



MORE TEACHERS AND SMALLER CLASS SIZES THE GREENS PLAN TO BRING FUNDING FOR VICTORIAN SCHOOLS UP TO THE NATIONAL AVERAGE

Victoria has been the lowest spending state per student for at least ten years. School funding in Victoria needs to be increased to the national average to ensure all children receive a quality education and the support they need in our government schools.

VICTORIA HAS BEEN THE LOWEST SPENDING STATE PER STUDENT FOR AT LEAST TEN YEARS

Government funding for schools has not kept up with Victoria's growing population and student numbers. Victoria has been the lowest spending state per student for at least the last ten years.ⁱ

The Productivity Commission's Report on Government Services 2018, shows that in 2015-16 – the latest publicly available figures - funding per student in Victoria remained the lowest in the country at \$13 301 per student, which is \$1,589 lower than the national average of \$14 890. The next lowest spending state is Tasmania spending \$14 372 per student and the highest spending state is WA at \$17 306.ⁱⁱ

More recent figures provided by the Parliamentary Budget office and based on confidential government numbers have the gap between the Victorian funding per student and the national average at \$1,470 per student.

Government schools educate the majority of students in Victoria, including the highest number who are from disadvantaged backgrounds or have disabilities or learning difficulties. Every student deserves to receive the learning support they need in our government schools.

OUR PLAN

The Greens plan is to:

- **Increase funding per student in Victoria to the national average over the next eight years;**
- **Allocate funding to schools on the basis of equity and need and in a fully transparent way;**
- **Review the funding model for students with a disability to ensure a model that meets the needs of students with disabilities and other learning needs; and**
- **Remove the minimum 25% guaranteed funding increase to private schools that distorts schools funding in Victoria.**

The Greens plan is to increase recurrent per student funding in Victorian public schools to equal the national average of state and territory expenditure per student, phased in over eight years.

Bringing per student recurrent funding in Victoria up to the national average will mean that more teachers can be employed in government schools along with more educational support staff.

Our plan has been costed by the Parliamentary Budget Office and would cost \$2.4 billion over the 2018-19 budget and forward estimates and \$19.490 billion over the next ten years (2018-19 to 2028-29). This is an



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indication of how much successive governments, have been underspending on public education in Victoria.

This costing takes into account projected student enrolment growth and indexation of funding for public schools, funding provided by the Australian Government for public schools.

FUNDING TO SCHOOLS TO BE FULLY TRANSPARENT AND PROVIDED ON THE BASIS OF EQUITY AND NEED

Transparency

The criteria by which funding is allocated to particular schools and not to others in any state budget is not open and transparent to the public. It should be.

Promises are made by governments and oppositions in election periods. Often these are not followed through or fully followed through. It's not the way to run an education system.

The Greens have been calling for many years for DET data to be made public and for full transparency about how funds are allocated to schools across Victoria.

Equity and need

The 2011 Gonski Review of Funding for Schooling, found a significant gap between our highest and lowest performing students; that our lowest performing students are not meeting minimum standards of achievement and that there is an unacceptable link between low levels of achievement and educational disadvantage, particularly among students from low socioeconomic and indigenous backgrounds.

It is not acceptable that some students are disadvantaged by virtue of where they live, or the income of their parents and other students are privileged by virtue of the same things.

The Greens will ensure that allocation of school funding is based on equity and need so that all children with additional needs are provided with a comprehensive education.

We will repeal the unfair legislation that guarantees private schools a minimum of 25% of the funding provided to public schools. This legislation means that whenever the government wants to increase much needed funding to our public schools it also must increase funding to private schools. It is a distortion of the schools funding system.

More teachers and education support staff

Schools should be staffed according to needs of the students in the school to ensure that all children are supported.

Bringing per student recurrent funding in Victoria up to the national average will mean that more teachers can be employed in government schools along with more educational support staff to assist students with special learning needs.

Smaller class sizes

Our plan will also result in smaller class sizes meaning more manageable workloads for teachers and education support staff, and better educational outcomes for students.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY

According to the Monash University: Castan Centre for Human Rights Law report, *Improving Educational Outcomes for Children with Disability in Victoria* (June 2018)ⁱⁱⁱ, some government schools continue to turn away students because of their disability.

The research revealed that parents have been informally discouraged from enrolling their child by school leaders, citing "the school can't meet the student's needs or the school is not the right 'fit'".

Some parents reported social exclusion.

Rather than basing eligibility on a student's functional needs and capacities, the current funding model is based on deficit and diagnosis resulting in many students not receiving the support they require in order



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to participate in education on the same basis as their peers who do not have a disability.

The Greens would implement the recommendations of the report including that the:

- Department of Education and Training (DET) develops a new funding model based on the recommendations of the review and that it should be based on human rights principles and standards; and
- DET provide effective oversight, accountability and access to information regarding the rights of children and the available support and inclusion training for all staff.

References

ⁱ Productivity Commission report – Report on Government Services 2018: <http://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2018/child-care-education-and-training/school-education/rogs-2018-partb-chapter4.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Productivity Commission report – Report on Government Services 2018: <http://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2018/child-care-education-and-training/school-education/rogs-2018-partb-chapter4.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Monash University: Castan Centre for Human Rights Law report, *Improving Educational Outcomes for Children with Disability in Victoria* (June 2018) https://www.monash.edu/_data/assets/file/0016/1412170/Castan-Centre-Improving-Educational-Outcomes-for-Students-with-Disability.pdf