

MORRISON GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE AUSTRALIAN PARENTS COUNCIL

1. What actions will you take to improve the quality of teaching in schools?

Through the *Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership* (AITSL), our Government is implementing the reforms recommended by the 2014 *Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group* (TEMAG). These reforms are being delivered in collaboration with states and territories, higher education providers, teacher regulators and the non-government sector.

We are ensuring the next generation of teachers will be better prepared to provide a top-class education from day one, regardless of where they teach. Before they can graduate, every teaching student must now pass a test that puts them in the top 30 per cent of the adult population for literacy and numeracy. Starting this year, trainee teachers will also be required to pass a teaching performance assessment before they graduate.

The Government's TEMAG reforms are lifting standards across the board. Our Government has also started the process of reviewing Australia's education goals as set out in the *Melbourne Declaration*. The review will consider life-long education for all Australians – from early childhood, primary and secondary schools, through to higher education, vocational training and beyond.

2. What will you do to assist parents to improve their capacity and capability to prepare their children for formal schooling and to continue this throughout their education?

The Morrison Government funds a number of initiatives to support families and their child to prepare for school and to engage in their children's education.

The Learning Potential app and website for all ages includes a dedicated early years section. It is designed to help parents and carers become more positively involved in their children's learning and development by providing practical tips and information on their child's learning 'from the high chair to high school', including current content to assist parents improve their capacity and capability to prepare their children for formal schooling. The project will continue to expand to include more early years content.

The *Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters* (HIPPY) program specifically targets school readiness and is a two year, home-based parenting and early learning program targeted to families with 4 and 5 year-old children. HIPPY is delivered to 100 vulnerable communities in inner cities, rural towns and remote or very remote areas. The program provides a structured curriculum of learning activities whereby participating families spend 10–15 minutes per day, five days a week, undertaking educational activities that support school readiness.

The *Continuity of Learning* research is a resource to support effective transition to school and school age care and it is available to every family via the website. The research was conducted by Charles Sturt University's *Educational Transitions* team.

The Morrison Government also funds a number of national parent bodies. These bodies develop and disseminate information to their members and affiliates. This information includes supporting student wellbeing and supporting parents and carers to transition their children from early childhood settings to primary school and beyond and is available for all families at their websites.

The organisations are:

- Australian Council of State School Organisations, representing parents in the government schooling sector;
- Australian Parents Council, representing parents in the non-government schooling sector;
- Catholic Schools Parents Association, representing parents in the Catholic system; and
- Isolated Children's Parents' Association, representing regional, rural and remote parents.

As part of their funding, these bodies develop and disseminate information to their members and affiliates. This information includes supporting student wellbeing and supporting parents and carers to transition their children from early childhood settings to primary school and beyond.

A re-elected Morrison Government will invest \$10.8 million to provide a Year 1 voluntary phonics health check for parents and teachers to ensure their children are not falling behind.

3. What are your plans for funding non-government schools?

- **Will you commit to continuing the funding model recently negotiated with the states and territories and non-government sector?**
- **How are you going to take into account the needs of specific groups of children – eg indigenous, rural and remote children, students with disabilities and special educational needs – to ensure equality and opportunity for all?**

The Morrison Government believes that parents should be able to choose the school that best meets the needs of their child. We are delivering on our commitment, by providing a record \$310 billion in recurrent funding to all schools over the coming decade.

This is in recognition of the longstanding position of the Government as majority funder of non-government schools and the states and territories as the majority funder of government schools. Our record funding provides 62 per cent more funding per student, on average, a total of an extra \$37 billion in funding over the decade. In the 2019-20 Budget, the Morrison Government delivered a record \$21.4 billion for schools for the 2020 school year, an increase of \$8.5 billion since 2013.

The Coalition is backing our commitment to parental choice, by providing a \$1.2 billion *Choice and Affordability Fund* over the next 10 years as schools transition to new funding arrangements. The Fund helps non-government schools and school systems to invest in their schools in ways that support parental choice, which can include keeping schools

affordable, improving student wellbeing and support, lifting student performance, assisting schools in regional and remote areas and in drought affected areas, and providing assistance to help schools to transition to needs-based funding.

In addition to providing record funding, we have legislated funding for schools that is truly needs-based, ending Labor's 27 special deals which gave students more because of the state in which they lived.

Indigenous Students

The Morrison Government is providing record funding to all schools, including an additional \$5.2 billion for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to 2029. In 2019, this additional funding is expected to benefit around 223,000 students.

The Morrison Government is leading work through the *Study Away Review* to address issues in the boarding space and support students to have a more successful boarding experience.

Since the commencement of the *Indigenous Advancement Strategy* in July 2014, the Coalition has committed over \$1.6 billion under the *Children and Schooling Program* to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from their early childhood years, through primary and secondary education, to post-school qualifications and into the workforce.

