



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STANDING COMMITTEE ON
PETITIONS
received 27.8.08

THE HON JULIA GILLARD MP
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

20 AUG 2008

Mrs Julia Irwin MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear ~~Mrs~~ ^{Julia} Irwin

Thank you for your letter of 27 May 2008 concerning a petition submitted to the Standing Committee on Petitions regarding Commonwealth funding for public schools. I apologise for the delay in responding.

The Australian Government provides funding to both government and non-government schools as part of a funding partnership involving state and territory governments and parent communities. Under the existing funding arrangements, government schools are primarily resourced by state and territory governments with the Australian Government providing supplementary funding. The Government is the primary source of public funding for non-government schools.

The Government will implement its election commitment to continue the existing funding arrangements for all schools for the next funding period (2009–2012) to provide funding certainty to schools. These arrangements will be reviewed with an open and transparent process anticipated to conclude in 2011. This review is intended to ensure that the strongest possible platform is built for long-term investment and improvement in educational outcomes beyond 2012, the year the next funding period concludes.

At the same time, the Council of Australian Governments has agreed to develop a new plan for school reform. As part of this plan, governments will work together, and with the Catholic and independent sectors, to identify disadvantaged school communities regardless of the sector in which they operate or where they are located. The aim of this national approach is to focus additional resources to where the greatest impact and the most improvement in outcomes and school quality can be achieved so that every Australian child has access to a first-class education.

Through its Education Revolution, the Australian Government has made a commitment to lift educational standards across all schools and provide funding on the basis of need. It aims to ensure that schools, particularly those in greatest need, are resourced so that children can achieve better outcomes and schools are better placed to meet the National Goals for Schooling in Australia. This commitment is made as part of a funding partnership involving state and territory governments, non-government school authorities and parent communities.

In addition to the significant amounts of funding provided in general recurrent and capital grants for schools, the provision for broadband connection to all schools and the Education Tax Refund for parents, there are a range of new Australian Government initiatives providing additional resources to both government and non-government schools. In 2008–09 more than \$813 million in additional funding will be provided by the Government for computers in secondary schools, trade training centres, investment in new shared school facilities and improvements in literacy and numeracy, languages and a national curriculum.

The Government is also investing in a range of measures aimed at improving teacher quality, including prioritising teacher professional development in ICT and its integration into other key learning areas in the Australian Government Quality Teacher Program (AGQTP). In 2009, \$11.25 million of AGQTP funds will underpin schools-based activities related to ICT professional development for teachers and school leaders.

I trust this information is of assistance in responding to the terms of the petition.

Yours sincerely



Julia Gillard
Minister for Education