

WA Council of State School Organisations Inc.

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Monday 20 May 2024

**The Hon Anthony Albanese MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600**

Dear Prime Minister,

Giving every child every opportunity to succeed requires fully funded public schools in every community.

But only 1.3% of public schools are currently funded at 100% of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS).

At WACSSO, our vision is for Western Australian schools to provide world-leading education to every student. In line with this vision, we are deeply invested in the future wellbeing and life outcomes of Australian children and young people. We acknowledge and welcome your election promise to end this underfunding through new agreements with State and Territory governments. We also acknowledge the work already done to reach agreements with our WA Minister for Education.

We sit on the precipice of an opportunity for an historic, nation-building investment from all governments that will help achieve the national goals of excellence and equity in our school system.

The biggest beneficiaries will be the children who face the greatest barriers to their participation and success in education: children who live in rural and remote areas, Aboriginal students, children with disability, children from language backgrounds other than English and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The parents of these children, and of all children in public education in WA, are among our members and in our support to them, we raise to you their voices. They are calling out for more investment in and support of public education in this country.

Full funding will also help address the worrying decline in student wellbeing and mental health and the teacher shortage crisis which is affecting schools and student learning in every corner of the nation.

We urge you to reach agreements this year that deliver 100% of the SRS for public schools by 2028 at the latest, with a minimum Commonwealth contribution of 25% of the SRS.

As the Expert Panel, convened by education ministers, reported in December, full funding of public schools is "urgent and critical" and a prerequisite for learning and wellbeing improvement across the nation. We agree with the Expert Panel that all jurisdictions should fully fund public schools "within a comparable timeframe" to ensure that there is a level playing field for students, wherever they live and whatever their needs.


To achieve full funding, it is essential that your government does not include in new bilateral agreements the same unacceptable loopholes inserted by the Morrison Government into the current agreements that allow states and the NT to count, for public schools only, additional expenditure items within their recurrent SRS funding share that are not directly related to costs of educating students in schools.

This runs counter to the design and legislated intent of the SRS and artificially inflates the state and territory SRS shares by 4%, or more than \$2 billion every year.

The challenges we face right now in education are too great to deny public schools this \$2 billion investment.

Your Government has a unique opportunity to ensure that every child in every school across Australia has access to a fully funded high quality public education. Accordingly, we urge you to deliver on your commitment to fully funding public schools for every Australian child.

Thank you,



**Pania Turner
President, WACSSO**

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