

Interview with Belinda Varischetti, ABC Radio Perth

BELINDA VARISCHETTI:

Good afternoon Prime Minister.

PRIME MINISTER:

Good afternoon, great to be with you.

BELINDA VARISCHETTI:

Now the Government has been locked in a school funding dispute with the states who have been calling for the Commonwealth to stump up the full funding recommended under 'Gonski 1' if you like. How far does this announcement go to bring that dispute to an end?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, this is delivering exactly the vision that David Gonski laid out in 2011, Belinda.

What David Gonski said, and his panel said, was that schools funding should be needs based and it should be consistent. And that is exactly what we're delivering.

It's not what Labor delivered, they had 27 different agreements. They were all conflicting. There was inconsistencies – students in one state, a student with the same needs in one state, would get dramatically different levels of Commonwealth funding in another state. And what we're doing is bringing the all into one consistent system, so that we are actually realising, as David Gonski acknowledged today, we are realising his vision of school funding being equitable, being consistent and being needs based.

And it's going to result in a substantial increase in Commonwealth Government funding for schools in Western Australia, which had been a good case of why the Labor, sort of, the Labor corruption of the Gonski idea – I mean Ken Boston, who was one of the members of the Gonski panel, described the deals that Bill Shorten and Julia Gillard did as having failed to deliver the consistency that David Gonski had proposed.

Now what we'll see over this period of the next decade, we'll see in Western Australia, funding for government schools will grow at an average of 6.8 per cent per student, per year, with Catholic and independent schools growing at 3.8 per cent and 4.5 per cent respectively. And what that is going to do is provide the support that will mean, in Western Australia, as everywhere else in Australia by 2027, the Commonwealth will be providing for government schools, 20 per cent of the schools resourcing standard, and for non-government schools, it will be 80 per cent of the schools resourcing

standard.

BELINDA VARISCHETTI:

But Prime Minister, will any schools miss out on any of this funding?

PRIME MINISTER:

No school will miss out. There is a very small number of schools, none of which are in Western Australia I might add, which will have a net reduction over the ten years. The Education Minister estimates this to be around 24 independent schools. But this is a modest net reduction and that is because of all the conflicting deals that were done. But the overwhelming majority of schools, well over 9,000, will receive additional funding over this period.

The important thing is where you end up. In 2027, you will have, all schools will be receiving consistent, fair, needs-based funding from the Commonwealth.

BELINDA VARISCHETTI:

Deputy Opposition Leader and shadow education minister Tanya Plibersek has said the announcement is really just smoke and mirrors, an effort to hide the \$22 billion in funding cuts from schools. Let's just have a listen to what she said.

TANYA PLIBERSEK [Recording]:

It is extraordinary that after years of waiting, after months of uncertainty, after states and territories have been pleading with the federal government for certainty, after Catholic and independent schools have said they need certainty for next year, what we get today is a smoke and mirrors, pea-and-thimble effort to hide the fact that instead of cutting \$30 billion from schools over the decade, this Government will cut \$22 billion from schools over the decade.

But the truth is, Labor laid out a comprehensive school reform agenda when we were in office. It was trashed by Christopher Pyne. That school reform agenda included things like more autonomy for principals, more decisions at a school level about how to best spend the extra funding that came with needs-based funding. All the things we know make a difference in classrooms.

I can say to Mr Gonski that the first place he should look is the school reform agenda that Labor committed to, that Christopher Pyne junked when he was the Education Minister.

BELINDA VARISCHETTI:

The Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull with you on ABC Radio Perth this afternoon talking through the Government's education school review and the funding boost which was announced today.

Prime Minister, Tanya Plibersek also says that the Government abandoned the

funding package originally recommended by Mr Gonski, saying it is laughable and the schools will be \$22 billion worse off under the Coalition than under Labor. What do you say to that?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well what I say is that she is talking about money that the Labor Party promised in a shambolic set of 27 agreements, all of them inconsistent – one of the biggest losers being Western Australia, as Western Australians would well understand – and this was a set of arrangements which did not reflect David Gonski's vision.

