



Territory Educator

Our Kids Need GONSKI



Term 2 / 2016

Don't Let Malcolm Turnbull Stop Gonski Funding



- boarding school for
secondary students in
town lots of social impact
(petrol sniffing, alcohol, loss of
identity) - social impact lots
of money
- Secondary students should
have the choice to be
educated in their homelands
- Senior secondary education
in the Homelands must be
funded to and (Grant/allow)
mobile pre-school teacher
support pre-school
Homelands school continues
to employ Aboriginal teachers
and open work pathways for
younger students
- air conditioning in classrooms
- two separate blocks for
parking area

Federal President Correna Haythorpe with Gangan Elders



Gonski Student Support

What You See is the Iceberg Tip

Remote Resourcing

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Don't let Malcolm Turnbull stop Gonski funding

As the federal election date of 2 July approaches, it is worth looking closely at the commitments of the major parties on education.

Many political commentators have described this election as one of the duller in history. And although on most issues it seems there is very little to separate the major parties, there is a very marked difference on education policy and schools funding.

Malcolm Turnbull confirmed with the federal budget that his Coalition government is abandoning the Gonski needs-based funding model for schools. He has committed an additional \$1.2 billion over three years beginning in 2018.

Bill Shorten on the other hand pledged that a Labor government would continue to fund the Gonski model and invest an additional \$4.5 billion in 2018 and 2019. According to Labor's figures, this would mean an additional \$100 million in funding for the NT school sector as a whole in those two years.

The picture under Malcolm Turnbull looks very grim. Because of changes in how funding increase

are calculated, NT public schools would actually see a cut in funding after 2017.

The Federal Budget papers show that federal funding for public schools in the NT will drop from \$167.3 million in 2016/17 to \$138.4 million in 2018/19. Funding for private schools will continue to rise, from \$151.4 million to \$169.4 million.

The decrease in funding to public schools is despite the fact that the Northern Territory has one of the most socio-economically disadvantaged populations in Australia. Of the 100 most disadvantaged schools nationally, 54 are in the NT, and 44 per cent of NT students live in remote or very remote locations, compared to 2.2% nationally.

It should be a national scandal that massive additional funding from Canberra – \$272 million over four years – has not found its way to Territory public schools. The NT received this funding – over and above what was promised under the Gonski model – despite not being a signatory. The decision by the Giles Government to cut staff and redirect those funds to infrastructure means that our public schools are funded at a lower level on a per student basis than they were in 2012.

The squandering of this additional investment is not a reason to abandon the Gonski funding model. The case for additional funding is compelling, but it will require federal



THE ELECTION CHOICE IS CLEAR

LABOR	COALITION	THE GREENS
Support full Gonski funding	Will cut Gonski funding after 2017	Support full Gonski funding



Funding for NT public schools under Malcolm Turnbull

Financial Year	Amount in Millions of \$	Change on Year Before (Millions of \$)
2015-16	143.5	n/a
2016-17	167.3	+23.8
2017-18*	155.8	-11.5
2018-19	138.4	-17.4
2019-20	145.2	+6.8

* First year of Malcolm Turnbull's new funding policy.
Source: 2016 Federal Budget papers

The picture under Malcolm Turnbull looks very grim. Because of changes in how funding increase are calculated, NT public schools would actually see a cut in funding after 2017.

and Territory governments to work together to ensure that our public schools receive more resources for teaching and support staff and special programs to assist students. It will require a commitment at a Territory level to transparent and genuinely needs-based funding of schools.

Our students deserve these extra Gonski resources and need them to close the gap with the rest of Australia. That's why we urge you to use your vote on 2 July to help secure additional funding for our public schools.



A Permanent State of Insecurity

Too many staff in NT public schools are employed on contracts, writes Branch President Jarvis Ryan. It's unfair on staff and is hurting the NT's ability to attract and retain teachers.

Before I came to teach in the Territory, I vividly remember attending an impressive seminar at the swanky Sir Stamford Hotel at Sydney's Circular Quay. A young teacher spoke passionately about his experiences teaching in a remote community.

Seminars like this took place in several major cities around Australia. They were advertised in the big papers and were a recruitment push by the NT Department of Education to attract adventurous and talented teachers from around the country.

Later, I was interviewed at another swanky hotel by a panel of three DoE officers to be assessed for suitability.

I'm sure many of you teaching in the Territory had a similar experience. For a long time, the NT DoE made a strong push to recruit from interstate, and central to the marketing pitch was the lure of permanent employment.

Most of those who commenced teaching in the Territory before 2013 describe being offered permanency within two years.

But everywhere I go when I visit schools all over the NT today, I meet disgruntled teachers who describe having been on a series of fixed-term

contracts for three or four years and sometimes even longer.

Since 2013, which saw the last big conversion of staff to permanent status, the proportion of teachers on contracts has soared, from 13 per cent to well over 30 per cent (see the graph). The situation is even worse for non-teaching staff.

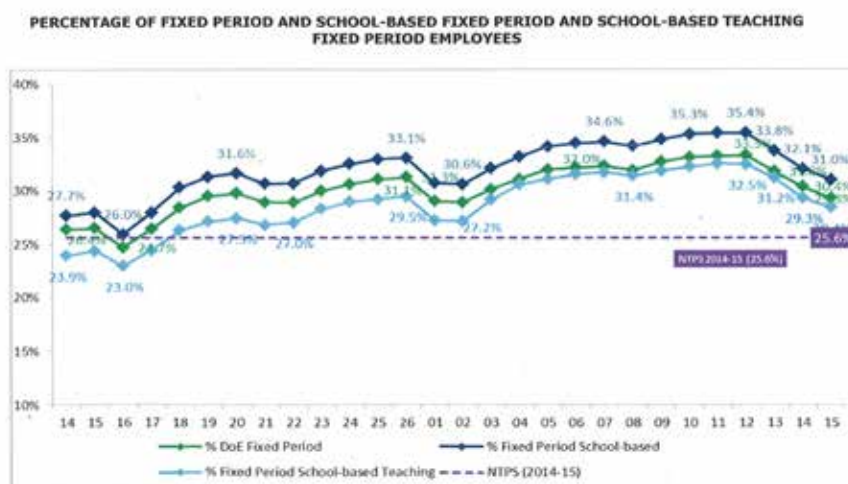
To try to break the impasse, in 2014 the union agreed during enterprise bargaining negotiations to support the introduction of school-based merit selection procedures for the appointment of classroom teachers.