This includes \$128.1 million for the *Remote School Attendance Strategy* between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2018, which is currently delivered across 78 schools. The Government also provided an additional \$78.5 million over ten years to the Northern Territory as part of our needs-based funding plan, including for Indigenous students.

Rural and Remote Students

The Morrison Government will provide an estimated \$6.8 billion for remote loading to 2029 — the more remote a school, the higher the loading. Total Commonwealth funding for students in regional and remote Australia will increase by 62 per cent. This money will benefit more the 3,357 schools that attract remoteness loading.

The Morrison Government supports the High Achieving Teachers Program by funding employment-based pathways into teaching for high achieving individuals, committed to pursuing a career in the teaching profession. Over 40 per cent of the placements have been in regional, rural and remote communities, while the remainder were placed in disadvantaged metropolitan schools. In addition to strong growth in funding, we know that it is important that schools in rural and regional areas, and with disadvantaged students, can attract high quality teachers.

We are also incentivising teachers to make a commitment to live and teach in remote schools by removing all or part of an individual's *Higher Education Loan Program* (HELP) debt from their accumulated HELP debt after they have been engaged in work as a teacher

for four years in a school in a very remote location in Australia. This could apply to teachers at 292 schools in Australia currently listed as 'very remote schools', and their surrounds.

Students with a Disability

The Morrison Government is increasing the students with disability (SWD) loading from an estimated \$1.7 billion in 2018 to \$3.0 billion in 2029. The Morrison Government will provide an estimated \$28.8 billion to all Australian schools in the SWD Loading between 2018 and 2029, with average growth in funding of 5.1 per cent a year.

The number of students with disability that attracted Commonwealth funding through the new loading more than doubled between 2017 (approximately 219,000 students) and 2018 (approximately 501,000 students).

By using the *Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with a Disability*, we are ensuring that the same students are receiving the same support. Previously, under the different definitions applied by states and territories, a student with a disability in one state could receive funding, whilst a student with the same disability in another state did not.

The Morrison Government has asked the *National School Resourcing Board* to review the student with disability loading to ensure that we are doing our best to support these students. Terms of reference for the review were announced on 15 November 2018, with the Board to provide its final report to the Government by December 2019.

4. How are you going to address the increasing problem of mental health issues in children and young people? And more specifically, in schools.

The Morrison Government's \$503.1 million *Youth Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan* is the largest suicide prevention strategy in Australia's history. It will ensure that government activities are coordinated, services are delivered to young Australians at risk and support is available for friends and families.

Our Plan focuses on:

- Strengthening the headspace network,
- Indigenous suicide prevention,
- Early childhood and parenting support.

A new school-based mental health program that aims to give teachers the tools to help students manage their mental health was launched on 1 November 2018 following a \$98.6 million investment from the Morrison Government.

The program Be You will be delivered by beyondblue in partnership with headspace and Early Childhood Australia. The program will provide Australian teachers with the skills and resources to be able to teach students how to manage their mental health and wellbeing, build resilience, and support the mental wellbeing of other students. The program will be rolled-out by beyondblue in 6,000 schools and 2,000 early learning services in 2019.

Teachers can use the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework to find the best resources to help kids deal with bullying and cyberbullying. Parents want to know that schools and teachers have the best tools to deal with bullying and the Framework will provide practical ways to do that.

5. What are your plans on improving digital literacy, digital citizenship and equity of access to technology for children and young people?

The Morrison Government has allocated over \$64 million under the *Inspiring all Australians in Digital Literacy* and STEM measure of the *National Innovation and Science Agenda* for initiatives to improve the teaching and learning of STEM in schools and preschools.

The Morrison Government is taking action to support parents and keep Australian children safe online with a \$17 million online safety package. The Keeping our Children Safe Online package announced in December 2018 includes an education campaign to help Australian parents, carers and teachers keep children and young people safe online.

The package also includes new resources for parents and carers, an online safety research program and the development of an *Online Safety Charter* for digital platforms. These latest measures will be rolled out in early 2019 and are part of the Government's ongoing commitment of more than \$100 million over the next four years to improving online safety.

A re-elected Morrison Government will also work with state and territory governments on best practice policies on mobile phone use in classrooms.

6. What are you going to do to promote positive relationships and communication between parents and teachers and schools?

The Morrison Government supports parent, teacher and principal relationships based on mutual respect. Although the Federal Government does not directly run schools, it provides significant funding and policy leadership in the schools sector.

The Morrison Government provides a range of resources for parents to use to support them with their child's school education. The Learning Potential app and website provides useful tips and information for parents on how they can be more involved in their child's learning at school. Managing school refusal is just one of the many topics covered.