I mean, David Gonski was standing there with me today and he acknowledged that what we are doing is fulfilling his vision and it is one that makes a lot of sense because-

BELINDA VARISCHETTI:

So why is it necessary to have a second review? Gonski mark 2?

PRIME MINISTER:

If you let me finish I'll just explain.

David's vision was that all schools, all students should get Commonwealth funding on a needs basis – understand that? And it has got to be fairly allocated and consistently allocated. That's what we are doing. There is no question about that.

Gonski 2.0 is not about funding. It is about ensuring that we pursue and achieve educational excellence in Australian schools.

You see, what we've seen in recent years is that while we have been spending more money on schools – the federal government has been spending a lot more money on schools, state governments have been spending more money as well, parents have been spending more money – our performance relative to other countries has been going backwards, particularly in reading and mathematics.

And what we need to do is, we owe it to our kids and our grandkids to ensure that we get a better result from better outcomes from our investment in schools.

And so that is what David Gonski is looking at. Gonski 2.0 is the next stage.

We believe we have the funding right. We have delivered on the right level of funding. It is consistent with the schooling resource standard that David Gonski set out in 2011.

The Commonwealth, as you know, is the majority government funder of the non-government sector and the states are the majority funder of the state sector. So we've got the ratios right.

We are going, for state schools, government schools, Belinda, we're going

from currently funding on average 17 per cent, we are going up to 20 per cent. For non-government schools we are currently around 77 per cent, we are going up to 80 per cent. So it is very significant increases in support.

But now the next question, and this is what parents, this is what parents are focused on, and grandparents are focused on is why aren't we getting better outcomes from the schools, from our massive investment in schools?

David Gonski foreshadowed this in his report, back in 2011, that this was the next step and that's what we are asking him to do now.

BELINDA VARISCHETTI:

And when will that be handed down?

PRIME MINISTER:

That's going to be delivered to us by the end of the year. I expect this will be, this is going to be a very lively discussion. This is what we should now be focused on. I believe that time has come to end the school funding wars. We are committing a record amount of money to school funding. We are seeing the federal government's commitment to schools increasing by 75 per cent over the decade to come. That's a massive increase.

So the money has been committed and the issue now is to ensure that we get the value out of that investment in terms of great outcomes, great schools, great teachers, great results for our children and grandchildren.

BELINDA VARISCHETTI:

On ABC Radio Perth – the Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull with you this afternoon.

And Mr Turnbull, this announcement comes hot on the heels of a major announcement about higher education funding which was made last night by the Minister, announcing the Government would introduce an efficiency dividend which will effectively mean a \$2.8 billion funding cut for universities. Did you pay for your university education?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, no I didn't. I am probably a bit older than you, a lot older than you I expect and I went to university before HECS. So I did not pay fees to go to university.

BELINDA VARISCHETTI:

So how do you balance that with the announcement today then? Taking away the funding cut from universities with today's announcement?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well look the bottom line is that it's been established and accepted for a

very long time that university students should contribute to the cost of their university education. I mean we all, HECS was introduced originally under the Hawke government I recall, so this has been around for a very long time. And this is about maintaining the sustainability of the higher education system.

Now, over the last five years the funding for universities on a per student basis has increased by about 15 per cent, and the cost for educating students at universities has increased by about 9.5 per cent. So there is scope for the universities to return some of that, by way of efficiency dividends, to return some of that to the taxpayer and I believe that there is also the opportunity for students to make a larger contribution.

But it is a modest increase in the contribution and it is very measured and it is part of ensuring that we have a sustainable higher education system that is fair.

BELINDA VARISCHETTI:

And I can't let you go today without raising the Government's call for the Productivity Commission to review how the GST is distributed – a hot topic here in Western Australia. Under the Grants Commission Formula WA in 2017-18 will get only 34 per cent of the average national per capita distribution of the GST. Are you confident this review will see an increase to Western Australia's share?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well I'm confident that the Productivity Commission will do a very thorough examination of the way in which the Commonwealth Grants Commission's formula impacts on productivity right across the country.

