Over the next four years the Australian Government will invest \$2.1 billion in those Indigenous educational programmes that have proved most effective, especially those delivered in remote areas. Education providers will be required to provide more detailed reporting on outcomes for indigenous students.

Helping families with post school choices

The transition from school to career is a significant milestone. It is important that all young people have a clear understanding of their career options once they leave school. Young people should have opportunities to explore different vocational paths and to be able to access

sound advice about career choices. The Australian Government will spend more than \$214 million on career, transition and partnership programmes over the next four years.

Greater autonomy to school principals

The shift towards giving school principals greater power over the running of their schools has been occurring in Victoria and South Australia. It needs to be accelerated nation wide. Research shows that school autonomy is one of the key factors in success. Of particular importance is the power over staffing decisions. Few boards or heads of any organisation – be in business, non-profit or government enterprise – could guarantee quality of service without some control over who they employed. Schools are no different, and the Australian Government will be requiring state governments and school authorities to commit to providing principals strengthened autonomy over, and responsibility for, education programs, staffing, budget and other aspects of the school's operations.

Better approaches to boys' education

There is a high level of public concern about the disengagement of boys from education and their lower levels of achievement. The Australian Government has already invested \$8 million to help schools address the educational needs of boys, and recently announced that a further \$19.4 million will be made available over four years to the very successful Boys Education Lighthouse Schools initiative. Since this initiative began in 2003, more than 500 schools have been identifying and developing strategies that have a positive impact on the learning outcomes of boys. Some successful programmes have involved positive male role models from within and beyond the school. Others have focused on literacy, or the use of information and communication technologies as a way of engaging boys in classroom activities.

The additional funding of \$19.4 million will enable as many as 1600 schools to participate in the programme, developing a critical mass of activity that will improve educational outcomes for boys across the country.

The *Schools Assistance (Learning Together – Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Bill 2004* contains the following funding:

- \$27.4 billion in general recurrent grant assistance to government and non-government schools;
 - including an additional \$362 million for 1,610 Catholic systemic schools to join the socio-economic status (SES) funding model for non-government schools from January 2005;
- \$1.5 billion in capital grants to assist with the provision of school facilities;
 - including an additional \$17 million for non-government schools in the Northern Territory;
- \$2 billion for an overarching Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs Programme for the most disadvantaged students including students with disabilities;
 - this includes additional funding of \$25.6 million;
- \$113 million for the Country Areas Programme;
- \$231 million for English as a Second Language – New Arrivals Programme; and
- \$110 million for the Languages Programme.

This funding provides security for the schools sector to plan and deliver school education over the next four years. The Bill seeks to enhance the educational outcomes of all school students by providing support for education systems through its general recurrent, capital and targeted programmes for schools.

Other key features of the Bill are:

- the continuation of the generous annual supplementation arrangements for Australian Government funding for schools using the Average Government School Recurrent Cost

index as the basis of the indexation of recurrent funding over the next four years. This decision provides an estimated \$2.8 billion above what would have been provided if indexation was based on the Wage Cost Index over the quadrennium;

- continuation of the Australian Government's commitment that no school will be financially disadvantaged by the introduction of the SES funding arrangements by extending the 2001-2004 funding maintenance arrangements for a further four years as well as introducing a funding guarantee to keep funding at 2004 levels, ensuring that schools currently funded on the SES model whose SES scores have gone up since the last quadrennium will not experience a drop in funding; and
- strengthened performance framework to ensure the provision of meaningful information to parents, support for the professional standing of teachers, greater national consistency in schooling and encouraging safer schools. It will enable parents to make informed decisions and critical choices about their children's schooling. It will promote greater transparency and accountability for school performance. While education authorities have primary responsibility for managing school performance, improved and up-to-date information is vital for ensuring schools are accountable for their performance.

Closing the education divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians remains one of the Australian Government's highest education priorities. The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (AEP), endorsed by all Australian governments and reflected in the objects of the *Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Act 2000*, guides programme initiatives across Australia in continuing efforts to achieve equity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

The Australian Government's approach is to:

- redirect resources to programmes that have demonstrably improved outcomes;
- provide greater weighting of resources towards Indigenous students of greatest disadvantage – those in remote areas; and
- improve mainstream service provision for Indigenous students, particularly those in metropolitan areas.

