

Budget 2021 – Education

Schooling overview

NFAW welcomes the extra spending in education but notes the disparity in the percentage increase for government schools at 7 per cent and non-government schools with 13 per cent. Given this is a Budget seeking to “secure Australia’s recovery” and direct Australia’s exit from the pandemic, the lack of an integrated education structure for upskilling the community in digital expertise is disappointing. The expansion of the Digital Economy and the role teachers and education will play has not been fully acknowledged and requires more attention and resources. As women have been more heavily impacted by COVID-19 than men (WGEA 2020), better outcomes for the recovery could be achieved with a more nuanced and cooperative approach across a range of sectors with women as the central focus.

Schooling

The Budget

Funding for Schooling falls into two categories: funding provided to schools and territories to support school education; and additional funding for specific Australian Government education programs and policies.

Funding provided to schools and territories to support school education

In 2021–22, the Australian Government will provide funding of \$24.8 billion to support state education services, including \$24.4 billion in Quality Schools funding and \$409.1 million through National Partnership payments. This includes recurrent funding, capital funding, funding for non-government school reform support funding, Choice and Affordability Fund funding and other prescribed purpose funding.

While there has been an increase in funding for both government and non-government schools, the non-government sector has received an increase of 13 per cent while the government sector has only had an increase of 7 per cent. This undermines the principle of needs-based school funding and the necessity for the Schooling Resource Standard to be fully implemented.

Government Schools National Support

	2020-21 Estimated actual \$'000	2021-22 Budget \$'000	2022-23 Forward estimate \$'000	2023-24 Forward estimate \$'000	2024-25 Forward estimate \$'000
Annual administered expenses:					
Other services (Appropriation Bill No. 2)					
Additional Support for Northern Territory	12,804	14,242	12,263	10,035	7,536
Special appropriations:					
<i>Australian Education Act 2013</i>	9,038,811	9,712,514	10,411,123	10,992,250	11,439,159
Total program expenses	9,051,615	9,726,756	10,423,386	11,002,285	11,446,695

2021-22 Portfolio Budget Statements No 1.4, p. 39.

Non-Government Schools National Support

	2020-21 Estimated actual \$'000	2021-22 Budget \$'000	2022-23 Forward estimate \$'000	2023-24 Forward estimate \$'000	2024-25 Forward estimate \$'000
Annual administered expenses:					
Other services (Appropriation Bill No. 2)					
Non-Government Representative Bodies	40,013	40,013	14,004	-	-
Adjustment Assistance	9,131	1,676	491	-	-
Choice and Affordability Fund	156,045	107,682	110,912	114,240	117,667
Special appropriations:					
<i>Australian Education Act 2013</i>	12,804,610	14,560,971	15,383,946	16,085,732	16,634,577
Total program expenses	13,009,799	14,710,342	15,509,353	16,199,972	16,752,244

2021-22 Portfolio Budget Statements No 1.4, p. 41.

Quality Schools funding

\$million	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT	Total
2020-21									
Government schools(a)	2,815.4	2,098.1	2,030.7	924.7	611.0	222.7	130.8	220.2	9,053.6
Non-government schools(b)(c)(d)	3,893.5	3,520.3	2,840.2	1,271.4	809.4	299.2	227.9	147.9	13,009.8
Total	6,708.9	5,618.4	4,870.9	2,196.1	1,420.4	521.9	358.7	368.1	22,063.4
2021-22									
Government schools(a)	3,009.9	2,270.2	2,157.8	1,020.6	665.7	234.3	142.9	227.3	9,728.8
Non-government schools(b)(c)(d)	4,454.8	3,796.5	3,156.3	1,494.3	1,062.5	321.6	236.4	187.9	14,710.3
Total	7,464.8	6,066.7	5,314.1	2,514.9	1,728.2	555.9	379.3	415.1	24,439.1
2022-23									
Government schools(a)	3,212.0	2,451.4	2,286.1	1,121.9	722.9	244.0	156.0	231.1	10,425.4
Non-government schools(b)(c)(d)	4,705.4	4,012.1	3,323.4	1,570.1	1,116.6	339.9	244.8	197.1	15,509.4
Total	7,917.4	6,463.5	5,609.5	2,692.0	1,839.4	583.8	400.8	428.3	25,934.7
2023-24									
Government schools(a)	3,386.3	2,605.6	2,395.0	1,200.2	762.8	252.8	167.0	234.6	11,004.3
Non-government schools(b)(c)(d)	4,914.9	4,201.7	3,470.3	1,636.1	1,163.7	355.7	252.7	204.8	16,200.0
Total	8,301.2	6,807.3	5,865.4	2,836.3	1,926.5	608.5	419.7	439.4	27,204.3
2024-25									
Government schools(a)	3,525.9	2,727.0	2,481.8	1,251.4	789.6	260.5	175.3	237.3	11,448.7
Non-government schools(b)(c)(d)	5,076.3	4,359.9	3,590.4	1,687.8	1,199.5	368.9	259.4	210.0	16,752.2
Total	8,602.2	7,086.9	6,072.2	2,939.2	1,989.1	629.4	434.7	447.3	28,200.9

