

2016 Federal Election – Policy Positions of Major Political Parties on Key School Education Funding Issues

Below are the positions of the Coalition, Australian Labor Party and the Australian Greens on the key funding issues raised by member schools in the lead up to the 2016 Federal Election. The full statements received from the Nick Xenophon Team and Family First in response to the AISSA's questions are also provided. A more detailed version of this document is available on the AISSA [2016 Federal Election page](#) of the [AISSA website](#).

Government Recurrent Funding

Coalition	Australian Labor Party (ALP)	Australian Greens
The Coalition will provide an additional \$1.2 billion over four years from 2017-18 to provide further funding support for government and non-government schools for the 2018 to 2020 school years. Total school funding will be indexed by an education sector specific index of 3.56 per cent, with an allowance for changes in enrolments, over the same period.	The ALP will deliver the Gonski funding reforms 'on-time and in-full'. The independent Parliamentary Budget Office has costed the impact of funding 2018 and 2019 at \$4.5 billion.	The Greens have committed to 'funding in full', years 2018 and 2019 of the National Education Reform Agreement' (Gonski).

Funding of Year 7s*

Coalition	Australian Labor Party (ALP)	Australian Greens
No specific policy. However, the Coalition has indicated that it will seek to fix the Year 7 funding issue by 2018, 'barring legislative restrictions'.	No specific policy. However, the ALP has indicated that it will seek to discuss the situation with the South Australian State Government if elected.	No specific policy.

*In South Australia Year 7s are funded as primary school students whereas in all other States Year 7 students are funded as secondary students. In general, secondary students receive more funding than primary students as the SRS rates which form the basis for a school's base funding amount, are considerably higher for secondary students (\$9,951 primary; \$13,087 secondary).

Additional Funding Support for Students with Disabilities

Coalition	Australian Labor Party (ALP)	Australian Greens
<p>The Coalition will provide an additional \$118.2 million over the years 2016-17 and 2017-18 for students with disability.</p>	<p>The ALP will provide \$368 million in funding for students with disabilities in the 2018-19 years as a result of delivering the Gonski reforms in full.</p> <p>The ALP will also provide \$320 million from 2017 in additional funding for students with disabilities. \$30 million will be provided for schools to purchase assistive education technology and undertake minor capital works and \$40 million will be provided for up to 2,000 teachers to complete a Masters in Inclusive Education.</p>	<p>The Greens have committed '\$4.8 billion over the next four years', for students with disabilities 'as part of a comprehensive plan for fairer funding for schools'.</p>

Note: No party is offering additional funding for capital works. The Australian Labor Party will also invest an additional \$100 million to support Indigenous students and increase the number of Indigenous teachers. The Coalition will invest \$5.75 million in the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience programme. Further details are available in the more detailed version of this document on the AISSA website.

As at 21/06/16. Information correct to the best of AISSA's ability at time of preparation. No warranty or guarantee is or can be given by AISSA or any member of staff and no liability is or can be accepted for any loss or damage resulting from any person relying on or using the information contained in this document.

Full Statement Received from Nick Xenophon

Nick Xenophon Team Education Policy

Our vision is realizing the full potential of education in Australia to propel all learners to be the best that they can be now and in the future so they can further their individual aims and assist in lifting Australia's competitiveness and innovation.

We support transforming schooling to drive a new era of development and growth across the full range of expectations for 21st Century learning. We support building upon the strengths of our schools and driving and amplifying leading edge research driven teaching in Australia.

Children should have the best start for learning through quality Early Childhood experiences that nurture and develop the whole child.

Examples of what needs to be done:

- Implement and fully fund Gonski to address the inadequate and piecemeal approach to funding for our schools. Currently schools in South Australia receive less Federal Government funding than if they were in any other state or territory. If this funding inequity continues, South Australian independent school students will receive on average \$400 less in funding each year, increasing each year from 2017 compared to students in other states. This funding discrimination against South Australian schools and their students must be reversed as a matter of urgency.
- Further support for students with special learning needs including students with disability and high achievers.
- All Year 7 students in South Australia should receive the same amount of Federal Government funding as Year 7 students in other states. Year 7 students in South Australia receive less Commonwealth Government funding per year than students in other states and territories. This is because the federal government funds them at the primary school student rate even though all Year 7 students in Australia now use the Australian Curriculum.
- A Senate inquiry into Australia's education system, with a particular focus on best practice in teaching and learning and how this can be supported by Government funding.
- Fund education in ways that enable students of all ages and socio-economic statuses to have the best opportunity to achieve their potential and goals
- Place greater emphasis on increasing the range of education options for students from Years 10 +, including trade, work-ready and entrepreneurial courses
- Maintain university fee regulation to ensure students from all backgrounds are able to access higher education as a way to address socioeconomic disparity