This approach will be implemented through:

- renewed emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and teacher practice;
- strengthening the application of 'what works' approaches, particularly around:
 - preparing young Indigenous children for formal schooling;
 - improving attendance, and literacy and numeracy achievement, particularly in primary schools;
 - lifting the effectiveness of teachers and their support staff; and
 - helping to re-engage and retain more indigenous students to year 12, or its vocational education equivalent; and
- strengthened monitoring and reporting of educational outcomes, particularly at regional levels.

Some \$2.1 billion is being provided for Indigenous-specific supplementary assistance to preschools, schools and tertiary providers and Indigenous students over 2005-2008. The elements contained in this funding package include:

- Indigenous Education Direct Assistance (IEDA) – \$280.9 million consisting of:
 - \$179 million for the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS) for students in schools, VET and higher education comprising:
 - \$105.5m targeted at those students not meeting the Years 3, 5 and 7 minimum literacy and numeracy benchmarks;
 - \$41.9 million targeted at Years 10, 11 and 12 Indigenous students;
 - \$31.5 million targeted at tertiary students.
 - \$102 million for a Whole of School Intervention Strategy including:
 - \$62.5 million for projects to underpin parent and school partnerships;
 - \$37.8 million for homework centres.

- Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme (IESIP) – \$641.6 million
 - \$513.5 million for per capita, supplementary recurrent assistance
 - \$128.1 million for on-going and new strategic projects such as
 - the National Indigenous English Literacy and Numeracy Strategy; and
 - \$14 million to improve Indigenous student literacy outcomes using the Scaffolding Literacy approach.
- ABSTUDY – \$905.3 million for the study assistance scheme to help Indigenous people to stay at school and go on to further studies.
- Indigenous Support Funding – \$121.3 million to meet the special needs of Indigenous students in higher education.
- Away from Base assistance – \$110.1 million to enable students to attend block release studies.

Important features of the Indigenous education package for 2005-2008 include:

- the IEDA programme being brought under the Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) legislation;
- discontinuing the formula funding of Indigenous parent committees (known as Aboriginal Student Support and Parent Awareness (ASSPA) committees) and the Vocational Education Guidance for Aboriginals Scheme programme;
- using the 2001 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data to update the remoteness boundaries for funding purposes;
- strengthening the Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) legislation to include conditions of funding with respect to educational accountability;
- transparent reporting by providers of their expected and actual expenditure on Indigenous education from their own sources;
- strengthening the performance and reporting framework for IEDA and IESIP.

These measures represent a significant step to improve mainstream service provision and to better focus Indigenous-specific resources to the most disadvantaged Indigenous students, with the objective of closing the educational divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Terms of Reference

The principles of the Government's schools funding package and the effect of these principles on:

(a) The capacity of all schools to meet current and future school needs and to achieve the Adelaide Declaration (1999) on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century

School funding is a joint responsibility between the States and Territories and the Australian Government. All governments contribute funding to both government and non-government schools. The States and Territories have the major responsibility for State schools, which they own and manage, while the Australian Government is the primary source of public funds for non-government schools. Many parents also make considerable financial contributions to the cost of their children's education.

The Australian Government seeks to enhance the educational outcomes of all school students by providing support for education systems and schools through its general recurrent, capital and targeted programmes for schools and through policy development, and research and analysis of nationally significant educational issues.

The Australian Government also plays a strategic role in the reporting of nationally comparable data on student achievement and other outcomes of school education, and improved accountability by education providers for schooling outcomes to parents and the wider Australian community. It does this by working cooperatively with the States, Territories and non-government school authorities in pursuit of national goals for schooling.

The *National Goals for Schooling in the 21st Century* set out the aspirations for the Australian schooling system in recognising that improving skills and educational attainment is vital to Australia's long-term productivity levels and labour force participation.

Under the *States Grants (Primary and Secondary Education Assistance) Act 2000*, all education authorities were required as a condition of funding to make a commitment to the *National Goals for Schooling in the 21st Century* and to commit to achieve any performance measures, including targets, incorporated in the legislation. Under the new *Schools Assistance (Learning Together – Achievement Through Choice and Opportunity) Bill 2004* these commitments will continue and be supplemented by a range of additional commitments and requirements which are detailed later in this document. These commitments and requirements form part of the funding agreements between the Australian Government and each State, Territory and non-government education authority.