The Department was keen to align staffing selection with its push for devolution, or Increasing School Autonomy, as it is badged, and also the merit principle, which is supposed to underpin all permanent appointments in the NT public sector.

The union agreed to the changes but also signed a memorandum with the Department agreeing that an overall target of 85 per cent of agency staff in permanent employment was both realistic and desirable, and that both parties would work co-operatively to achieve this figure.

I have no hesitation in saying that the new policy has been a dismal failure. According to figures provided by Human Resources, since the memorandum in late 2014 only 130 permanent positions have been offered, of which only 84 were for teachers. This is far less than the number of permanent staff who have resigned or retired in this period.

In my view, the major culprit is clearly the Global Funding model (also known as global school budgets). With all permanent staff now required to be "attached" to a school, the impetus to offer permanency has to come from principals. Their failure to offer many positions demonstrates nervousness about the impact appointing



*** NOTE ON GRAPH:** This graph covers the period from the beginning of the 2015 school year until early in 2016. The figures make it look like the level of contract employment has declined in recent months. This is only due to contracts ending over the Christmas holiday period. There has been a steady trend in the growth of contract employment since 2013.

permanent staff will have on their budget, as the salary cost of nearly every staff member now has to be factored into the school's operating budget.

Merit selection means the best candidate should get the job, regardless of how much they cost. But many principals seem concerned about employing CT9s when they may only be able to cover a CT3 in their budget.

This dilemma is central to why the AEU views Global Funding as a disaster and we will continue to lobby for its rollback and dismantling, or at the very least the removal of most of the staffing costs from school budgets.

The current model imposes too much risk on individual schools, especially in an environment in which schools budgets have been frozen or cut in real terms. It abrogates the Department's responsibility as the overarching employer to strategically manage its overall workforce profile, including staffing costs.

Not only is the current stasis unfair to staff who have been on contracts for several years, it means the NT is missing out on attracting many of the best teachers from interstate. As a very small jurisdiction which only trains a fraction of its own teachers, the NT will always be overwhelmingly reliant on enticing teachers to move from other states. The AEU's view is that a strong incentive program with realistic prospects of permanency is vital to attracting and retaining high-quality teachers from interstate.

Principals are currently largely left to do their own recruiting, and a number have spoken with me about the difficulty of finding suitable applicants.

Clearly we need to create a better balance between local selection and centralised workforce planning.

The union has flagged our concerns on numerous occasions with the Chief Executive, Ken Davies, who has acknowledged the high level of contract employment is a major problem. Mr Davies told a meeting of school leaders during the mid-semester break that if principals didn't move on this issue, he would, and impose solutions from above. He signalled a readiness to work with the union to find solutions, and indicated the Department would soon commence interstate recruitment again.

Clearly we need to create a better balance between local selection and centralised workforce planning.

One idea I've floated with members that seems popular is offering permanency within a region. Staff might not be guaranteed ongoing employment in their school of choice, but would have greater certainty. But for this to work we will need to work out an appointment process.

I can assure all members that the union will make the issue of permanent employment a core priority in the coming months, and especially as we get prepared for enterprise bargaining next year.

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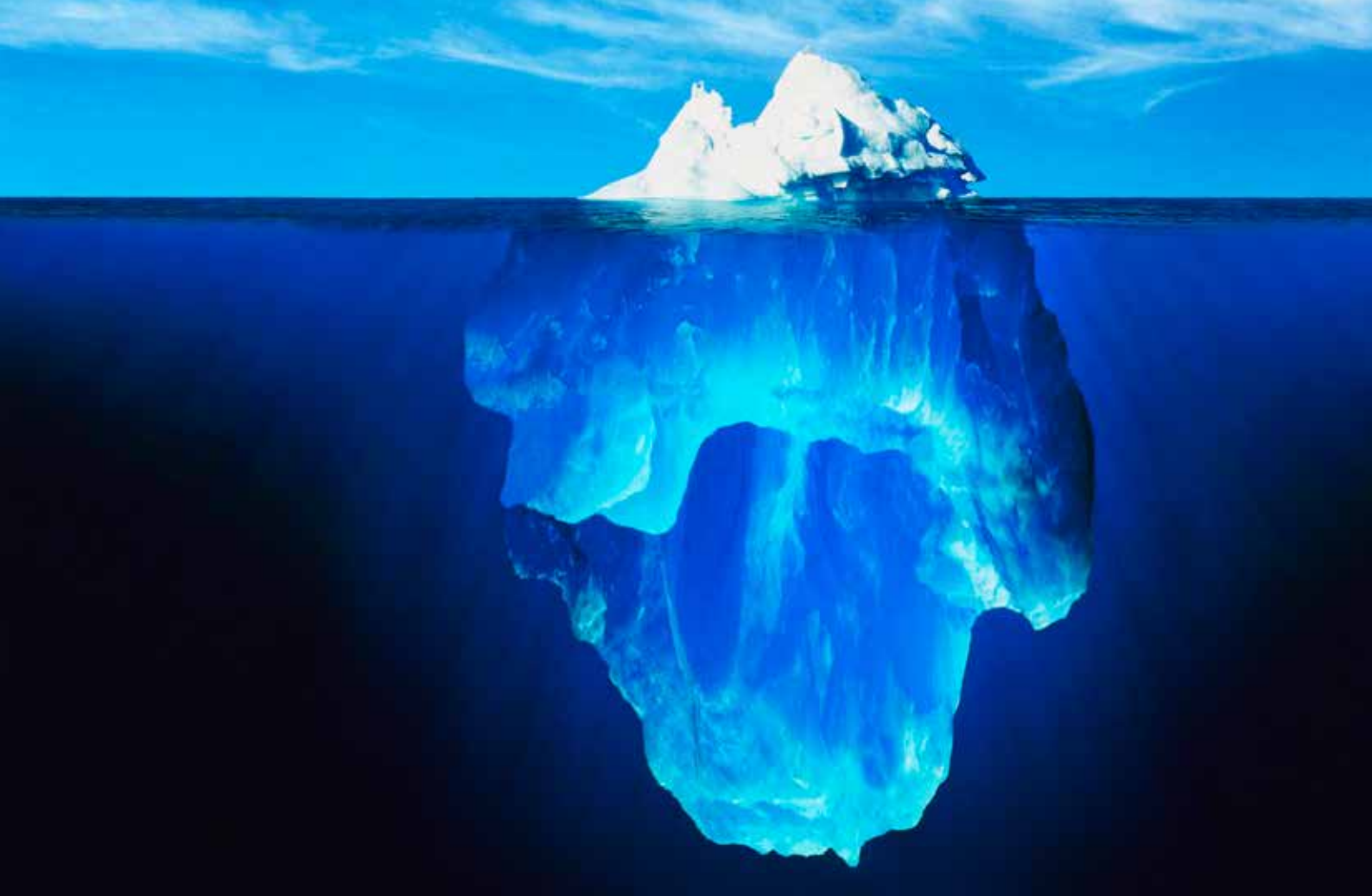
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What You See is the Iceberg Tip

