

THE NATIONALS
for Regional Australia

OUR PLAN FOR
**RAISING
SCHOOL
STANDARDS**

**GETTING
IT DONE** 
for Regional Australia

Key points

It's been an incredibly tough two years for our schools. Thanks to the professionalism of our teachers, and students and parents adapting, our children have continued to receive a world-class education.

As we emerge from the pandemic, only the Coalition Government will give teachers and families the support they need for even stronger schools: with record funding and a commitment to boost standards.

We have a plan to lift student achievement to the top of the world.

We have locked in \$318.9 billion in Federal school funding to 2029, including \$25.3 billion in 2022 alone.

With this record investment, we can focus on ensuring better outcomes for all Australian students.

We want every Australian child to reach their potential.

And we know how to help get them there, with a **strong curriculum, quality teaching and engaged classrooms.**

That's why we worked so hard last year on driving improvements to the Australian Curriculum. We fought to ensure that the next generation of Australians will understand the basis of our Western democracy. We fought to **improve maths and English standards**, and we have secured new consent education content from Foundation to Year 10 to foster more respectful relationships.

In short, our Government saw the curriculum review as an opportunity to **defend our values as a society, reinforce the lessons of our Australian history and ensure future generations are rightly proud of our incredible country.**

The Coalition places a high value on our teachers and school leaders. We celebrate their contribution to shaping Australia's future.

We know that skilled and effective teachers and leaders are the foundation of a quality education system. There is no greater influence on learning outcomes.

We also know that student engagement has never been more important. We must ensure our children, especially the most vulnerable, remain strong and resilient after the challenges of the pandemic.

That's why we have committed new resources to best-practice teaching that ensures students are heard, and that their needs are met.

A re-elected Coalition Government will:

- Continue to strongly **support innovative and proven pathways into teaching**, such as the Teach For Australia program, as well as **place more emphasis on prior real work experience** when supporting mid-career professionals into teaching.
- Equip teachers with resources that focus teaching practice on **proven teaching strategies**, such as phonics and explicit instruction.
- Leverage our funding for Initial Teacher Education to increase the quality of ITE courses and **drive improvement**.
- **Upskill and engage** on how to help teachers and students return to traditional, post-pandemic classrooms.
- Achieve **safe and engaged classrooms**.

Labor puts all this at risk.

Labor has said nothing on school standards.

Labor did nothing to back-in the Coalition's work to ensure our Australian curriculum rightly champions Australian values, respects our ANZAC heritage, sets a higher standard of achievement and frees teachers to focus on what matters most.

They have announced vague funding buckets for capital works in schools and mental health, with no guidelines and no transparent process. Yet Labor is already picking and choosing who they will invite, in safe Labor seats, to benefit from the program.

Labor's approach looks more like a return to the politically driven policy that led to the school halls disaster last time they were in Government, rather than a plan that is in the best interest of our students.

Only the Coalition has a plan to strengthen teacher training and lift student achievement.

Our Plan

1. Strengthening teaching courses

The Coalition recognises that quality teaching has by far the most influence on student performance.

As a Government, our best opportunity to keep standards high is to invest early – and ensure skills remain current. We provide \$760 million to universities to deliver the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) courses, as well as funding for world-class teacher professional development.

To produce teaching graduates that meet nationally agreed standards, university programs must be evidence-based, link theory and practice and provide students with authentic and practical classroom experiences.

A re-elected Coalition Government will:

- Continue to strongly support innovative, proven pathways into teaching. Over the next two years, the Coalition Government will **provide \$40 million to support 700 new Teach for Australia teachers and 60 new teachers through La Trobe's Nexus program**. This will enable Teach for Australia to double the number of exceptional teachers it trains and places, focusing on regional and remote areas and STEM subjects – where teacher shortages are greater.
- Focus on greater use of phonics and explicit instruction in classrooms. The Coalition Government will **invest \$10.8 million to develop new micro-credentials in classroom management, phonics and explicit teaching, and to support the expansion of the Quality Teaching Rounds program**. This will equip all teachers with the most effective teaching strategies.
- **Invest \$6.4 million to develop a new performance assessment framework for ITE courses to ensure our funding supports high-quality ITE and encourages constant quality improvement**. An expert panel, chaired by Mark Scott, is tasked to design the framework so that we can assess and guarantee that ITE courses are providing quality evidence-based instruction. More closely linking course quality and funding not only benefits taxpayers, but strongly incentivises improvements. \$1.3 million in ongoing funding will support implementation of the performance framework.

