

The Treasurer of Australia must do more to stand up for vulnerable Territory students

MEDIA RELEASE

The Northern Territory's peak body representing government schools is urging Australia's Treasurer, Scott Morrison to stand up and fund the full 30% of the School Resourcing Standard (SRS) required to meet the needs of Territory students.

Tabby Fudge, President of the NT Council of Government School Organisations, said, "We are here to stand up for the most vulnerable and voiceless students and their families here in the Territory."

"There is the misguided belief by the Turnbull government that funding all schools the same at 20% of the School Resourcing Standard (SRS), provides equity and meets individual student needs. Nothing could be further from the truth and we counter this with "equal does not result in equity".

"The fact that a public school in a high socio-economically advantaged area in Canberra will be funded the same as a remote school in the middle of the desert or in Arnhem Land means the federal government has not delivered Gonski student needs based funding."

"The Northern Territory has one of the highest socio-economically disadvantaged populations in Australia. In 2015 the average Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage for NT Government schools was 758, compared to a national average of 1000."

"In addition we have a small population and it is unreasonable to expect the Territory to be able to fund the balance of 80% of the School Resourcing Standard (SRS) when we simply do not generate the income that larger states do."

“Last week, the Coalition Government passed off an additional \$35.6M for 2018 to 2021 as additional funding to recognise our higher needs.”

“This isn’t money which will provide for additional teachers and support staff. This money is not part of the School Resourcing Standard (SRS) and as Senator Nigel Scullion has advised this is “to accelerate evidence-based reforms to improve outcomes for vulnerable students”.

“We don’t know yet what these Canberra reforms are, which this \$35.6M is tied to, but what we do know is it is not recurrent, ongoing funding for schools”.

“Today the federal Treasurer announced an additional \$42.9M for the years 2022 to 2027. Is this also tied to Canberra reforms? These two figures, \$35.6M re-announced today and \$42.7M, total only a meagre 0.33% of the Turnbull governments \$23.5 billion school funding package.”

“It is important to remember the additional money announced today is not to meet our individual student’s need’s nor will it adjust and account for our growing student numbers each year.”

“Whilst additional money is welcomed, it still ignores that the NT is expected to transition down from our current ongoing school funding of 24% to 20%.”

“We have a passionate plea for Scott Morrison as Treasurer of the Commonwealth of Australia; please do not consign our children to further disadvantage; to an ever-widening gap; to attendance strategies with no adequate resources when children arrive at school; to continued hearing loss with no resources to help them hear their lessons; to any cut to the School Resourcing Standard (SRS).



A true student needs based funding model from the federal government would fund 30% of the School Resourcing Standard (SRS) and provide for our urgent, ongoing educational needs of our students.

Tabby Fudge

President

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The Council of Government School Organisations represents over 19,000 Northern Territory families, their 34,500 children and the school communities that support them, in 153 public schools.

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