- (a) Includes funding for the Northern Territory to accelerate evidence-based reforms to improve outcomes for vulnerable students and includes Literacy Support for Tasmanian Students.
Includes capital funding.
Includes prescribed circumstances funding.
Includes funding for non-government school reform support and the Choice and Affordability Fund.

2021-22 Budget Paper No 3, Part 2, p. 38.

Additional funding for specific Australian Government education programs and policies
The Government will provide \$77.5 million over four years from 2021-22 (and \$5.5 million per year ongoing) for further initiatives to support teachers, students and young Australians.

While each of these programmes are individually worthy of being funded, they are not part of a wider integrated structure with long term goals. Indeed, the funding for some of these projects is only for one year.

This is particularly true of the STEM proposals which are very small given the size of the Australian Schooling sector.

However, NFAW welcomes the inclusion of young women into the Clontarf Foundation's programmes which was a recommendation from the analysis in the 2020 Budget. (Women's Budget p48)

Funding includes:

- \$20.0 million over four years from 2021-22 to continue and improve the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on school students with disability, to ensure the quality and integrity of data that underpins ongoing funding for students with disability.
- \$16.6 million in 2021-22 to assist boarding providers with a high proportion of Indigenous students to remain financially sustainable during the COVID-19 recovery period.
- \$11.9 million over four years from 2021-22 (and \$3.0 million per year ongoing) to support the Australian Children's Television Foundation to continue to support the development, production and distribution of quality Australian children's screen content and educational resources.
- \$8.1 million over four years from 2021-22 for Together for Humanity to deliver a program to students, teachers and parents so they are equipped for diversity, and to foster greater inter-cultural understanding and a sense of belonging.
- \$5.8 million over four years from 2021-22 (and \$1.5 million per year ongoing) to continue investment in the Australian Teacher Workforce Data collection, to help improve teacher workforce planning and outcomes.
- \$4.0 million over four years from 2021-22 (and \$1.0 million per year ongoing) to continue and expand the Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education Students, to assist aspiring students to make informed decisions about their suitability to become teachers.

- \$3.0 million in 2021-22 for the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award in Australia to encourage young people to volunteer time in their communities, participate in sport and recreational activities, and develop social skills.
- \$3.0 million over two years from 2021-22 for High Resolves to deliver a learning experience to young Australians to help build social cohesion, strengthen cultural understanding and promote positive participation in their local community.
- \$2.9 million in 2021-22 for the *Commonwealth Scholarships Program for Young Australians* to support up to 240 training scholarships for young people aged 15 to 24 years in ten regions, with funding to be redirected from unused places in the *Commonwealth Scholarship Programs for South Australia*.
- \$1.2 million over four years from 2021-22 to co-sponsor the Young Australian of the Year Awards
- \$1.0 million in 2021-22 for youth engagement activities, including improving Year 9 and Year 10 students' learning about civics and citizenship through the annual National Schools Constitutional Convention, delivering activities for Ministerial engagement with youth, and providing greater information to young Australians on programs and services that support them.