BELINDA VARISCHETTI:

Do you think WA deserves more than that 34 per cent?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well as you know I have said in the past and I am the first Prime Minister to have done so, that plainly when Western Australians see they're getting on a per capita basis 30 per cent, or a little bit more now, of the GST you can entirely understand why they feel that is unfair.

BELINDA VARISCHETTI:

So it's unfair?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well you can entirely understand the point of view of Western Australians. But what we need to do is to ensure that the Grants Commission system works fairly and effectively and that it enhances productivity. That is the goal. So we are certainly looking at that, or the Productivity Commission will be

looking at that.

But I do understand very keenly how big an issue this is in Western Australia – I can assure you.

All of my Western Australian colleagues have made that point to me as have many, many other Western Australians so I understand it keenly and that's why I presented last year a way of resolving the issue. But I think we need to get the benefit of the Productivity Commission – with the benefit of their work I should say.

Part of the problem with the Commonwealth Grants Commission if I may say so, is that nobody really understands how their formula works. It's very much a black box in that sense and I think it's important that that be unpacked and the Productivity Commission is the right agency – you know, that's the top economic think tank of the Government and that's the right agency to do that.

BELINDA VARISCHETTI:

Malcolm Turnbull, thank you for talking to us on ABC Radio Perth this afternoon.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thank you so much.

[ENDS]

[Radio interview with Tom Elliott, 3AW](#)

TOM ELLIOTT:

Mr Turnbull, good afternoon.

PRIME MINISTER:

Good afternoon.

TOM ELLIOTT:

Gonski 2.0 – just six years ago in 2011 we had Gonski, I guess 1.0, from then Prime Minister Julia Gillard. Why do we need another report like this?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well what David Gonski was looking at in 2011 was the funding arrangements for schools. And David's big idea, which we are implementing and which Julia Gillard did not, is that school funding should be needs based and it should

be consistent across Australia.

TOM ELLIOTT:

I agree, yeah-

PRIME MINISTER:

And that's what we are delivering.

The question that he did not answer, that he wasn't asked to answer but he flagged it in his report, in chapter six in fact, was that the next piece of work is that once you've got the funding right and you've got the resourcing right, how do you ensure that you improve your educational outcomes? In other words, how do you get the biggest educational bang, the biggest outcome, the best schools, the best teachers, the best results for your kids and your grandkids – how do you do that with the resources that you've brought to bear.

TOM ELLIOTT:

Okay, so you bring the resources to bear, however many billions it might cost. Is it a question of measuring how that money is spent or is it a question of actually what to do with the money?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well it is both. I mean, basically, the review that David will do with his colleagues will focus on the effective use of funding to improve student outcomes and our national performance, because when you look at the way we have been travelling – by reference to the other countries – we have been going backwards in terms of our comparative performance and that is the big challenge.

So what we need to do is to be getting – we've been spending more on schools, Tom, and you know, we have had significant declines over recent years since 2000 in reading and indeed in mathematical literacy and in numeracy, and so, this is an unsatisfactory state of affairs. We're spending more but we're not getting better outcomes.

So yes, we have to make sure that funding is consistent across the country. Yes, we have got to make sure that it's needs based. And we're putting another \$18 billion into schools over the next decade but what we've got to do is also make sure that our children and grandchildren get the great schools, the great teachers and the great results that that money warrants.

TOM ELLIOTT:

I've read some comments by the Education Minister Simon Birmingham which suggest that for some schools which are currently overfunded they might actually have their funding cut in order to get the funding right. Does that breach a promise not to cut any schools funding?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well Birmo has been making this point for some time. In fact, the number of schools likely to be affected is 24. So it's a very – out of more than 9,000 schools in Australia – it is a very small number.

But you see – what you had was in effect a mish mash of 27 different agreements. What the Labor Party did in government was they ran around and they did all sorts of special deals here there and everywhere. Very complex, very conflicted. You had a situation where a student in one location, in one state with the same needs would get very different levels of Commonwealth funding than the same student with the same needs in another state or another system.

So what we're aiming to do here is – and look I think Australians understand that if you're going to be having Commonwealth funding going into schools it should be consistent and it should be fair, and it should be needs based. And that's what we are delivering.