The work of teachers and school leaders reminds me of an iceberg. Only 10% of its mass is visible. The other 90% is hidden beneath the ocean, seen only by marine creatures. In the same way the work done by teachers and school leaders is 10% observable and 90% unseen.

Perception

A common public perception of teachers and school support staff is that they work for six hours each day five days a week. This 30 hour working week is complimented by 12 weeks "holiday" each year. When it comes to occupational comparison,

those working in schools are deemed to be people on Easy Street. Letters to newspapers and callers to radio talkback programs frequently slate teachers for lack of commitment and care for students.

A criticism heaped on teachers, support staff and school leadership teams is that teaching is a simple job, generating far too many rewards. I have heard people say that teachers should go and get themselves a "real job". Letters to newspapers regularly decry teachers as being too well rewarded for the tasks they undertake.

There are some of course, who appreciate the in depth nature of teaching and education: Sadly the view that teaching is superficial appears to be held by many people.

Many students and parents appreciate 'their' teacher. However, in media releases and public statements about schools and teachers, there are far more brickbats than bouquets on offer. Criticism is often harsh and strident with acclamation of the positives being restricted to recognition on World Teachers' Day.

What is Entailed

Teaching is far more than what is visible to the public. In fact, 'teaching' is but one small part of the educational equation. Detailed planning, preparation and programming, taking many hours of time, precede classroom teaching and direct engagement with students. Beyond teaching there is the recording of outcomes, (testing, measurement and assessment), review and then the considerations of revision and extension. These educational elements go well beyond teacher and pupil interaction in the class room.

After Hours Commitment

A drive past most schools before and after hours, on weekends and during holiday periods will reveal a growing number of parked teachers' cars. Staff members are inside working on the huge number of tasks that embrace the teaching profession. Salary recognises teachers for around 37 hours per week. Many in real terms many are working upwards of 60 hours during the same period.

Teachers are one of the few professional groups not eligible for overtime payments to recognise extra hours at work. Police, firemen, and nursing staff work to fixed rosters and are remunerated if extra hours or shifts are worked. This does not happen for teachers in schools. The only person entitled to compensation for extra work is the school janitor and only if pre-agreement has been arranged.

These days, there are more and more meetings in which teachers and staff members are required to participate. Staff and unit meetings, moderation meetings, performance management meetings and a plethora of other gatherings have proliferated. Most are held outside the scope of the normal working day and week. Teachers organise extended excursions. They coach and manage teams and groups involved in sporting and cultural exchanges of several days duration. Preparation for their normal classes before going is part of the deal. They are part of fundraising activities, school council committees and school improvement planning groups. The list goes on.

Unlike many professionals, educators do not always feel they can leave school at work. Programming and preparation, marking and updating data onto electronic files which transfer back to school records are three of the tasks that transfer classrooms to lounge rooms.

A 'Giving' Profession

As teaching does not pay overtime, teachers give an incalculable number of unpaid hours devoted to their profession. This makes 'giving' one of the key characteristics of those engaged in the profession.

Teachers and support staff should not be knocked. They are selfless, giving and caring. Most are there for others and without the work they do our society would be the poorer. Theirs is one of society's linchpin professions. And they deserve to be valued and appreciated. *Henry Gray*

Union Thug or Forthright Advocate?

Stephen Pelizzo

I've been a union member for more than forty years. For the majority of that time I have actively sought out representative roles. I formed the view a long time ago that people, join, remain in or leave unions for as many reasons as there are individuals.

This is probably equally true of those who seek union office. For me, it's been an interesting and uplifting journey.

However, these days it has become more than fashionable, almost accepted as common knowledge, that unions are on the decline and union leadership is suspect. It's reflected in how difficult it is to get teachers to seek leadership roles such as sub branch reps or Conference delegates. In the hope of encouraging others, I would like to offer a positive perspective.

