

Key Policy in discussion

EDUCATION - Schooling

Portfolio and or agency

Department of Education

Date Issued

20 May 2023

Key Portfolio Issues

The Government has clearly set its direction for school funding with its commitment to fully fund every school in Central Australia so that it reaches 100 per cent of Schooling Resource Standards. This sends a clear message to every Australian school. It also points to a recognition by the Government of a need for more resources to ensure that schools can only operate effectively if they have sufficient resources and appropriate staffing levels.

Budget funding for the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan adds further support to the view that a strong teacher workforce is necessary to meet all students' needs. A workforce that is fully supported and well-resourced is central to the schooling of Australia's children.

Budget Measures

- **Funding the Schooling resource Standard -- Safer Future for Central Australia**

As part of its *Better, Safer Future for Central Australia Plan* the government will provide \$40.4 million over two years from 2023-24 to schools in Central Australia to improve school attendance and education outcomes (2023-24 Budget Paper No 2, p. 83). This measure will prioritise community engagement and locally driven responses in partnership with local community organisations.

For public school students in Central Australia, this measure represents full funding to 100 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) in the region. That funding will help deliver more teachers, more education support staff, and more one on one individual attention for students. For public schools across the country, it is the step towards the delivery of the Government's election commitment to get every public school on the pathway to 100 of the SRS.

The funding will increase school enrolment and engagement and improve learning outcomes for all children. It will sustain an effective workforce and provide individual support for all students. This is an acknowledgement that current outcomes are not acceptable, and more support is needed. This clearly points to the future direction for school funding in Australia.

- **Teacher Workforce Action Plan**

Payments (\$m)

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27
Department of the Treasury	4.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	-
Department of Education	-13.6	-3.2	-4.2	-6.6	0.4
Total – Payments	-9.6	3.8	2.8	0.4	0.4

Source: [2023-24 Budget Paper No 2](#), p. 102

The Government will provide \$35.0 million over 4 years from 2022–23 to attract more people to the teaching profession and retain more teachers in the workforce. This funding forms part of the \$328 million *National Teacher Workforce Action Plan* (the Action Plan) agreed by Commonwealth, State and Territory Education Ministers in December 2022. This measure will be fully offset from savings within the Education Portfolio.

In addition, the Government will provide \$9.3 million over 4 years from 2023–24 for the Department of Education, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority to support the implementation of the Action Plan.

This is a recognition of the way in which this workforce has been devalued and poorly resourced over time and the need for action. By working collaboratively with other groups in the education sector the government can draw on expertise and look to new and different ways of empowering teachers.

- **Government and Non-Government Sector Funding**

The Budget Papers again reveal the disparity in funding the education sectors. There is concern that this funding model continues to entrench inequity (Connors & McMorrow 2015). The roll out of Schooling Resource Standards should mean a more equitable distribution of funds across all schools in Australia.

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National Support

Program expenses 1.3: Government Schools National Support

	2022-23 Estimated Actual \$'000	2023-24 Estimated Actual \$'000	2024-25 Estimated Actual \$'000	2025-26 Estimated Actual \$'000	2026-27 Estimated Actual \$'000
Annual administered expenses: Other services (Appropriation Bill No. 2) Additional Support for Northern Territory	12,263	10,035	7,536	4,745	1,637
Special Appropriations: Australian Appropriation Act 2013	10,251,595	18,835,067	11,258,849	11,671,186	12,106,035
Total Program expenses	10,263,858	10,845,102	11,266,385	11,675,931	12,107,672

Source: [Department of Education 2023-24 Portfolio Budget Statement](#), Table 2.1.1, p. 28

Program expenses 1.3: Non-Government Schools National Support

	2022-23 Estimated Actual \$'000	2023-24 Estimated Actual \$'000	2024-25 Estimated Actual \$'000	2025-26 Estimated Actual \$'000	2026-27 Estimated Actual \$'000
Annual administered expenses: Other services (Appropriation Bill No. 2)					
Non-Government Representative Bodies	42,013	12,004			
Adjustment Assistance	491				
Choice and Affordability Fund	111,716	116,957	121,292	124,580	128,256
Special Appropriations: Australian Education Act 2013	16,491,393	17,312,098	18,009,402	18,555,940	19,131,725
Total Program expenses	16,645,613	17,441,059	18,130,694	18,680,520	19,259,981

Source: [Department of Education 2023-24 Portfolio Budget Statement](#), Table 2.1.1, p. 28

Background: current circumstances of women in this portfolio

Teaching is very much a feminised workforce. Women are [eighty-two per cent of the primary school workforce and sixty-one per cent of secondary schools](#). The share of male teachers in Australia has been [declining since 1977](#). [Attrition intentions](#) in the teacher workforce suggest that there is a potential for the loss of around 14% of teachers due to reasons other than retirement across the entire teaching workforce over the next ten years (p. 23).

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According to the [Australian Teacher Workforce Dataset](#) (p.24), coping with workload demands was the predominant category of issues reported to underlay intentions to leave and was selected by 87 per cent of the teacher workforce. Within that category, a heavy workload was the most common reason indicated for wanting to leave the profession. It was reported by 70 per cent of the teacher workforce and 71 per cent of classroom teachers. Insufficient pay was selected by 29% of those intending to leave the profession.

According to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's [Gender Equality Scorecard](#), among the organisations in the Education and Training sector who report to them, there is a ten and a half per cent gender pay gap and women make only fifty-four per cent of managers – both despite women's predominance in the schooling sector (pp. 221 and 25). Any changes flowing from the Teacher Workforce Action Plan are likely to have a significant impact on women. It is not just their role at work but also their whole family. More recognition of the work of teachers and its intrinsic value for the community will be a morale boost for women as well as a recognition of their work, which is often under-resourced. Progress toward fully staffed and funded schools that ensure that all students' needs are met will enhance the role of women teachers and lift the retention rate.

Gender implications of this budget measure

There is no doubt that these budget measures when fully implemented will enhance the status of women and their central role in the education of young Australians. Women's role is key to academic achievement and with government support, the significant part women play in the schooling sector can be acknowledged.

Recommendations

That Schooling Resource Standards be implemented across all schools in Australia.

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