



What's in the Gonski report?

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PHOTO: The Gonski report hopes to help Australian students who are slipping behind on a global scale. (AFP: Martin Bureau)

The Government says it's vital and the Opposition now agrees. Unions, teachers and parents say the money won't come soon enough.

EXTERNAL LINK: [Review of Funding for Schooling Final Report](#)

But what does the 319-page Gonski report on school funding actually say? Find out, and then take our pop quiz.

MAP: [Australia](#)

- What is the report?
- Why does school funding need to be reviewed?
- What does the report recommend?
- Key conclusions
- Pop quiz: What did you learn?

What is the report?

Commissioned by the Government in 2010 and chaired by businessman David Gonski, the review panel received more than 7,000 submissions, visited 39 schools, and consulted 71 education groups across Australia.

It presented its findings to the Government in November 2011, and the Government released that report, along with its initial response, in February 2012.

Since then, the Commonwealth and states have been deliberating over what to do with the recommendations.

Julia Gillard says the Government's final response will be coming soon - although it has already been delayed once.

Why does school funding need to be reviewed?

Differences in educational outcomes must not be the result of differences in wealth, income, power or possessions.

David Gonski

Performance decline

The report says the performance of Australian students has declined at all levels over the last 10 years.

It says in 2000, only one country outperformed Australia in reading and scientific literacy, and only two outperformed Australia in mathematical literacy.

But by 2009, six countries outperformed Australia in reading and scientific literacy, and 12 had students who were better at maths.

Growing gap

The report found Australia has a significant gap between its highest and lowest performing students.

It says a concerning proportion of Australia's lowest performing students are not meeting minimum standards of achievement.

It says there is an unacceptable link between low levels of achievement and educational disadvantage, particularly among students from low socioeconomic and Indigenous backgrounds.

Complex funding

The report says current school funding arrangements are unnecessarily complex, lack coherence and transparency, and involve duplication of funding in some areas.

It says there is an imbalance between the funding responsibilities of the Federal Government and state and territory governments across the schooling sectors.

It says the current funding system makes it difficult for governments and policy makers to decide how best to fund schools.

Future investment

The report says school funding is not simply a financial matter. Rather, it is about strengthening and securing Australia's future.

It says schools must be appropriately resourced to support every child, and every teacher must expect the most from every child.

It says Australian children, now and in the future, deserve nothing less.

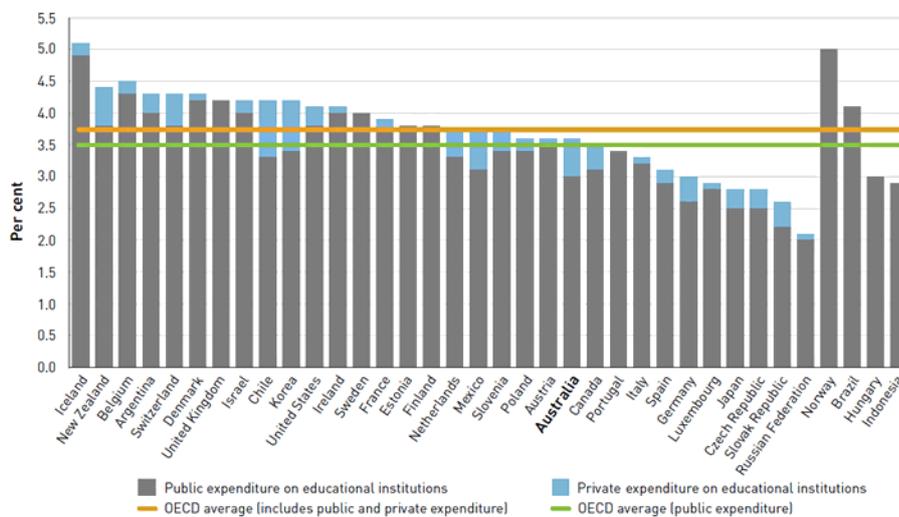
Education inequity



Professor Richard Teese from the University of Melbourne recently wrote a report for state and territory governments on the current school funding model and who it advantages and disadvantages.

He found there is a growing gap between Australia's wealthy and disadvantaged schools.

[View his interview on 7.30 here.](#)



INFOGRAPHIC: Expenditure on primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education as a percentage of GDP, 2008. (Review of Funding for Schooling Final Report)

What does the Gonski report recommend?

The report proposes arrangements that we believe will deliver a funding system that is transparent, equitable and financially sustainable. It is also effective in providing an excellent education for all Australian students.

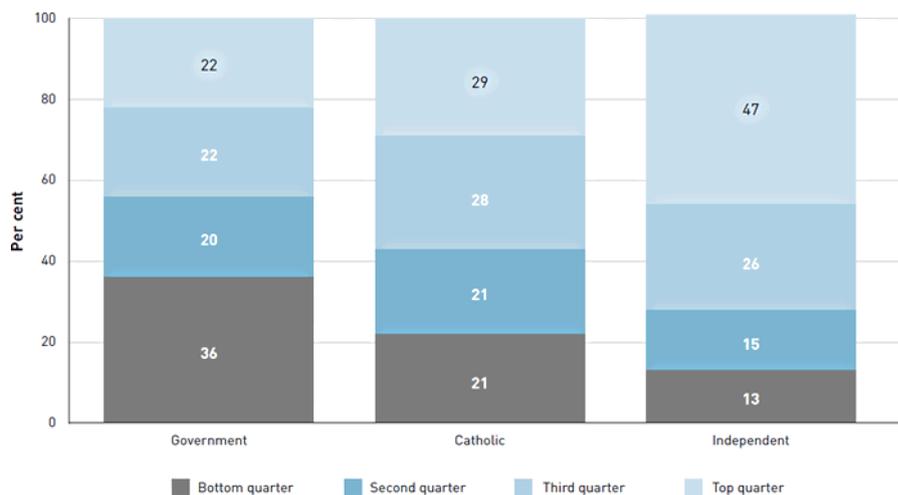
David Gonski

Additional investment

The report says funding needs to be increased by about \$5 billion per year across all schooling sectors.