The Government launched in October 2018 the Australian Student Wellbeing Framework. Parents and teachers can use the Framework to work together to find the best resources to help children deal with bullying and cyberbullying. The Framework provides practical ways to work through issues that students face.

The Morrison Government is also taking action to support parents and keep Australian children safe online with a \$17 million online safety package. The *Keeping our Children Safe Online* package announced in December 2018 includes an education campaign to help Australian parents, carers and teachers keep children and young people safe online. These

measures were rolled out in early 2019 and are part of the Government's ongoing commitment of more than \$100 million over the next four years to improving online safety.

7. What are your plans for early childhood education?

The Morrison Government will provide more than \$440 million for preschool in 2019 and over \$450 million in 2020, under the National Partnership with states and territories on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education. This extension takes our overall investment in preschool to \$2.8 billion since elected.

This year's Budget also includes funding to develop and implement strategies to increase preschool attendance rates amongst vulnerable, disadvantaged and Indigenous four year old children.

The Government will also review the National Partnership to ensure future funding is set up to achieve the best possible preschool outcomes.

The extension of the National Partnership will ensure almost 350,000 children in Australia have access to 15 hours of quality early learning a week, or 600 hours a year, in the year before school.

The Morrison Government also provides subsidies to improve the affordability of child care for families who depend upon it. The 2019-20 Budget provides a record \$8.6 billion for child care, including \$8.3 billion for the Child Care Subsidy.

8. What are your plans for post school education?

The Morrison Government supports Australians to get a job, and get a better job, by investing over \$3 billion a year into vocational education and training (VET). The Morrison Government is investing \$585 million in a package of measures which includes boosting incentives for employers to hire 80,000 new apprentices over the next five years.

We have strengthened the reputation of the VET sector, and replaced Labor's failed VET FEE-HELP scheme, which ripped off vulnerable students and taxpayers, with VET Student Loans, which provide financial support for students to undertake high quality training linked to real workplace needs.

The Morrison Government believes our universities should be places of learning that set students on the path to rewarding careers. This is why we are investing record funding into universities and record funding into assisting students who would not otherwise have access.

We have increased funding for universities by 19 per cent since we were elected. By 2022, the increase will be 28 per cent. We believe that you should be able to attend university whether you are from a regional community or from a capital city. Yet if you are from regional Australia, you are half as likely to attend a tertiary institution.

That is why the Morrison Government has invested over \$490 million to help fix this gap, through greater access to Youth Allowance for regional students, and has increased funding for regional scholarships.

We have invested in making sure regional students can also study in the communities in which they live. We have committed to creating Regional Study Hubs in 22 different locations and created the Destination Australia scholarships to support students to study in regional Australia.

9. How are you going to ensure that the education system in Australia is going to adequately prepare children for life beyond school?

The Morrison Government is committed to providing choice and quality in our schools. That's why the government has provided record funding for Government, Catholic and independent schools.

Under the Morrison Government's plan, backed by the work carried out by David Gonski, the government will lift student outcomes so that every child can fulfil their potential. To get this done the government has secured the agreement from every state and territory to lift student results.

The Morrison Government believes that record school funding has to be matched with a plan on how to spend that money to get the best student outcomes. As part of the National School Reform Agreements, the states and territories have also committed to implementing the reforms recommended by David Gonski in the *Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools*.

The three key areas of responsibility for the Commonwealth Government are:

- Enhancing the Australian Curriculum so that teachers can identify each individual student's learning needs;
- Creating a unique student identifier; and
- Establishing a new national evidence institute to drive improvements in teaching practice, school systems and policies.

The Morrison Government, through Education Council, is also undertaking a review of the 2008 Melbourne Declaration of education goals for young Australians. The review will update the current Declaration to create a nationally consistent future direction for Australian schooling for the next decade. On 16 April 2019 a discussion paper was released for public submission, which will close at midnight on Friday 14 June 2019.

The Morrison Government believes that learning through a vocational education is just as important as through a university degree. That is why we commissioned a comprehensive review of the VET system by former New Zealand Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills and Employment, Steven Joyce to review how Australia's VET system can better deliver, including for young Australian jobseekers.

The Review suggested immediate steps and a longer-term roadmap to strengthen the VET sector to ensure that all Australians have the skills they need to succeed in a changing workplace, and businesses have a pipeline of qualified workers to grow and prosper.

One particular measure to help transition young people from schools to work is the establishment of 10 pilot Industry Training Hubs to address the challenge of high youth unemployment in regional areas. The Hubs will create better connections between local industry and schools to improve outcomes for students, employers and the VET sector. They will be an on-the-ground presence where new approaches are needed to help students transition from school to training and work. These hubs will be supported by VET scholarships.