2. Making it easier to switch careers to teaching

Mid-career professionals have so much to offer students. With workplace and lived experience, they should be able to transport their skills to the classroom without unnecessary barriers.

Not so long ago, a teacher could be trained through a one-year, postgraduate Diploma. It now takes a two-year Masters of Education, which stops many mid-career professionals from retraining and undervalues their workplace history.

The ITE Review found this concerning, with mid-career professionals denied the opportunity to share their real-life, on-the-job experiences in the classroom.

A re-elected Coalition Government will:

- Invest \$13.4 million to support changes to accreditation standards, including working with state and territory governments to lead a **return to the one-year Graduate Diploma of Education**. We're reducing the barriers stopping great mid-career professionals from taking their skills and experience to the classroom.

3. Positive learning environments

It is essential that classrooms are well managed, safe, supportive and conducive to learning.

Australia is ranked 70 out of 77 countries on the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) index of disciplinary climate. Simply put, this measures the extent of missed learning opportunities from disruptive classroom behaviour.

According to the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) 2018, only 45 per cent of Australian teachers felt "well prepared" to deal with "student behaviour and classroom management".

Teachers, parents and students have strongly supported schools during the pandemic. The return to traditional classroom teaching will inevitably reignite challenges for school communities.

A re-elected Coalition Government will provide \$7.2 million to:

- **Develop and distribute professional resources and professional development opportunities for teachers and school leaders, as classrooms re-engage.** Three expert teachers will be seconded to the Australian Education Research Organisation to lead this work. An easy-to-access podcast (8 episodes) will cover traditional classroom management and disruption practices, and how schools can support and optimise the learning of neuro-diverse students and students with disabilities.
- **Develop a national data set to build a longitudinal picture that measures the impact of COVID-19 and the success of the Coalition Government's interventions on classroom discipline.** Reports of violence and assault against teachers and principals are deeply troubling, but we need to know more to move to a solution and support better learning environments for our students and safer workplaces for our teachers. We will partner with states and territories to produce the data that can inform targeted measures.

- **Lead a national summit into positive learning environments and student engagement, with the goal of improving classroom discipline.** The summit will bring together 50 teachers, school leaders, academics, students and parents to discuss the challenges of returning to school after two years of disruption, along with proven strategies on how to improve classroom order and support all students, including students with disabilities and neuro-diverse students.

4. Strengthening the curriculum

Australian parents, students and teachers expect and deserve a world-class national curriculum.

The Coalition Government is committed to improving curriculum quality because every young Australian must develop the skills and knowledge to keep pace with a rapidly-changing world.

The Australian Curriculum has been refined, with a focus on mastering the basics, especially in primary school years. It now sets a higher standard of achievement, and frees teachers to focus on what matters most. It is evidence-based, with phonics embedded in English, and lifts standards in Maths. Age-appropriate consent content is included and further work is underway to improve what students learn about mental health.

Our Australian Curriculum rightly champions Australian values, ensuring students learn Indigenous history and the foundations of our nation as a Western liberal democracy. It respects our ANZAC heritage and the contribution of migration, especially since the Second World War.

Australia's Education Ministers have agreed to consider continuous updates, where improvements can be made.

A re-elected Coalition Government will:

- **Continue to safeguard evidence-based practice in our school curriculum.** The Coalition will also defend the new curriculum's sharpened focus on Australian history and values. Iterative reviews ensure we will continue to monitor the implementation and impact of the revised curriculum.
- **Provide the Australian Human Rights Commission with \$5 million to develop a survey of secondary school-age students on issues related to consent.** This

research will provide a world-leading data set, and support meaningful and practical advice for teachers as they work to implement the strengthened consent education in the Australian Curriculum. It will also further inform the Government's work on respectful relationships and national prevention strategies on a range of issues. The Australian Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Kate Jenkins, and the National Children's Commissioner, Anne Hollonds, will work in partnership with Chanel Contos, founder of Teach Us Consent. Together, they will ensure parents are engaged throughout the process.

5. Supporting regional and remote students in boarding school

The Coalition Government is committed to choice and opportunity for quality schooling, no matter where families live. We recognise the particular needs of regional and remote communities.