Amendments to the *Indigenous Education (Targeted Assistance) Act 2000* for the 2005-2008 quadrennium will strengthen the financial and educational accountability arrangements for Indigenous education. To be eligible to receive funding, parties to agreements must make a commitment to the objects of the Act which reflect the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Policy (AEP) and a commitment to achieve the performance targets specified in the agreements. Payments under this Act are to supplement, rather than substitute for, the other forms of funding available to advance the education of all Australian students, including Indigenous students. Consistent with this objective, the Australian Government is implementing measures to ensure that there is an appropriate level of funding and effort dedicated to Indigenous students by education providers from both own-source funds and from Australian Government mainstream funds.

(b) the role and responsibility of the Australian Government, in partnership with state and territory governments, for quality and equity in public funding for government and non-government schools across Australia and for promoting efficiency and effectiveness in the allocation of public funds for schooling, including effects on enrolment trends in the government and non-government sectors

The Australian Government's role in school funding commenced in 1964 with capital grants to State government and non-government school science laboratories. Since then, the Australian Government has progressively assumed the role of main provider of public funds to the non-government sector. Australian Government recurrent grants commenced to non-government schools in 1970 and to State government schools in 1974. Since 1985, the Australian Government has been the primary source of funds for non-government schools.

The Australian Government's funding of State government schools has always been supplementary to that provided by the States and Territories and other contributions, such as those from parents. In addition to direct Government funding, the Australian Government also provides large amounts of additional funding to the States and Territories through redistribution of the goods and services tax (GST). Over the next four years, States and Territories will receive \$3.6 billion more than the Guarantee Minimum Amount recommended by the Commonwealth Grants Commission. The Guarantee Minimum Amount for each State is the amount each would have had if the tax reform had not been implemented.

Australian Government contribution to State government school funding has been steady at 12% of total public funding to government schools since at least 1993. States contribute the other 88% of public funds for State government schools. Parents also make some contribution through fees and other financial support. The Australian Government contributes around 44% of funding from

all sources to non-government schools with States contributing 17% and parents contributing 39%. The main drivers of Australian Government funding to schools are currently enrolment growth and Average Government School Recurrent Costs.

The Australian Government and the States and Territories work together to develop agreements, strategies and policies for Australia's education systems through the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) which was formally established in 1994. It is supported by taskforces which convene as needed for particular tasks. National school reporting and performance benchmarking will continue to be a major vehicle for collaboration and innovation in the education sector between the Australian Government and the States and Territories.

While the Australian Government does not run schools it has a responsibility for national leadership in education in areas that transcend State boundaries. It also has a responsibility to taxpayers to assure them that the \$33.4 billion in Australian Government funding allocated to schools over the next four years will deliver real improvements in the quality of schooling. The accountability arrangements contained in the schools and Indigenous education funding packages for 2005-2008 are the most rigorous ever demanded by an Australian Government. They include requiring education authorities to commit to achievement by education authorities of the performance targets for years 3, 5 and 7 in reading, writing, spelling and numeracy.

The Australian Government aims to distribute funding in an equitable manner. Non-government schools are funded according to a formula which measures the socio-economic status of the communities they serve. Schools which draw students from the neediest communities receive from the Australian Government 70% of the cost of educating a student in a State government school. Schools educating the wealthiest communities receive about 13.7% of that cost. The socio-economic status (SES) approach provides an open and simple measure of need based on independent information which is consistent for all schools.

The Australian Government also provides funding for schools under the Capital Grants Programme and a number of targeted programmes such as the Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs Programme, the Country Areas Programme, the Languages Programme, and the English as a Second Language – New Arrivals Programme. Funding for these programmes are predominantly allocated according to need and educational disadvantage.

Another example is the provision of supplementary funding for Indigenous students. In 2005-2008 this supplementary funding will be further weighted towards Indigenous students of greatest disadvantage – those in remote areas. Effort will also be directed at improving mainstream service provision for Indigenous students and at programmes that have demonstrably improved outcomes.

