

Election: funding breakthrough

March 11, 2019

Federation helped gain a significant step towards fair funding of public schools after an announcement over the weekend that a Labor state government would fully fund the public system.

In setting our 2019 priorities, Federation members voted to work with their public education colleagues across Australia to ensure all schools are fully funded so teachers are equipped with the necessary resources to meet student needs.

Over the weekend, Labor announced that, if it forms government at the 23 March state election, it will work with a change of government at the federal level to make NSW the first state committed to funding our public schools to 100 per cent of the schooling resources standard (SRS).

The original Gonski review into the education system developed the SRS, a measure of the resources needed to meet the educational needs of every child.



While most private schools are now funded well above the SRS with combined state and federal funding, to date no NSW public school has received anywhere near 100 per cent of the funding required to support teachers and give every student a fair start in life.

This is reflected in the fact that Australia has one of the most unequal education systems in the OECD.

Every student deserves a fair start in life, and teachers begin the year excited to help provide it. But every teacher also knows we are increasingly being asked to do more with less. We are stretched and placed under pressure to meet new demands marked by shifting goalposts.

That's why the Fair Funding Now! campaign is so important. Proper funding of our public school system would mean significant improvements to our teaching and learning conditions, including smaller class sizes, additional permanent teaching positions, more support staff, increased release time, systemic support for curriculum delivery, as well as one-on-one time and support for children with specific learning needs.

The announcement is a result of your activism; Federation members across the state who have pushed for fair funding in every public school by meeting with politicians and having conversations with parents, friends, family and the community.

Our campaign for a strong public education system has also meant standing strong against the destruction of TAFE, resulting in Labor recommitting to a guarantee that at least 70 per cent of vocational education and training funding by state and federal governments would be provided to the public system.

This would break the discredited market model.

TAFE has trained and educated millions of Australians in some of the most important professions in the country. But successive governments have critically weakened TAFE by reallocating funding to for-profit, private providers. The result is we now have students holding debt but no qualification, ripped off by scam providers that are funded by the taxpayer.

The major parties have announced their vocational education and training policies for this election, with both committed to increasing government-funded courses for specific industries.

This increase in funding for vocational education is because of the staunch, vibrant campaigning work of Federation TAFE members. But while NSW Labor has committed to provide these courses through the public TAFE system, the NSW Liberal and National parties are still proposing to send taxpayer funding to the unregulated, low quality, for-profit providers.