A re-elected Coalition Government will:

- **Commence a new Commonwealth Regional Scholarship Program with a \$10.9 million investment** to help students and their families from low-SES regional and remote communities to afford boarding school fees. The scholarships will support up to 200 students from low SES communities, with eligible students receiving \$15,000 per year for three years.
- **Fund boarding schools to better support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.** \$17.3 million will be invested in extending the Indigenous Boarding Grants Program for one year (2022-23) to in-need boarding providers with a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from remote and very remote areas. This will support an estimated 2,300 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in up to 50 boarding providers. It builds on the \$15.7 million investment in this program in 2021-22, which supported more than 40 in-need boarding providers and more than 2,000 students.

Our Record

The Coalition Government has delivered needs-based schools funding for the first time in Australia.

We are improving teacher quality by testing trainee teachers to ensure they are in the top 30 per cent for literacy and numeracy. We are supporting students to re-engage after the pandemic and have refocused the curriculum on essentials like strengthening mathematics and proven reading techniques.

The states and territories have also agreed to work with us to improve results, including a renewed commitment to NAPLAN.

Record school funding

- The Coalition is investing record funding of \$318.9 billion to all schools from 2018-2029 under the Quality Schools package.
- We have nearly doubled schools funding, from \$13 billion in 2013 to \$25.3 billion in 2022.
- Our Quality Schools investment is growing fastest for government schools, at around 4.7 per cent per student each year, compared to per student growth of 3.8 per cent for the non-government sector.
- The Commonwealth is doing our fair share of heavy lifting on school funding to government schools. We're meeting our commitments under the Australian Education Act and under the Quality Schools Agreement with states and territories.
- The Productivity Commission Report on Government Services revealed that from 2012-13 to 2019-20, Australian Government funding per student for all schools increased significantly in real terms.

Supporting quality teaching

- The Coalition established the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) in 2014. As recommended, every initial teacher education course must now be assessed and accredited.
- Delivering on our 2019 election commitment, we reformed the accreditation standards for teaching degrees. Every primary education degree must now include phonics content so that teachers are properly equipped to help kids learn to read. Evidence-based practices around phonics and early reading are firmly embedded in initial teacher training.
- The Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education (LANTITE) ensures every ITE graduate has literacy and numeracy skills in the top 30 per cent of the adult population. If trainees do not pass the test, they do not teach in a classroom. From

2023, ITE students will have the option of taking the LANTITE test before starting their training course.

- Since 2019, we have invested in Teach for Australia to place more than 400 new teachers in regional and disadvantaged schools. Teach For Australia supports an accelerated path into the classroom for top graduates with non-teaching qualifications. Our investments in Teach for Australia deliver more expert teachers into difficult-to-staff classrooms, including in remote areas and STEM subjects.

Managing COVID in schools and early education

- From the start of the pandemic, the Coalition Government has worked hard to ensure students did not miss a year of school.
- We have called on states, territories and non-government schools to keep schools open for the children of frontline workers, vulnerable and disadvantaged children and the children of parents who could not work from home.
- In January this year, National Cabinet put an end to school disruptions when it agreed to the National Framework for Managing COVID-19 in Schools and Early Childhood Education and Care.
- More than four million students have been welcomed back to the classroom in 2022. The health-informed and practical measures agreed in the Framework have ensured schools remained open throughout the recent Omicron wave.
- The Coalition Government has worked with states and territories to back their local school management solutions. To support the return to school, we offered premiers the opportunity to split the cost of Rapid Antigen Tests for students.

Mental health support

- The Coalition Government understands the significant impact of the pandemic on student mental health.
- We've provided unprecedented funding to support the mental health of our young people, including a \$2.3 billion investment in the 2021-22 Budget for the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Plan.
- We also fund several school-based wellbeing programs, including \$61.4 million a year for the National School Chaplaincy Program supporting more than 3,000 schools; \$144.6 million for the Be You Program which helps educators to teach children social and emotional development skills; and \$8 million for the Bushfire Response Program, providing contact liaison officers for school and child care communities.

Stronger Regional Education

- Under our Quality Schools program, Commonwealth funding for students in regional and remote Australia is growing from \$4.4 billion in 2018 to around \$7.3 billion in 2029.
- Australia's first Regional Education Commissioner Fiona Nash is focused on reducing

the disparity between city and country students, particularly in education participation and attainment.