As previously indicated, enrolment growth is a key driver in the allocation of Australian Government funding to schools. The Australian Government introduced the Enrolment Benchmark Adjustment (EBA) in 1996 as a means of addressing cost shifting between the States and Territories and the Australian Government as a consequence of the drift of students from government to non-government schools. The EBA represents a saving in general recurrent funding incurred when there is a shift in enrolments from government to non-government schools. From 2001, the EBA liability that would have otherwise been returned to the Australian Government is retained by States and Territories for the express purpose of building science and innovation capacity in schools.

Enrolments in non-government schools have increased in the order of 13% over the last six years compared with an increase in enrolments at government schools of approximately 2%. As a result of these enrolment patterns the level of funding being given to non-government schools, by the Australian Government, has increased.

The Australian Government believes that the community should have information about the levels of public funds received by individual schools. This is essential in order to consider equity, efficiency and effectiveness. The Australian Government publishes funding levels for all non-government schools in receipt of Australian Government funding. If States and Territories followed

the Australian Government's lead and were to make publicly available similar information on how much funding they allocate to their individual government schools the Australian community would have a complete picture of how public funding is allocated to government and non-government schools in Australia.

The Australian Government is committed to choice and is determined that all parents, having paid their taxes, will receive support in the choice of school they believe best suits the interests of their child – State, Catholic or independent.

(c) the effectiveness of accountability arrangements for state, territory and Federal governments' funding of government and non-government schools

The accountability arrangements put into place by the States and Territories in relation to how their funding contributions are allocated and spent are not the domain of the Australian Government. The Australian Government does, however, have both financial and educational accountability arrangements that apply to funding contributions it allocates to the States and Territories and to non-government schools.

Financial accountability

The Australian Government is accountable to the Parliament and the people of Australia for the expenditure of public funds it provides for school education and Indigenous education.

Financial accountability requirements have been, and will continue to be, a condition for funding that must be complied with by State and other educational authorities.

For mainstream schools funding, school authorities must provide financial accountability each year, in the form of a certificate, signed by an accountant, to the effect that funds have been spent, or committed, for the purposes for which they were provided. Non-government education authorities are also required to submit a Financial Questionnaire which specifies all gross income received by the authority in operating the school and in providing activities for the students enrolled at the school, as well as all gross expenditure (whether of a recurrent or capital nature).

The accountability provisions applicable to Australian Government funding for schools and Indigenous education are built on the premise that all schools are equally accountable for the public funds they receive for the education of the children in their care.

Non-government schools and systems are subject to a range of accountability requirements in order for them to receive Australian Government funding. Apart from Australian Government requirements (discussed under the sub-heading Educational Accountability), as legally incorporated entities, non-government school authorities are also subject to the accountability provisions of the Australian Securities and Investment Commission or their State or Territory registrar of associations. This entails the submission of audited financial statements which are available for public scrutiny.

Educational accountability

Australian Government accountability requirements

- Schools provide educational accountability for Australian Government funding, mainly through participation in the annual National Report on Schooling in Australia (the ANR).
- Under the *States Grants (Primary and Secondary Education Assistance) Act 2000*, all education authorities are required as a condition of funding to make a commitment to the National Goals for Schooling in the 21st Century and to commit to achieve any performance targets, and to report against any performance measures, incorporated in the legislation. These commitments will form part of the funding agreements between the Australian Government and each system/school. Performance targets and measures are incorporated in the legislation through regulations, though wherever possible national targets and measures are to be agreed first by MCEETYA.

- An important step in recent years has been the development by MCEETYA of an overarching measurement framework for national key performance measures, setting out the basis for reporting progress towards the achievement by Australian students of the national goals. A key feature is the regular assessment of student outcomes, with a proposed programme of assessments for the period 2002-2009. The framework sets out the broad nature of the performance measure in each domain, the year levels at which assessment takes place and the assessment cycle.
- Literacy and numeracy at Years 3, 5, and 7 is measured through annual, full-cohort skills testing undertaken by each State and Territory. In other domains, rolling triennial national sample assessments are being put in place. Reading numeracy and scientific literacy for 15 year olds are being assessed through the triennial OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) which is already in operation. Both government and non-government schools/systems are required to participate in these assessments as part of their educational accountability for Australian Government schools funding.