TOM ELLIOTT:

Okay. Do you fund the schools directly or do you hand the money over to the respective state governments and let them do it?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well it is by reference to needs of the schools and the, and of course it goes to those state education departments but you can look up at My School and you'll be able to see, people will be able to see very transparently how much federal funding is going to their school.

TOM ELLIOTT:

Okay. Now can I just cast your mind to university funding?

PRIME MINISTER:

Sure.

TOM ELLIOTT:

There has been another big announcement about that in the last 24 hours. So we are going to firstly increase the cost of degrees by different amounts. Secondly we're going to lower the threshold at which the repayment of HECS kicks in from around \$55,000 to \$42,000. The National Union of Students has said that you are declaring war on them, what do you feel about that?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, that is a pretty – what do we say – a ebullient response. I mean the reality is this, that the National Union of Students know and we all know that if you have a university degree your earning capacity is vastly increased. I mean it is a hugely enriching experience in every respect. And

so it's been accepted for a very long time that students should pay a proportion of their university fees.

Now what we are doing here and this is all about sustainability and equity, Tom. It's got to be a sustainable system, it's got to be fair and so basically on average Commonwealth supported students will pay, will go from paying 42 per cent of their degree cost on average to 46 per cent. So yes, that is more, there is no doubt about that.

Once fully implemented it would result in an increase in the total student fees of between \$2,000 and \$3,600 for a four-year course.

TOM ELLIOTT:

Okay-

PRIME MINISTER:

So I'm not pretending that it isn't a significant amount of money, but equally compared to the benefits, compared to the very generous terms upon which the FEE Help Loan is available it is, you know it is a very good deal. It remains an extremely generous deal by world standards and of course it makes the system sustainable.

TOM ELLIOTT:

Very quickly, there is \$52 billion of outstanding HECS debt, a lot of which will never be collected. Does that not suggest that perhaps too many people, or some of the wrong sorts of people are going to university? Like they're going but they're not getting decent jobs afterwards?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, no I wouldn't say that. I think it's important, however, that's why it's important to bring the threshold for repayment down so that once someone is earning \$42,000 – then they've got a university loan, they've got an obligation then to contribute 1 per cent towards it. I think it's important for people to get into the practice and habit of repaying the loan. It is a loan it's not a grant and obviously the taxpayer is entitled to have it repaid.

But you've got to understand that the – and I think that this is a very important point – that the bulk of the cost of a university course is paid for by the taxpayer.

TOM ELLIOTT:

That's true, over 50 per cent-

PRIME MINISTER:

The loan only relates to the portion that the student is asked to pay, and that is less than half.

TOM ELLIOTT:

Very quickly, I know you're leaving for the United States tomorrow to visit President Trump for another time. Will you be discussing North Korea with him?

PRIME MINISTER:

Yeah – I have no, absolutely we will be discussing all of those regional security issues and North Korea is clearly one of the most pressing issues in our region.

TOM ELLIOTT:

Are you looking forward to the visit?

PRIME MINISTER:

Absolutely it is going to be a great event, a very historic event Tom because it is commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of the Coral Sea. And, you know, that is the first time Australian and American Naval Forces went into action together and that was when we succeeded in turning back a Japanese invasion force headed for Port Moresby. Had it succeeded in taking in Port Moresby, as it undoubtedly would have, were it not for the action of those task groups, Australian and US Navy Task Groups then of course the whole of Eastern Australia would've been exposed, we would have been cut off from the United States, we would've been at the whim of the invaders.

So it was a really critical turning point in the War.

And that's why I was up in Townsville yesterday at a service there, actually with one of the veterans of the – 93 years of age, veterans of the USS Lexington which is the big aircraft carrier, the American Aircraft Carrier that was sunk in that battle.

TOM ELLIOTT:

Prime Minister I do appreciate your time.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thanks.

[ENDS]

[Press Conference with the Minister for](#)

Education and Training, Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham and Mr David Gonski AC

PRIME MINISTER:

Good afternoon. I'm joined today by the Education Minister Simon Birmingham and David Gonski.