1. The thrill of elections. I've won some, lost some. While winning is better, even when a better candidate gets up, there are people who have made the positive choice to vote for you. At the end of the day, no Regional Director, or even Chief Executive, ever receives such a direct endorsement of the education fraternity. Pretty affirming.
2. The cut and thrust of debate, including the pleasure of losing gracefully, something I struggled to learn. In any representative group there will be a range of opinions, and most union matters raise an emotive response. Sometimes it can be brutal. But the skill of influencing others, of public speaking, and a belief in democracy means accepting that everyone else just got it wrong.
3. Standing up for, sometimes even in front of, others. One of the basic principles of my life, which has informed why I am a teacher, an Army Reservist and Unionist is that those who are strong enough have a duty to protect and assist those who are less so. Effectively you put yourself between those you care about and people and values you oppose.
4. Observing firsthand the cultural evolution of an industrial landscape based on the 'rule of law' to one in NT education more comfortable with a 'rule of man'.
5. Being prepared to take risks on principle and learning to accept the cost.
6. Identifying as being part of movement, of fellowship with those whose interest is in the education of the young of our society.
7. Being a part of the conversation (having a voice) on education matters locally, Territory wide, and nationally.

Personally I believe I have always gained more than I gave, emotionally and intellectually. With all its ups and downs, I'd thoroughly recommend it.

Resourcing in Remote Schools: What Difference Does it Make?



There appears to be a strong correlation between resourcing of remote schools and student outcomes, writes John Guenther

The findings presented in this article are based on independent research conducted by the Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation's Remote Education Systems project.

This research was designed to uncover ways to improve outcomes for remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. It commenced in 2011 and concludes in June 2016. It is the largest project of its kind ever to be undertaken.

While the team's qualitative research has focused mainly on three jurisdictions – the Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia –

our quantitative analysis has drawn on national data from My School and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census. A summary of the project's qualitative findings is available in a downloadable technical report.

The arguments presented here are based largely on quantitative data gleaned from the My School website.

On the basis of the evidence, I contend: 1) that schools with higher proportions of local staff produce better outcomes; 2) they do so partly because they are better resourced; and 3) that in the Northern Territory (which has about half of all very remote schools), resourcing makes it more difficult to employ more local staff. I acknowledge that there is a complex array of factors at play here and I am not suggesting that simply adding more local staff or more money to schools will improve outcomes. However, I will tackle each of these assertions and show some of the evidence on which I base these claims.

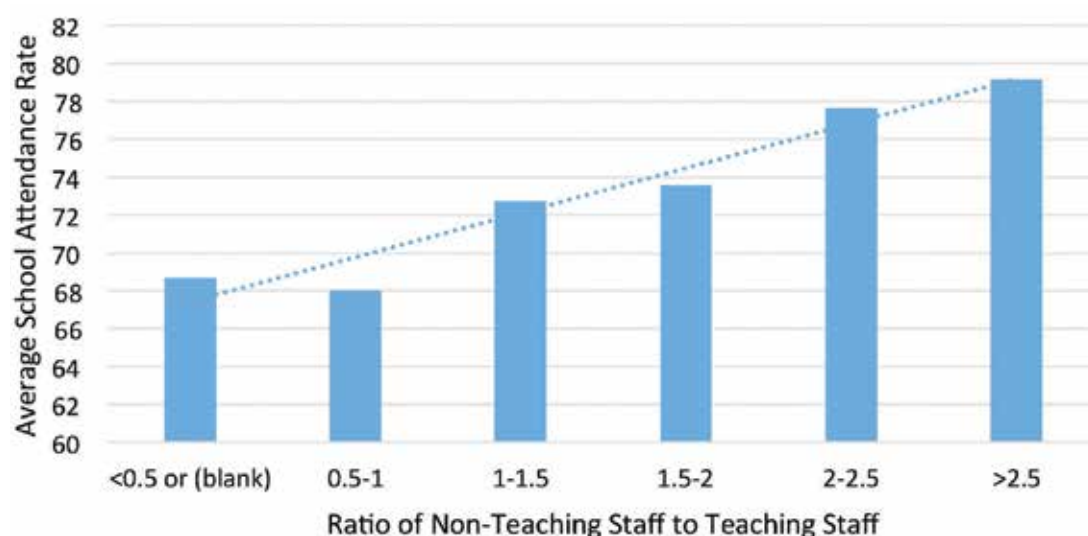


Figure 1. Average School Attendance Rates for Very Remote Schools with >80% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders compared with ratio of non-teachers to teachers, 2008-2015 Source: My School



Local Staff and Very Remote School Outcomes

Figure 1 shows how the ratio of non-teaching to teaching staff in very remote schools changes with attendance. Schools with a ratio less than 1:1 have on average, an attendance rate of between 68 and 69 per cent. As the ratio increases to above 2.5:1 the attendance rate increases to about 79 per cent. While I am careful not to make assertions about causality, the relationship between the two variables is strong. It should be noted that *My School* defines non-teaching staff as any staff that are not qualified teachers – those staff are not necessarily only teacher assistants. They may not be all local staff, but our analysis of Census data shows that the non-teaching workforce is predominantly local (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders) in very remote schools. We have found

that similar relationships exist with academic performance (NAPLAN) variables.

Resourcing and Very Remote School Outcomes

Figure 2 shows how net recurrent income per student changes with school attendance. Again, while I am cautious about causality, there is a strong relationship between the variables. Schools with greater recurrent per student funding have better attendance outcomes.

Money does make a difference, and while I have shown attendance data here, the relationship also applies to academic outcomes.

