



QUALITY AND EQUITY

The Principles

All students have the right to equitable, high quality and accessible education.

Education for all students, in both government and non-government schools, is a critical investment that Australia makes for its future.

The Issues

The allocation for education funding rose in the early 1990s. During the past ten years, however, there has been a substantial reduction in funding in real terms (*Australian Bureau of Statistics, Catalogue No. 5204*).

It has been shown that Australian public expenditure on education is fourth lowest across all OECD countries, and that NSW expenditure is one of the lowest across all Australian states.

Trends towards the transformation of education into a private consumer commodity are undermining the fundamental goals of education.

The Alternatives

1. Commit the government to provide funding comparable to OECD standards.
2. Emphasise in policy and action the value of education for the individual, the community.
3. Develop policies designed to promote the intrinsic worth of education and to reduce its commodification.

FUNDING FOR EQUITY

The Principles

Governments play a critical role in the provision of funds and the delivery of services for all educational institutions, both government and non-government.

Funding that is equitable, stable and long term in perspective and commitment promotes protection and security for educational institutions.

The Issues

1. Non-government schools currently receive 25% of the allocation provided to government schools. Endeavours to reduce this percentage will ultimately undermine education in all schools.
2. Any reduction in the quantum amount currently allocated through the Interest Subsidy Scheme could result in a reduction of educational opportunities and the delivery of quality services by all schools.

The Alternatives

1. Continue the funding of non-government school students on the basis of 25% of the average cost of education for a student in a government school.
2. Retain the current level of subsidy for interest payments on loans taken out by non-government schools for approved building projects.

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Your Voice Strengthens Our Voice

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SPECIAL NEEDS

The Principles

Equitable distribution of resources overcomes the disadvantages caused by social, economic, geographic, cultural or physical factors.

The Issues

Specific cuts in funding and services have impacted negatively on disadvantaged groups, especially those in greatest need, and those with the least powerful voices.

The Alternatives

1. Expand the State Government's financial provision for all students with disabilities in NSW schools.
2. Provide equitable access to technologies to overcome the digital divide between the information rich and the information poor.
3. Compensate for disadvantage arising from social status, material resources and geographic location.
4. Develop inbuilt processes to guarantee the stability, predictability and long-term protection of specific purpose programs.

THE TEACHING PROFESSION

The Principles

The quality of teaching is a significant determinant of the quality of education.

The provision of adequate resources for teacher development is essential for the provision of high quality education.

The Issues

There is a chronic teacher shortage, exacerbated by the low status of, and

limited career paths in, the teaching profession. (*Deans of Education Study 1999*)

Increasing litigation and an accumulation of legislative and regulatory requirements are impacting negatively on the teaching profession.

The Alternatives

1. Develop effective policies to promote the intrinsic worth of education and teaching.
2. Provide adequate resources for the professional development of teachers.

THE BOARD OF STUDIES

The Principles

The independence of the NSW Board of Studies is essential for the provision of quality education in all schools.

The promotion of consultative processes with all educational sectors is best achieved through an independent Board.

The Issues

The Board is seen increasingly as an arm of the Education Department rather than the independent body it was intended to be.

The critical and comprehensive *Eldridge Report (2001)* calls for the structural redesign of schooling, achievable only through a well-funded, autonomous Board.

The Alternatives

1. Maintain the clearly defined independence of the Board of Studies.
2. Provide the human and financial resources to enable the Board to establish adequate consultative processes with all educational sectors.