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NEW OECD EDUCATION REPORT SHOWS AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS POLICY IS LEADING US DOWN THE WRONG PATH

Australia spends much more than peers on school education and relies heavily on people joining the teaching profession mid-career, according to the OECD's new *Education at a Glance* report. These findings show very starkly how our current approach to school education is taking us down the wrong path.

Despite the record levels of school funding, our academic performance is at a record low, and despite our reliance on mid-career professionals becoming teachers, we have made it much harder and more expensive to make the change – with no gain to show for it.

The new report, released today shows that, in 2023 Australian government expenditure per student was higher than the OECD average at every level:

- primary level: USD **12,968**, versus USD **12,893** across the OECD
- lower-secondary level: USD **15,844**, versus USD **14,291** across the OECD
- general upper-secondary: USD **15,823**, versus USD **12,421** across the OECD.

The OECD data shows that in 2023 Australian spending on lower-secondary level education was about 10.6% higher than the OECD average, and 27.4% higher at general upper-secondary level. Since 2023, school funding in Australia have further increased—but that increase has not led to higher performance, as was shown recently by the 2025 PISA test scores.

The report also shows that Australia is much more reliant on teachers who move into the profession mid-career. In Australia, 16.9% of lower-secondary teachers are second-career teachers, more than double the OECD average of 8.4%.

The Coalition's policy to restore excellence to Australian schools addresses these key issues. Among other things, the Coalition has committed to:

- root and branch curriculum reform, including removing cross-curriculum priorities;
- clear commitments to explicit teaching and lifting the performance of boys and girls;
- a return to one-year teaching accreditation.

In addition, the Coalition has given a School Funding Guarantee to provide ongoing certainty around school funding levels, to neutralise future scare campaigns, and to allow the debate to shift to quality, performance and academic excellence.

Quotes attributable to Julian Leeser MP

“This new report shows that when it comes to high school education, we massively outspend our peers. The irony is that even though school funding is at record levels, our academic performance is at its lowest level ever.”

“In Australian dollars, the OECD report shows that governments spend about \$2,200 more per student on lower secondary education than our peers, and almost \$5,000 more per student per year on general upper secondary.”

“The evidence is clear: funding is not the issue. If we want to lift academic standards, we need to end the ideological fixation on money alone. We must shift the debate to focus on performance and quality.”

“The Coalition’s policy to restore excellence to Australian schools will end the school funding wars and focus unashamedly on excellence.”

“Australia has benefited tremendously from people moving into the teaching profession mid-career. We have double the rate of other OECD countries, and they are excellent. When I was on the board of Teach for Australia, I saw first-hand the incredible impact some of these teachers could have.”

“For some reason we’ve made it harder than ever to become a teacher by requiring people to take two years out to do a Masters degree. That’s a huge barrier if you’re thinking about making the switch, and it wasn’t necessary 15 years ago, when our academic results were much better than they are today.”

“In New South Wales alone this decision cost us more than 9,000 teachers, contributing to the teacher shortage and costing the community billions of dollars across the board.”

“It’s time to end this policy and return to an approach that we already know works.”

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