



**VASSP**  
Victorian  
Association  
of State  
Secondary  
Principals



**Victorian  
Principals  
Association**

The Hon. Anthony Albanese,  
Prime Minister  
PO BOX 6022, House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

The Hon. Jason Clare  
Minister for Education  
PO BOX 6022, House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

## **JOINT LETTER ON PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING**

Dear Prime Minister and Minister

Our organisations are taking the unprecedented step of collectively writing to you about the chronic underfunding of Victorian public schools, an issue we have been raising over many years. We do this because of your recent decision to put a school funding ultimatum to the Victorian government.

This “take-it-or-leave-it” approach to Victorian public school funding appears to put politics ahead of the interests of public school students and staff in the context of your dispute with state and territory governments over current school funding negotiations. Having endured more than a decade of underfunding, with the consequences of this lack of resources now laid bare, it seems we are expected to be grateful for what is on offer even though another generation of students will miss out on the resources to which they are entitled.

Victorian public schools are only funded to 90.4% of the funding standard established in legislation, the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS). Our schools are a further 4% short with the capacity of the Victorian government to discount depreciation and other system costs from their share of the funding. This means our public schools and students are missing out on \$1.9 billion of funding this year alone. Over the next four years, Commonwealth budget papers show that the federal government will provide \$20.1 billion to the state’s 724 non-government schools, but only \$12.1 billion to the 1570 public schools, with non-government schools remaining overfunded until 2029. How is this fair?

Your actions put you on the brink of breaking the promise you made before the last election to fix the funding gap and fund public schools to 100% of the SRS. Why is it that you now think Victorian public school children don’t need to be fully funded and their schools should continue to be denied the resources you promised?

Public education is a public good, and the cornerstone of a healthy democratic society. Every child, no matter their background or circumstances, is entitled to receive a high quality education. That requires you to ensure public schools are fully funded in line with the SRS benchmark, as all Catholic and independent schools are currently.

The funding gap is, not surprisingly, contributing significantly to ongoing and ultimately unnecessary challenges across the Victorian public school system. As you know our schools are experiencing a teacher shortage crisis, resulting in multiple classes being grouped together on a daily basis, student programs and activities cut, students trying to learn in classrooms without fully qualified, permanent teachers, shortages of casual relief teachers, additional work on top of already excessive and unsustainable workloads for teachers, principals and support staff, insufficient support for students with additional needs and with mental health concerns, increasingly disruptive behaviour from students, and many staff left feeling disrespected and undervalued, including in relation to salary.

In addition, and despite record investment by the Victorian state Labor government over the past decade, there is further need for new schools and upgrades of older school buildings. It was with great dismay that instead of stepping up to contribute to public school infrastructure, your Federal budget in May confirmed that the Albanese government would not provide ongoing funding for public school capital works, whilst at the same time allocating \$1 billion dollars over the next four years to private schools.

Research released recently by Monash University shows only three out of ten public school staff intend to stay working in public schools till their retirement, with a further 40 per cent indicating they are uncertain about continuing to work in public schools.

As we approach another federal election, principals, teachers, support staff, students, and families are urging the federal government to finally end decades of neglect. We call on you to step up and fully fund public schools now, for the benefit of our students, staff, and the community.

Yours sincerely,




**Andrew Dalgleish,**  
President  
Victorian Principals Association



**Gail McHardy**  
CEO  
Parents Victoria



**Colin Axup**  
President  
Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals



**Meredith Peace**  
President  
AEU Vic Branch

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