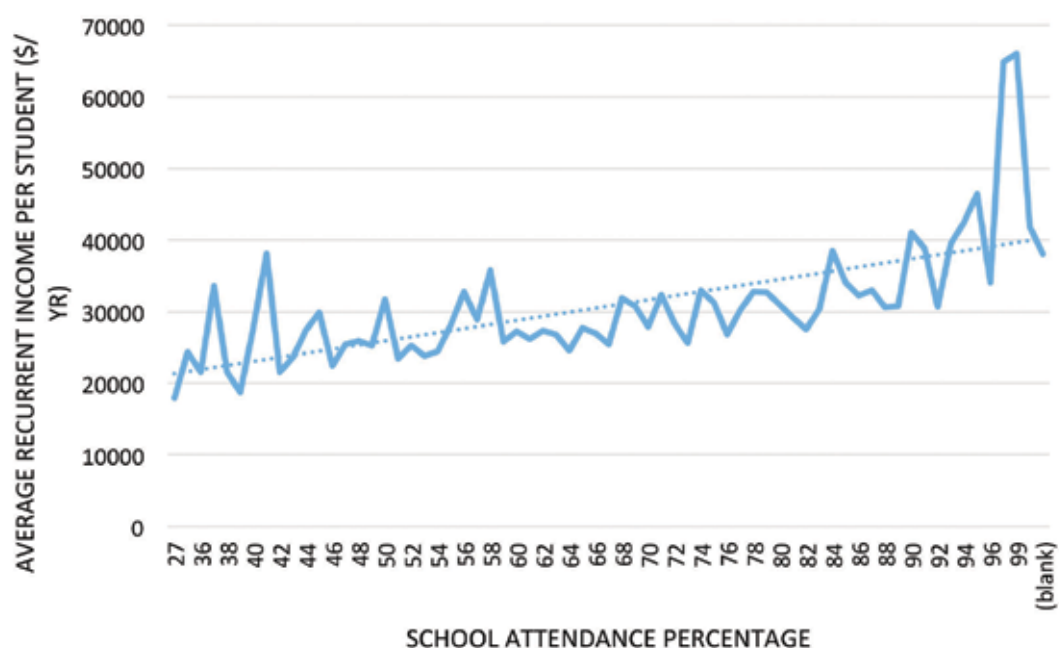


Figure 2. Average School Attendance Rates for Very Remote Schools with >80% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders compared with average per student net recurrent income, 2009-2014. Source: *My School*

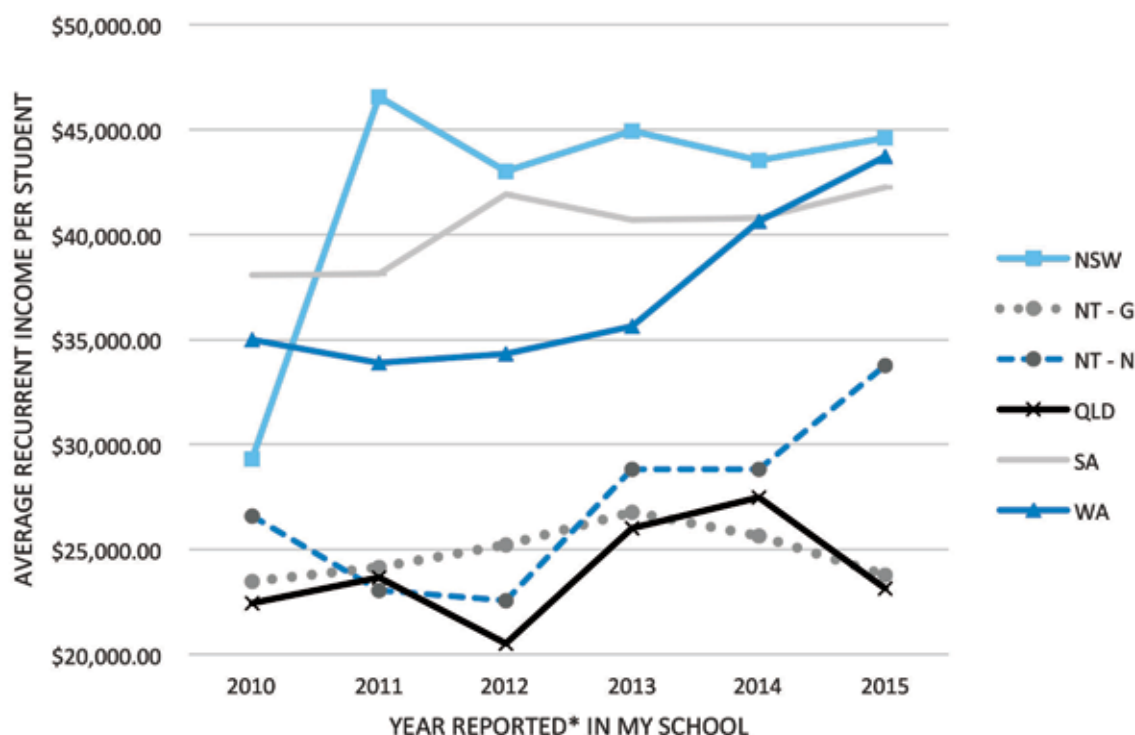


Figure 3. Average recurrent per student income for Very Remote Schools with >80% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders by jurisdiction and year reported in My School*. Source: My School (ACARA 2016) *report year is for previous year e.g. school finances for 2014 are reported in the 2015 release of My School data

Very remote school resourcing trends

Figure 3 shows trends for per student recurrent funding by year and jurisdiction. I have separated the Northern Territory into government (NT-G) and non-government (NT-N) sectors deliberately to show the diverging trends.

On its own, this chart does not tell a complete story. For example, while Queensland schools have similar levels of per-student recurrent spending, attendance rates in very remote schools there are among the highest of all jurisdictions. However, in 2015 there were only 15 Very Remote schools with more than 80 per cent ATSI students, compared with 81 in the Northern Territory. Enrolments in Queensland were on average 2.5 times higher per school than in the Northern Territory. The two jurisdictions are quite different.

However, the point to take from this chart is that while other jurisdictions have increased per student resources to very remote schools considerably since 2009 (2010 reporting year), the Northern Territory has kept its resourcing in actual dollars about the same.

Non-government schools in the Northern Territory on the other hand, have increased per student recurrent funding by about 30 per cent. In the period between 2009 and 2012 when per student funding was about the same in the two sectors, attendance rates were tracking at about

the same levels (if not a little lower for the non-government sector).