Schools and Youth — supporting students, teachers and young Australians

Payments (\$m)

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
National Indigenous Australians Agency	-	16.6	-	-	-
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications	-	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Department of Social Services	-	2.3	0.7	-	-
Department of Education, Skills and Employment	-2.9	14.4	8.4	9.7	11.2
Total — Payments	-2.9	36.2	12.1	12.7	14.3

2021-2022 Budget Paper No 2 part 2, pp. 78-80.

STEM Funding

The Government will provide \$0.5 million in 2020-21 for the Resources Technology Showcase 2021 (the Showcase), to be held in June 2021 in Perth.

The Showcase will provide approximately 10,000 school age entrants with the opportunity to interact with the technology and innovation that drives growth in defence and space industries, and to promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics opportunities within defence industries (2021-2022 Budget Paper No2 Part 2, p. 87)

\$42.4 million over seven years from 2021-22 to establish the Boosting the Next Generation of Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Program by co-funding scholarships for women in STEM in partnership with industry (2021-2022 Budget Paper No 2 Part 2, p. 81).

Gender implications

Why is this an issue for women?

Women make up 81.9 per cent of teachers in primary schools and 61.1 per cent of secondary school teaching staff (ABS 2021). Covid has had a significant impact on their workplace with changes to working conditions requiring them to prepare learning materials for the home and to teach online. This had some serious implications for professional skills and development.

While school lockdowns were in place findings suggest that it was women who took much of the responsibility for schooling from home (WEGA 2020). This was considerably stressful for those with limited access or skills around technology. Connectivity became a concern for these women in trying to ensure their children had equal access to learning (The Smith Family 2020).

Despite Covid women remain the major care givers in the family continuing to spend more time in housework and caring duties as well as caring for the majority of single parent families (ABS 2020). Hence, further pressures around lack of IT and its impact on limiting educational opportunities fell disproportionately on women.

What are the 2021 Budget impacts on women?

The 2021 Budget has some serious implications for women, not just those working in the schooling sector but also for women caring for and educating their own children.

Of particular concern in this budget is the disparity in the funding percentage increase between government and non-government schools. Given that 65.6 per cent of students are in the government sector this impacts heavily on the female dominated workforce (ABS 2020).

The lack of a national plan for STEM and short-term funding arrangements means women have difficulty accessing what limited professional development is available.

While female students continue to complete year 12 in more numbers than their male counterparts (ABS 2020) it is imperative that many more young women have basic skills in STEM. This requires a national plan with all students acquiring skills from the earliest years of schooling.

Many young women are unable to access STEM programmes in the last years of schooling due to lack of basic knowledge (The Smith Family 2020).

Recommendations

- NFAW recommends that the STEM skills of all Australians can only be enhanced by a national policy that is fully funded and supported by the government.
- NFAW recommends that a national STEM programme for all young people be established in schools. Such a programme would need to be fully funded and resourced.
- NFAW recommends that all classroom teachers be given the opportunity to develop their knowledge of digital technologies to enhance the quality of their teaching.
- NFAW supports universal access to high quality education for all Australian girls and calls on the government to overturn the disparity in the percentage increase of funding to government and non-government schools and fully implement the Schooling Resource Standard. This will help assure more equitable educational outcomes as well as better support the many female teachers working in the government sector.
- NFAW calls on the government to ensure all Australians have access to the internet to enable them to avail themselves of full educational opportunities as well as other aspects of Australian life.

References

Australian Bureau of Statistics (2020) [Schools](#).

Commonwealth of Australia (2021) [Women's Budget Statement](#).

Commonwealth of Australia (2021) Portfolio Budget Statement 2021-22 Budget Related Paper 1.4 [Education, Skills and Employment Portfolio](#).

Commonwealth of Australia (2021) Budget Paper No 2 [Budget Measures](#).

Commonwealth of Australia (2021) Budget Paper No 3 [Federal Financial Relations](#).

[The Smith Family](#) (2020) *Without Access to Computers and the Internet, disadvantaged students are getting left behind*

[Workplace Gender Equality Agency](#) (2020) *Gendered impacts of COVID-19*.