Full Statement Received from Family First

Family First values AISSA schools' important work in expanding choice in education in Australia. We are Australia's leading independent party with 14 years' experience in 4 parliaments nationwide, including the Senate. We have been growing steadily and have a comprehensive range of policies (see www.familyfirst.org.au).

Our experience in parliaments tells us that when it comes to funding initiatives, these are decisions for the government of the day. Our Party succeeds in getting Members of Parliament elected to Upper Houses, or 'Houses of Review' if you like, such as the Senate. Upper Houses review and can amend legislation, but whilst they can review and criticise spending decisions, they can not amend spending decisions. Australian experience tells us that it is a major party that will form government, and therefore they are the only parties who can make commitments to spend on initiatives you might desire.

Given Family First's steady 14-year growth and policy platform 'Family Business, Family Farms, Every Family, a job and a house', Family First is focussed on the long-term benefits for the nation. Those benefits are best advanced by ending the abuse of the constitution. The Federal Government is continually interfering in state or local council matters, reaching its worst level during this election campaign with pork-barrelling spending on all sorts of projects that have no Commonwealth constitutional responsibility. There have been successful High Court challenges to such spending in the past. Labor's campaign slogan is about 'health and education' but neither of these are Commonwealth responsibilities. As a federalist Party, Family First supports strong States and therefore is aiming, longer term, to move Commonwealth revenue down to States and let States have the funding base they need to spend on health, education, welfare, community facilities and many other responsibilities. Having said that, this is a longer term aspirational project. The short term funding needs of schools must be met and, as such, we support rectifying in the Senate the funding formula that is presently short-changing South Australia. The State Government has much to answer for in negotiating such a poor deal but it can be rectified in the States' house, the Senate. Before continuing, let us emphasise how important it is to Family First that our freedoms are protected. We argue that we are the leading party in protecting independent schools' right to hire staff according to the beliefs of their affiliated faith-based institution. Make no mistake, the Greens would tear this away and for many faith based schools this would be the end of the school. To use the Christian analogy, it would result in a choice between God and money. Labor have been weak on this issue during the campaign, at one stage Mr Shorten stated he would consider the Greens' attacks on faith based employment exemptions, but within a week he distanced himself from that position. There is a strong stream of agreement with the Greens position within Labor. Given these major risks to faith based education, Family First's state based funding aspirations would only be acceptable if all anti-faith discrimination laws at state level were amended and funding agreements containing strong protection of freedom. In other words, schools must have freedom to act on their faith based principles without fear of losing funding.

For all of the above reasons, we can not answer specific funding requests or questions, and are not making commitments during this election campaign for millions of dollars that you might wish to be spent on a project that is, properly, a state responsibility. As a Party with state and federal MPs, we commit to work with you to make states accountable for your funding needs. Family First is focussed on delivering a 20% income tax rate across the board, which will shrink Commonwealth revenue and leave room for States to raise the revenue they need to fund the initiatives you are

Statement Received from Family First cont'd

promoting. Lower Commonwealth taxes will also increase the prospect of greater corporate and individual philanthropy to social causes. We urge community groups and organisations to look beyond the short-term. Do not reward the major parties' pork-barrelling. The Liberals and Labor are not serious about bringing the budget into the black, and every pet project they support takes us further into \$450 billion in national debt (and approaching \$14 billion a year in interest repayments alone) that our children and grandchildren will have to pay for. Support long-term structural restoration of the federation. States will then be who you ask, and who are fully accountable, for your funding needs and the blame game will end once and for all.

Links

Full details of the policy positions of the major parties across a range of areas are available at:

Liberal Party of Australia: <https://www.liberal.org.au/>.

Australian Labor Party: <http://www.alp.org.au/>.

Australian Greens: <http://greens.org.au/>.

Nick Xenophon: <https://nxt.org.au/>.

Family First: <http://www.familyfirst.org.au/>.