In the last two years a gap between the two sectors has opened up so that in 2015 non-government schools had attendance rates six percentage points higher than comparable (very remote schools with greater than 80 per cent ATSI students) government schools.

Conclusions

The analysis I have presented here demonstrates the link between attendance and the proportion of local staff in remote schools, and the level of per-student funding for very remote schools with more than 80 per cent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Higher levels of local staff employment are of course enabled by higher levels of funding. In general NT schools lag behind other jurisdictions in the employment of Indigenous non-teaching staff, and this in turn reflects in lower levels of school attendance.

While there are several explanations for these relationships, the simple point of this analysis is to demonstrate that money does matter for very remote schools and it does make a difference both to the capacity of communities both in terms of local employment, and importantly in terms of student outcomes.

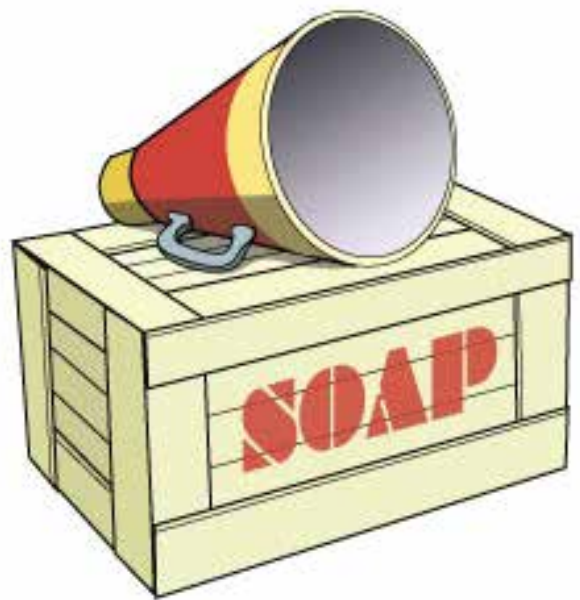
John Guenther is the Principal Research Leader, Remote Education Systems Project, Flinders University and the Cooperative Research Centre for Remote Economic Participation

This article is available at our website with a full list of references and links to further reading.

SoapBox

Soap Box is your chance to share your thoughts and experiences. All members are encouraged to submit articles and they will be published anonymously.

Here a teacher provides a critique of school devolution models.



The Illusion of the School Reform Agenda

"If the profession remains silent and passive in the face of some of these developments it will have itself to blame, at least in part, for what might eventuate"

(Dinham, 2014a).

Recent coverage of cuts to school budgets highlights the need for renewed focus on the principles of the Gonski funding reforms. Ultimately, most issues in education come back to equitable and adequate funding for schools. Cuts to funding in the guise of 'reform' will not improve NT education, nor will fancy language dressed up as individual choice (Martin & Macpherson, 2015). School autonomy can be perceived as a social devolution of responsibility to individuals (principals, teachers, students and parents) and positions these individuals as scapegoats for a broken system.

The drive for reform in the public system is largely in response to the belief that public education in the Australia is not 'up to standard' (Dinham, 2015). Let me be clear—there is nothing wrong with public schools in the Territory, nor any other part of Australia for that matter. I know because I work in one.

The 'failures', it could be argued, are due to the inefficient systems that we work within. The

inability of the education systems and various departments, to be reflective and respond to change prevents schools, teachers and communities working together to make schools function more effectively. The systems that we have in place are based on assumptions that have been made in the past. Historically, schools have been considered a social good and education as the key to overcoming disadvantage.

As a teacher in a Government school, my position is not against reform per se, but against a particular brand of reforms that are marketed under the guise of choice and individualism. These reforms are known to us in the Territory as Global School Budgeting and Independent Public Schools (IPS). The twin policies of IPS and Global Budgeting purport to fix a problem that doesn't actually exist.

Evidence-based practitioners who use data to inform our programs are often alarmed to learn that the foundations of these policies are largely borrowed from other jurisdictions, notably the UK and US. We all are aware of how those education systems are performing; in the main not well. Additionally, the debate about educational reform has largely occurred in the political sphere, outside of the school system and to a degree, without input or guidance from teachers who work at the coal face (Gobby, 2013).

Departmental documents, such as the IPS Prospectus (NT DoE, 2016), have no evidence from research or data to underpin them. The documents outline the positives of reforms in scant detail, but offer no data, evidence or reasoning that makes a case for change. Large graphics and

photographs ostensibly stand in the stead of the thorough research that is expected of teachers themselves. There is no mention of any negatives relating to taking on IPS status. This approach suggests that such a reform does not have learning outcomes at its core but is rather a political stunt.

Independent Public Schools

The rationale for IPS is for schools to become innovative and more responsive to the needs of the community. There is also the argument that this reform “enhances student pathways and student learning outcomes” (NT DoE, 2016). Schools should already be innovative and responsive. A change of title does nothing to improve how innovative or responsive a school is or can be.

There is a small bucket of money on offer to entice NT schools become ‘independent’, thus making this particular reform rather inequitable. Advantaging schools that already have the resources and results by rewarding them with extra money disadvantages schools that have neither the resources nor results. This type of systemic change is being pushed for political ends regardless of the ‘mixed findings of efficacy and effects’ (Gobby, 2013). Having schools round on each other and fight for this dubious status weakens the collective effort of teachers and the community in demanding adequate funding for schools and undermines the most needy of student cohorts.

The lure of extra money in a system that is crying out for funds is appealing to individual schools. But we live in a society and as a group of people that have said we value education. Most notably, the ministers of each state and territory signed and committed to the Melbourne Declaration (MCEETYA, 2008). The Declaration articulates goals relating to the educational aspirations that Australian society has for young people. The aspirations of this proclamation regarding equity and resourcing are inconsistent with the philosophy underpinning the IPS model.