The schools funding package for 2005-2008 introduces an enhanced performance framework with strengthened accountability and reporting requirements that will reinforce the link between the funding provided under Australian Government programmes and improved outcomes for all Australian students.

In order to receive funding, education authorities will be required to commit to:

- the National Goals for Schooling prepared by MCEETYA
- achieve the performance targets and report against the performance measures specified in regulations
- publication of the national report on the outcomes of schooling within one year after the end of each programme year
- ensure that school performance information is made publicly available
- report on student attendance
- develop before 1 January 2006, Statements of Learning that describe the key knowledge, understandings, skills and capacities in English, mathematics, science and civics and citizenship education and to implement those Statements of Learning either as part of the next curriculum review or before 1 January 2008
- put in place common testing standards in English, mathematics, science and civics and citizenship education
- put into effect before 1 January 2006, the National Safe Schools Framework
- provide at least 2 hours of physical activity each school week for primary and junior secondary students
- give the principal and the governing body of the school strengthened autonomy over education programmes, staffing, budget and other aspects of the school's operations
- appointments of staff being made with the approval of the principal or the governing body of the school
- implement before 1 January 2006, a consistent national system for the timely transmission between schools of student information relating to students moving interstate
- ensure that parents and guardians are given a report on their child's achievement against the appropriate national literacy and numeracy benchmarks for years 3, 5 and 7
- achieve before 1 January 2010 national consistency in starting ages and common nomenclature
- give parents plain language student reports conforming to certain principles

Education authorities are also required to:

- participate in preparing a national report on the outcomes of schooling
- provide reports as required addressing the requirements for performance information and student attendance as specified in regulations
- provide reports in relation to financial assistance
- take part in evaluations of the outcomes of programmes funded by the Australian Government
- provide reports in relation to expenditure on professional learning of teachers

- to provide parents and guardians with reports on their child's achievement against the appropriate national literacy and numeracy benchmarks for years 3, 5 and 7
- make publicly available school performance information specified in regulations
- implement by 1 January 2008 common testing standards, including common national tests in English, mathematics, science and civics and citizenship education

The Indigenous Education funding package for 2005-2008 also introduces an enhanced performance framework. Specifically, the Australian Government will require of State and Territory Governments and educational authorities to meet the following conditions of funding:

- the introduction of school attendance benchmarks;
- to commit to performance measures and targets and to monitor results;
- to measure outcomes at the remote, rural/provincial and metropolitan level, rather than as just aggregate level state data which often masks regional variations;
- to provide an annual statement that details how the funding provided by the Australian Government to school systems is being spent on improving Indigenous educational outcomes; and
- to transparently report their "own-source" expenditure on Indigenous education.

The Australian Government is committed to accelerating progress in Indigenous education and training outcomes. These measures represent a significant step to better focus resources on the programmes that are achieving real results with the objective of closing the educational divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

(d) the application of the framework of principles for the funding of schools that has been endorsed by state and territory governments through the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs

The paper *Resourcing the National Goals for Schooling: An Agreed Framework of Principles for Funding Schools* although endorsed by the State and Territory governments through MCEETYA was not endorsed by the Australian Government. The Australian Government abstained from voting and had the following preferred position recorded in the MCEETYA minutes:

"That Council note the current draft of the Resourcing National Goals for Schooling: An Agreed Framework of Principles for Funding Schools paper and asks AESOC to engage in a process of broad consultation with the school community in each State and Territory in both government and non-government school sectors including the National Catholic Education Commission, the National Council of Independent Schools' Associations, the Australian Parents' Council, the Australian Council of State School Organisations, the National Anglican Schools Commission, Australian Association of Christian Schools, National Office of Lutheran Schools, Isolated Children's Parents' Association of Australia, Christian Parent Controlled Schools and the Australian Primary Principals Association and report out-of-session to MCEETYA following the consultations."

The funding framework principles endorsed by State and Territory governments through MCEETYA were developed without the full consultation of the education sector and were not endorsed by the Australian Government. Non-government schools were excluded from the process of developing these principles, despite the fact that non-government schools educate approximately 33% of Australian primary and secondary school students.

As the Australian Government is committed to collaboration with all stakeholders and to effective choice for parents in educating their children, it could not endorse these principles as an agreed framework to apply to education funding within Australia.

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