It says one third of that funding should come from the Commonwealth; and how the additional cost is borne should be discussed and negotiated between all governments.

Wherever the funding increase comes from, the report is adamant it should go to the government sector, due to the significant numbers and greater concentration of disadvantaged students in government schools.



INFOGRAPHIC: Distribution of students by socio-educational advantage quarter, by sector, 2010 (Review of Funding for Schooling Final Report)

Fairer funding framework

The report says state and federal governments must work together to coordinate funding more effectively.

It recommends a two-tiered model called the 'schooling resource standard'.

The standard would form the basis for working out all school funding, and would be reviewed every four years.

- The standard should include a 'per student' amount, with adjustments for students and schools facing certain additional costs.
- Base funding would be set for every student at the amount deemed necessary to educate a student in well-performing schools, where at least 80 per cent of students achieve above the national literacy and numeracy minimum standard.
- The report suggests the base amount could be about \$8,000 per primary student, and about \$10,500 for secondary students.
- There would be extra loadings for disadvantage such as disability, low socioeconomic background, school size, remoteness, the number of Indigenous students, and lack of English proficiency.

The report says at least 10 per cent of student funding in non-government schools should come from private contributions. The minimum public contribution would be set at between 20 and 25 per cent.

The panel was concerned to ensure that its recommendations would enable the Australian Government to meet its commitment that no school will lose \$1 per student as a result of the review.

David Gonski

National Schools Resourcing Body

The report says the schooling resource standard should be overseen by an independent National Schools Resourcing Body.

It says the effectiveness of the standard rests on confidence in the independence and transparency of the process for setting the per student amounts and loadings.

- The National Schools Resourcing Body would get the job of making sure that money spent on schools is provided in a way that maximises its educational impact.
- Both the per student amounts and the loadings would be reviewed before the start of each funding term.
- The body would have the final call on whether particular non-government schools are eligible for full public funding.
- The body would also be responsible for ongoing research and analysis to make sure Australia's schools are continually improving.

Who is David Gonski?

- Australian public figure and businessman
- Dubbed "Mr Networks" for his connections
- Attended Sydney Grammar School
- Earned \$5 million by the age of 25 as a solicitor
- Currently sits on the boards of more than 40 businesses, including Coca-Cola and Singapore Airlines
- Chancellor of the University of New South Wales
- Ambassador for the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation
- Appointed OA for service to community through visual and performing arts
- Appointed AC for service to arts through charitable support

Government schools, special schools and disability loadings, in our opinion, should be fully funded. Other non-government sector payments should be based on the anticipated level of a school's private contribution. Which to begin with, though not in the long term, would be based on the socioeconomic status, SES score, of the school with a proscribed minimum level of public contribution.

David Gonski

Stronger governance and accountability

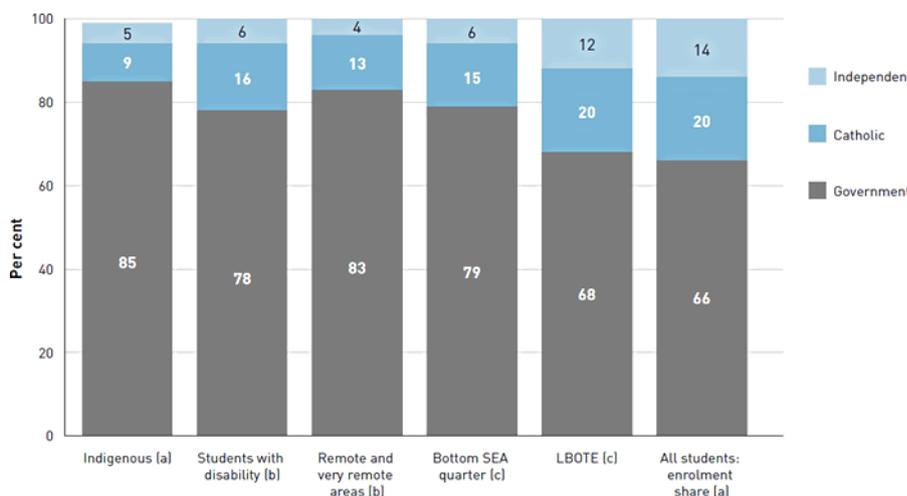
Gonski says state and territory government should forge bilateral funding agreements with the Commonwealth.

It suggests School Planning Authorities, made up of people from both the government and non-government sectors, be established to coordinate new school building and expansions.

It recommends setting up a school growth fund to cover the cost of major school expansions, with the School Planning Authorities having sole responsibility for approving funding to projects.

It also says the Government should create a fund to provide national leadership in philanthropy in schools, and to support schools who need help to develop partnerships with philanthropists.

[Click here to read the report's 26 findings and 41 recommendations in full.](#)



INFOGRAPHIC: Proportion of students by disadvantage group, by sector, 2010 (Review of Funding for Schooling Final Report)

Key conclusions

- The report says Australia must aspire to have a schooling system that is among the best in the world for its quality and equity, and must prioritise support for its lowest performing students.
- It says every child should have access to the best possible education, regardless of where they live, the income of their family, or the school they attend.
- And it says no student in Australia should leave school without the basic skills and competencies needed to participate in the workforce and lead successful and productive lives.