



GENDER LENS ON THE 2024 BUDGET

Key policy in discussion	Schooling
Portfolio and or agency	Education
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Key Portfolio Issues

NFAW welcomes the Australian Government's Statements of Intent for funding schools in Western Australia and the Northern Territory to 100 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard. NFAW also welcomes the government's investment in a National Teacher Resource hub to support teachers.

NFAW also welcomes extended funding for the *Together for Humanity* programme along with funding for the *Schools Anti-Bullying Collective* and the youth engagement strategy *Engage!*

However, schooling is central to individual development, as well as essential for the community at large and economic development. It needs to be seen as integral to the government's [Future Made in Australia](#) as the government seeks to meet the changing demands on Australian society for the next 50 years.

Full funding for all government schools is essential to lessen inequality not only in schooling but in the general community. Lack of resourcing continues to place a heavy burden on the largely feminised workforce as they struggle to meet the needs of all students in their care.

In March 2024 the Australian Government released [Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality](#). It identified gender gaps in education (p.66). In Year 3 NAPLAN test results girls are significantly higher than boys in literacy domains but boys outperform girls in numeracy.

The National Foundation for Australian Women is a feminist organisation, independent of party politics and working in partnership with other women's organisations. NFAW is dedicated to promoting and protecting the interests of Australian women, including intellectual, cultural, political, social, economic, legal, industrial and domestic spheres.

The National Teacher Resource Hub offers teachers evidence-based curriculum support in such areas. However, it is disappointing to note that the Inclusion Support Program does not extend to schooling (See Early Childhood Education and Care).

Budget measures

The Budget allocations below demonstrate the Australian Government's support for schools and areas where further support is needed.

Program expenses 1.3: Government Schools National Support

	2023-24 Estimated actual \$'000	2024-25 Budget \$'000	2025-26 Forward estimate \$'000	2026-27 Forward estimate \$'000	2027-28 Forward estimate \$'000
Annual administered expenses:					
Other services (Appropriation Bill No. 2)					
Additional Support for Northern Territory	10,035	7,536	4,745	1,637	-
Special appropriations:					
<i>Australian Education Act 2013</i>	11,089,244	11,466,937	11,883,920	12,320,844	12,782,300
Total program expenses	11,099,279	11,474,473	11,888,665	12,322,481	12,782,300

Source: [Portfolio Budget Statements. Budget Related Paper No.1.5](#), p.35 2024

Program expenses 1.4: Non-Government Schools National Support

	2023-24 Estimated actual \$'000	2024-25 Budget \$'000	2025-26 Forward estimate \$'000	2026-27 Forward estimate \$'000	2027-28 Forward estimate \$'000
Annual administered expenses:					
Other services (Appropriation Bill No. 2)					
Non-Government Representative Bodies	12,004	-	-	-	-
Choice and Affordability Fund	116,790	121,002	124,341	128,010	132,232
South Australian Non-Government Schools - one off transition assistance	24,203	-	-	-	-
Special appropriations:					
<i>Australian Education Act 2013</i>	17,962,805	18,605,269	19,372,172	20,146,935	20,918,590
Total program expenses	18,115,802	18,726,271	19,496,513	20,274,945	21,050,822

Source: [Portfolio Budget Statements. Budget Related Paper No.1.5](#), p.37 2024

Program Expenses 1.5: Early Learning and Schools Support

	2023-24 Estimated actual \$'000	2024-25 Budget \$'000	2025-26 Forward estimate \$'000	2026-27 Forward estimate \$'000	2027-28 Forward estimate \$'000
Student Engagement and Wellbeing	-	2,021	4,037	1,053	1,059
Student Wellbeing Boost	3,500	-	-	-	-
Supporting Australia's Teacher Workforce	2,243	2,286	2,584	1,738	2,651
Teacher Resource Hubs	-	5,230	6,169	10,049	10,346

Source: [Portfolio Budget Statements. Budget Related Paper No.1.5](#), p.43 2024

The growth in funding for the Teacher Resource Hubs is welcomed. This definitely addresses the issue of continuing development needed as the impact of new technologies continues to play out in schools, the workforce and the community.

Other measures include \$5.3 million over two years from 2024–25 to support the *Good to Great Schools Australia* English, Maths and Science pilot program to deliver targeted supports to students, and \$4.2 million over four years from 2024–25 to support the *Australian Schools Anti-Bullying Collective* to deliver national bullying prevention initiatives ([Budget Paper No 2](#) p.88 2024).

The Budget also includes \$110 million over four years from 2024-24 (and \$11 million per year ongoing) to accelerate action against the National Agreement on Closing the Gap Priority Reforms in the Education Portfolio and extend programs supporting education outcomes ([Budget Paper No.2](#), p.87 2024). Most of this additional funding will support First Nations students in school, although there is funding to support school teachers and leaders in developing cultural responsiveness, develop a First Nations Teacher Strategy and assist First Nations stakeholders to engage in developing a new First Nations education policy.

These Budget measures are worthy and do make a difference for students and schools that are involved. However, a full structural approach to funding would lead to a more equitable system as a whole.

Gender implications of these Budget measures

Schooling has a female dominated workforce. Hence any changes to schooling policy and funding impact directly on large numbers of women. In 2019, there were 288,294 full-time equivalent teaching staff across Australian primary and secondary schools, of which 206,838 (71.7 per cent) were women and 81,456 (28.3 per cent) were men. In comparison, 50 years ago 58.7 per cent of teachers were female and 41.3 per cent were male. Australian Bureau of Statistics [schools data](#) indicates that male teachers are more likely to work in secondary schools, where they comprise 39.2 per cent of the total teachers, compared with primary schools where male teachers comprise 18.1 per cent of total teachers. The growth of women teachers in our schools raises issues around the gender pay gap and the deficiency in resourcing experienced in female dominated industries.

It is essential for equity and for changes in the economic future of Australia that all students are fully literate and numerate. Teachers need all the resources at their disposal to ensure inclusion of every child.

Recommendations

NFAW calls for:

- All government schools in all states be funded to the 100 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard.
- The Inclusion Support Program be extended to all schools and not apply only to Childcare and Early Education Centres.