Arguably by implementing IPS, we could be creating a parallel system of the very bureaucracy we intended to replace and therefore make current systems more inefficient. Of particular note is the increase in school administration which continues well past the initial funding for transitioning to an IPS as reported by Gobby (2013). In the NSW school devolution context, Martin & Macpherson (2015) list a roll call of issues that begin with an increase in school workloads and end with increased pressure on principals. The authors suggest part of the increased pressure on Principals is being forced to defend budgeting decisions, particularly if such decisions result in a decrease in school staff. Thus principals are unwillingly co-opted to do the work of education ministers and education departments.

The decreasing systemic support that has been reported in both WA (Gobby, 2013) and NSW (Martin & Macpherson, 2015) is likely to also occur in the NT. Departmental restructures will inevitably lead to less support for schools across the board, not just IPS schools. Furthermore, reviewing the research into independent schools, Dinham (2015) suggests that there is very little evidence to support the assertion that student achievement is affected at all. Western Australia's own research into its system (that

we have largely borrowed) found that, on the contrary, the increase administrative load and the privileging of certain schools over others was prevalent in WA. Gobby (2013) notes that the Principal at the centre of his study found that innovation was actually curtailed. This reform could be considered disingenuous, in that the capacity to innovate depends upon being adequately funded in the first place. Moreover, research from the USA, where ‘charter’ schools have been in existence longer than here, is somewhat damning. Diane Ravitch (2013) suggests that instead of assisting schools in need, this reform has led to minority students being excluded as well as privatisation of the government school network. Political aims rarely match community expectations or align with the principles of equity.

Devolution itself does not just automatically improve a school system. It can improve school outcomes if it comes together with the resources and funding to improve the climate of the school and the main drivers of improvement: teachers, robust accountability measures, social and cultural capital, sound pedagogy, and effective leadership (Gobby, 2013). IPS schools are promoted as a way of providing schools with the freedom to improve the quality of education. Freedom to do what exactly? The freedom to teach?

Hattie (2009) suggested that the quality of the teacher and the relationships they form with students have some of the biggest effect sizes in relation to impacting achievement. If that is the evidence, then why not invest in teachers to enhance our capabilities? As far as evidence to support devolution, Hopkins (2013) states that “we know from the evidence of PISA... that there is no correlation between decentralisation and achievement”.

This reform leads principals away from the focus on teaching and learning and toward the role of a chief executive in a business. The marketisation of education is underway – just take a look at the copyrighted Visible Learning materials. Dinham (2015) points out that the school system cannot operate in the way of a business and that seeks endless growth and change. It is impossible for a school to implement a ‘business plan’. In seeking to act like a business, schools will inevitably focus on the cost of the people it employs as a way to activate money for innovation. A new graduate teacher will cost the budget a lot less than an experienced teacher. Just looking at this simple example shows that making schools subject to business-like market forces is not appropriate. In addition the market forces relating to education are already in action. Big publishers are now involved in most parts of the education sphere (Carmody, 2012 & Dinham, 2015).

Like it or not, there are political ends to the means of reform. It is a clear abrogation of responsibility to devolve funding and responsibility whilst

claiming to be upholding the social contract. These policies are not addressing the adequate funding of public schools, nor are they impacting on the inequitable outcomes experienced by some marginalised groups. In the Northern Territory context, we are fully aware of the gap in educational attainment for our Indigenous population, those in areas of low SES and students with special educational needs. These measures and further cutting funding to schools will not result in improved student outcomes.

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Women's Officer Bulletin June 2016

Melanie Murad Baldwin
Women's Officer – AEU NT Branch

Hello to all members. It is a great honour and pleasure to work in the capacity of the AEU NT Branch Women's Officer.

Since meeting so many members at Conference, I have taken NT specific issues to Federal AEU meetings. Behind the scenes and across Australia, all of the Women's Officers are working extremely hard to improve the conditions of members. This team is led by Sally Thompson and it is just wonderful to work with such an empathetic and formidable task force. All of these experienced women have the NT on their minds and admire the strength, passion and tenacity of our diverse membership. In fact, all of the meetings that are scheduled have been purposely adjusted to suit my needs as a grass roots teacher in the voluntary role that I proudly hold.

As a result, our issues are taken seriously and this team continually require feedback and workplace wellbeing data. Paid Parental Leave, Domestic Violence and Superannuation are key agenda items. After each meeting, the AEU NT Branch are required to complete an ongoing log of claims and the FTOs, our Organiser, and our Administration staff all work collaboratively to complete the necessary feedback. Their immediate responses provide the Federal team with current reflections and data on matters that are critical. To compliment this information, the Federal Women's Officer is encouraging all members currently affected by key issues to come forth and

share stories. Please forward your thoughts, especially in the case of Paid Parental Leave to the Secretary or myself. If we hold back and keep our experiences isolated, it is difficult to lobby and strive for change.

International Women's Day 2016 was once again a well supported event. My sincere thanks to all of the members, friends and organisations across Darwin and Katherine for attending the first "Strong Women" Film Festival. This year the AEU-NT Branch celebrated IWD 2016 and recognised the stoicism of Malala and her caring, unstoppable family. Both venues were a sell out!

I would also like to acknowledge the additional support of the NT Government. This "Strong Women" Film Festival will also come to a range of regional centres and communities very soon. Due to screening protocols, it was not possible to launch this initiative sooner. I am looking forward to the evening that I can gather with members in Tennant Creek and the small community that I teach in, Mung Karta to enjoy this film and also showcase the non-compromising efforts of both traditional owners and friends behind the Anti-Nuclear Waste Dump Campaign – Muck arty short film. Please send a request if your local remote membership would like this film event to come to your community. It's a wonderful chance to come together in a light hearted matter and to celebrate great efforts of women both locally and globally.

I was also once again to march in the IWD parade through the City of Darwin and to work in unison with a range of organisations. I would also like to acknowledge the marches that were held across the NT in which so many of our members were actively involved.

Please encourage colleagues to join the AEU-NT Branch and be a part of change.

Management of Unsatisfactory Performance

Processes: the good, the bad... and the downright ugly.