- We continue to support Closing the Gap Target 5 for students to achieve their full learning potential, with \$126 million invested in 2021-22 to accelerate progress including:
 - \$26 million for City-Country Partnerships to Improve Remote School Outcomes.
 - \$25 million to scale up evidence-based literacy and numeracy programs.
 - \$75 million to scale up Studio Schools Australia with three new boarding schools in remote WA and NT.
- We are attracting and retaining teachers with \$28.7 million for the High Achieving Teachers Program, recruiting more than 400 teachers from 2020-22 and targeting regional, rural and low socio-economic schools. The Future Leaders program pilot (\$7.5 million) supports aspiring school leaders in regional communities.
- We are supporting regional students and their aspirations with \$2 million from 2019-2022 to raise aspirations and career awareness through the Rural Inspire program run by Country Education Partnerships.

Action to support new priorities

- In 2020, we developed the Emerging Priorities Program (EPP) to help school communities respond to new education priorities, especially those resulting from the pandemic.
- To support the post-COVID wellbeing of returning students, the Coalition ran an open grants round seeking applications for projects to support school communities. We provided an extra \$10.4 million in supplementary funding to take this round to \$21.6 million and are proudly backing 36 nationwide projects supporting student needs and wellbeing, as well as school leaders and teachers.
- For example, we're supporting healthy, resilient and thriving classrooms, students and school communities by investing \$3.3 million in the Smiling Mind Schools Program. Their program promotes improved wellbeing of school leaders, teachers and school students through the mindfulness-based social and emotional learning (M-SEL) approach.
- EPP funding will expand to 200 more schools, as well as support existing participants for another year. Help will be tailored to meet the mental health and wellbeing impacts of the pandemic, supporting 1,100 primary schools, 275,000 primary students and at least 10,000 teachers over 12 months
- Total funding under the EPP is now at \$28.7 million. The EPP has previously funded a range of projects, including Science ASSIST, Stand Tall Australia and The Smith Family's Catch-up Learning.

A stronger curriculum

- What goes into the curriculum determines the learning experience of our kids in their formative years. The Coalition Government has taken a leadership role among state and territory Ministers to ensure the revised curriculum reflects our values as a society, and reinforces Australian history so that future generations develop pride in our nation.
- The curriculum has been refined, with a focus on mastering the basics, especially in primary school years. There is stronger evidence-based content, including teaching phonics in English. A clearer maths curriculum brings key concepts into line with other countries, and focuses on foundational knowledge in primary years, like the times tables.
- We listened to mums and dads, teachers and the broader community about their concerns with a draft of the Australian Curriculum in 2021. There is a stronger emphasis on Western history, and better reflection on the pride in Australia's successful democracy. Historically accurate references to Christianity have been reinstated. The curriculum no longer focuses on "contesting" the significance of our ANZAC tradition. Year 9 and 10 students will learn important Australian history including the contribution of migration, especially since World War II.
- For the first time, students will study Deep Time Indigenous History in Year 7.
- The revised curriculum will be implemented from 2023. It sets a higher standard for educational achievement.

The Risk of Labor

A Labor Government is a big risk to our schools.

Labor claims of Coalition cuts show that they don't understand school funding. And they don't know how to read a budget. Their scare campaigns are not only wrong, they're irresponsible.

Labor has said nothing on school standards.

Labor did nothing to back-in the Coalition's work to ensure our Australian curriculum rightly champions Australian values, respects our ANZAC heritage, sets a higher standard of achievement and frees teachers to focus on what matters most.

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COALITION	LABOR
<p>Funding Nearly doubled school funding, \$13 billion in 2013 to \$25.3 billion in 2022.</p>	<p>Funding Cut \$1.2 billion from government schools just before the 2013 election.</p>
<p>Funding Formula Implemented true needs-based funding.</p>	<p>Funding Formula 27 different funding deals.</p>
<p>Teacher Quality \$70 million in this year's Budget for a practical plan to improve initial teacher education and upskill existing teachers.</p>	<p>Teacher Quality Only \$16 million spent to recruit only 14 new teachers when last in Government.</p>
<p>What students are taught Strengthened the curriculum to one that champions Australian values, respects our ANZAC heritage and sets a higher standard of achievement.</p>	<p>What students are taught Missing in action during the Curriculum Review.</p>
<p>COVID Agreed to a National Framework to get kids back to school in 2022 and keep them there – and it worked.</p>	<p>COVID Funding announced for ventilation to mental health. Cash splashes with no consultation or guidelines.</p>

Cost

Funding for the Coalition's Plan for Raising School Standards is already provided for within budget estimates.

THE NATIONALS
for Regional Australia

 For further details of The Nationals' Plan go to: www.nationals.org.au