

Solomon Results are In!

As parents, we are about to cast our vote in the Federal election on 2 July. On behalf of Territory Public Schools in Solomon electorate we wrote to each candidate seeking their position on Student Needs Based Funding and transparent federal funding.

Make no mistake. A good education gives a child the chance to lead a fulfilling life and to make a valued contribution to society. It breaks the cycle of disadvantage. It keeps Australia competitive in an increasingly competitive world.

Some of our political leaders seem to have forgotten these simple facts.

It seems as though public education is under attack – and the victims of that attack are our children and Australia as a whole. We were shocked by Prime Minister Turnbull’s announcement in March this year that he would like to see Commonwealth funding removed from public education.

In the current Budget year the Commonwealth invested \$5.74 Billion into public education, whilst the non-Government sector received \$9.9 Billion.

Parents asked election candidates to support the public education system by campaigning for increased funding.

We are making a plea to all voters to put public education at the top of their wish list in this election.

A student needs-based funding model would give every child the same chance to receive a high-quality education.

Families across the Northern Territory have told the Council of Government School Organisations they want the Gonski plan fully implemented.

Those who say increased funds don’t necessarily improve education outcomes should talk to teachers in New South Wales. Gonski funding there has dramatically improved numeracy, literacy, year 12 completion and university offers. They have seen year 7 literacy levels boosted by one year and in other years’ literacy levels boosted up to 3 and 4 years.

MEDIA RELEASE



That's what you get for your money: better educated kids more capable of living enriching lives and making Australia a stronger, happier society.

Nearly 80 per cent of our schools are in remote communities and that's where the funding issue is most acute.

Expert education consultant Stephen Lamb has told the Federal Government that the NT is the most disadvantaged jurisdiction in the western world. In other words, you have to go to a developing country in Asia, Africa or Latin America to find worse disadvantage.

Spending on public education did not keep up with inflation in the Territory or Federal budgets. There is no doubt that public school funding has gone down over the past three years, especially in remote communities.

Hundreds of teachers and support staff have been cut. Money for vital equipment – resources as crucial as sound amplifiers, so that kids with hearing loss can hear the teacher – is not there. Special needs programs have been cut or curtailed.

Access to a decent education – with good teachers, enough teachers, teacher support staff, tutors, proper equipment, adequate learning programs – is crucial for our children.

We ask all election candidates and voters to support public education by supporting the Gonski plan.

Yes, it's expensive. Billions of dollars of Federal funds over the next 10 or 20 years. But it's an investment in our future – in the future of our children, in the future of the Northern Territory and Australia.

It's an investment we can't afford to ignore. For every \$1 we invest into Education we save \$10 in Health and Welfare expenses.

We hope to hear further announcements of increases to existing allocations for staffing and programming budgets.



The NT Council of Government School Organisations (COGSO) is not a political body, but parents have asked us to step up during the 2016 election campaign on behalf of the public education system.

COGSO represents 18,000 Northern Territory families and their 33,500 children in our 151 NT public schools.

Territory families need a voice now, more than ever.

We present the responses from the Solomon candidates for your consideration.

CONTACTS

For further information on COGSO Public Education Position Paper, please visit http://www.ntcogso.org.au/content_images/COGSO%20Public%20Education%20Position%20Paper.pdf

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24 June 2016