We've seen an upsurge in the use of what used to be known as PIPs over the past two years, particularly with the CT9 classification of teachers.

The Good:

The AEU NT fully endorses the need for its members to operate in a professional, efficient and friendly manner.

We have collaborated with the DoE in the production of an updated procedure and policy document that clarifies the process and has a clear timeline for staff and managers to adhere to. Some improvement processes were dragging on for months or even years, causing stress and confusion for all.

What's been made clear to all senior staff is that the MUP process is inappropriate unless a full cycle of supportive performance management has occurred, with relevant detailed documentation produced along the way that shows how any issues have been addressed at the time and what measures have been taken to support staff if problems are identified.

There is no such thing as an 'informal MUP' that does not follow process – you're either on one or you're not. The AEU NT is to be informed about any processes that are instituted – so if you're not sure, contact us.

The Bad:

Sometimes documentation is not produced and shown to the staff member well before a process commences. If there has been an issue, you should have been alerted to it when it occurred. You should not be surprised by 'parental complaints' or other evidence months after the complaint or issue arose. You should discount any anecdotal complaints unless they are given to you in writing and you have an opportunity to respond. Complaints should not be sought from your colleagues after it has been decided to begin a MUP process.



We have seen at least one case where notes were written regarding incidents after a PIP has commenced – such practice is not acceptable.

Goals need to be clear and you should be given clear examples of how you can meet them. They must also be based in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. Unfortunately, this is not always the case and if you are not informed of which standards you aren't meeting, then you need to contact us.

The Ugly:

Standards should be made clear at the beginning of a MUP process. It is not acceptable to have five or more standards to address or to have standards added along the process. A MUP process must not be used as a way to 'get rid of' staff that are no longer wanted, but needs to focus on actually improving performance. You are entitled to representation at all meetings and DoE supports this for both the protection of the member and the manager.

If you have any concerns, please contact us: 89485399 or admin@aeunt.org.au

Notice Board



Indigenous Officer's update

Cassandra Brown writes:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members: I am your representative on the AEU NT Branch Executive.

I want to hear your voices.

I am on the Executive to ensure your voices and issues are heard, and to support you in your workplaces. For any issue, I will try to help you.

If I have difficulties with answering your query I will seek the appropriate person to assist from our Full-time officers and other executive members.

So please contact me:

indigenousofficer@aeunt.org.au

We will also hold teleconferences for ATSI members throughout 2016. Contact the office for details on how to phone in.

Please make a note of these dates in your diary:

- 4 - 5pm, Thursday 16 June
- 4 - 5pm, Thursday 18 August
- 4 - 5pm, Thursday 8 September
- 4 - 5pm, Thursday 10 November



Branch Conference

Our annual conference took place from 20-22 May at the Darwin Airport Resort.

The Chief Minister, Adam Giles, and the Leader of the Opposition, Michael Gunner, both addressed the conference. All members were notified of the details of Conference by email and the information was posted to all sub-branches.

All sub-branches were encouraged to send a delegate. Changes to the Branch's Rules were approved and the details have been published on our website.

Principal and Early Childhood Reference Groups

Branch Executive has authorised the creation of two reference groups to assist the Full-Time Officers in developing policy and supporting members working as principals (including teaching principals) and as early childhood educators.

Expressions of interest are sought from members working in either area. It is envisaged that those involved will communicate mainly by email, with an occasional teleconference.

Please indicate your interest by emailing the Branch Secretary, Anita Jonsberg (secretary@aeunt.org.au), no later than Monday 20 June.

2015 Financial Report

The Branch's 2015 audited financial report is now available to members. It can be downloaded from our website or emailed to you on request.

Join Conversation Guide

The main reason why people don't join unions is that they've never been asked!

When you meet new colleagues at the start of the year, ask them to join the AEU NT. **Here are our tips on recruitment conversations.**

Planning and Preparation

Opening • Ask questions

Listen actively • Share your story

Feed off enthusiasm • **Ask them to join!**

A recruitment conversation should not primarily be about you or the AEU. The conversation should be about the person you're talking with and what's important to them. Be interested and inquisitive rather than intrusive.

Ask open questions about what being an educator means to them. Take in everything: listen to the words and tone non-members / new educators use as they speak to you. Reflect back what you think they are saying to communicate you are listening to them and to ensure you've understood them. Listen carefully to what's important to them.

Can you identify values they share with you and the AEU? If not, does what they're saying suggest shared interests? On the basis of the common values and/or interests, discuss our recent successes and positive initiatives.

Give them good news, increase their confidence and brighten their outlook. AEU NT fights for better conditions both for the workforce but also the children and young adults we teach, and we should communicate our victories. After engaging with the non-member use the shared values you have established, and subsequent connections to the work the union does, to ask them to join the union and contribute to its successes and democracy.

It is especially important every non-member is approached and engaged when they start at a new school. If unsuccessful, leave them with a copy of an application and follow up in a few weeks. Often the first conversation begins a process of reflection which in time can lead to a positive decision.

It's crucial that each and every one of us asks our colleagues if they've joined the AEU yet and, if you haven't, discuss the benefits of joining. As with everything, being well prepared is the best way of reducing any nerves and presenting effectively as possible. Ensure you: Think about a good time and place to have a chat Identify local and/or branch issues where you feel the AEU makes a difference, such as addressing workload issues, assisting with fair process and



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

www.aeunt.org.au

giving lots of advice on HR matters. Reflect on why being a member is important to you. Often it's your own story and the fact you care that persuades people more than anything else. Make sure you have an application form with you!

One-to-one discussion encourages honest and open dialogue. Once you have chosen to start the conversation, be honest. State that you would like a little bit of time to talk about the benefits of being part of the established union.

It is especially important every non-member is approached and engaged when they start at a new school. If unsuccessful, leave them with a copy of an application and follow up in a few weeks. Often the first conversation begins a process of reflection which in time can lead to a positive decision.



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