In the interests of our children and our grandchildren the time has come to bring the school funding wars to an end and to focus with renewed energy on ensuring that all our children have great schools and great teachers so that they can realise their full potential.

Today we are announcing that every school will receive Commonwealth funding on a genuine needs basis consistently across Australia, as David Gonski recommended in his report six years ago.

The substantial increase in funding which we are committing to will ensure that by 2027 the Commonwealth will be providing 20 per cent, up from 17 per cent currently, of the school resourcing standard for all government schools and 80 per cent, up from 77 per cent of that standard for non-government schools.

This investment will set Australian children on the path to academic excellence and success in their future lives.

It will deliver real needs-based funding for children from all backgrounds in every town and every city, in every region and every state, in every classroom of our great nation.

Every parent wants the best for their child. Our children deserve schools that are properly and fairly funded, which encourage the highest academic standards, teachers who encourage and inspire and facilities in which children can excel, laying the foundation for a lifetime of achievement.

And that's why the Quality Schools initiative we're unveiling today will increase the Commonwealth Government's recurrent funding for schools by 75 per cent over the decade.

It will ensure that funding is needs-based, equitable and targeted to lift the results for all Australian school children.

It will ensure that students with greater needs receive higher levels of funding from the Commonwealth Government.

This reform will finally deliver on David Gonski's vision, six years ago, after his landmark review of Australian school education.

Now the Gonski Review of 2011, as David will describe, should have been followed by a school funding model that treated students consistently and fairly, one in which the needs of the students were paramount. But instead of that the previous government, Labor government, cut a series of special deals that resulted in 27 different funding arrangements.

It was a patchwork system where some schools are overfunded, others were short-changed and the transition to a new funding deal was spread out in some cases by more than a century.

Now that inequity ends now.

We will ensure that all schools and states transition to an equitable funding model within a decade. It will ensure that the same student with the same needs will be treated exactly the same in terms of Commonwealth funding no matter which state they reside in or the school system in which they're being educated.

We're going to make every dollar count for every student in every classroom.

Now there is no more important responsibility than teaching the next generation of Australians, giving them every opportunity to succeed.

And yet the truth is the performance of Australian students in reading, science and maths in particular has been falling.

Now today's announcement is about turning those results around. By increasing the investment and ensuring fairness in the way Australian schools are funded, we will get Australian students back to the top of the class. That is my goal. That is my commitment.

The most valuable resource we have in our nation is not under the ground, it's walking around on top of it.

By investing in our children's education, by ensuring that we take responsibility for them having the quality education, the great learning, the great skills that they deserve, we will be building the human capital, the most valuable capital of our nation.

Now that's why in addition to this substantial increase in funding I'm pleased to announce that David Gonski has agreed to lead a new review, 'Gonski 2.0', if you like, into achieving educational excellence in Australian schools.

David will provide the high-level advice to the Government on how the extra government funding announced today should be used by Australian schools to improve their performance and student outcomes. It will build the evidence base needed to ensure that funding is used in ways that make a real difference to a student's academic performance.

And the findings of the review will inform the development of a new national schooling agreement between the Federal Government and the states – an agreement which aims to turn around a decade of declining student results.

David will chair an independent panel that will draw on the expertise of teachers, education experts, academics in recommending how to get the best from Australian schools for our children, for Australian students, for our future – investing in our future to ensure that our children and our grandchildren get the great education in the great schools from the great teachers that they deserve.

He will provide his final report to me by December this year.

Now this is a landmark day for Australian schools.

With this major increase in funding and a fair system of allocation, we'll ensure that every Australian child, no matter where they are born, or where they go to school, is given every chance to succeed.

Simon and I are committed to providing today's students with the best opportunities for a lifetime of success.

We're proud to be here with David Gonski. His report from 2011 set out a vision for a national, consistent, needs-based system of funding. And that's what we're delivering. That's what we are delivering. Putting aside the patchwork of inconsistent special deals we inherited. That's what we're delivering going forward and the next step is going to be to ensure that those dollars deliver the great schools, the great teaching, the great outcomes for our children, our grandchildren and generations to come.

I'll ask the Minister now to explain this reform in more detail.

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

Thanks very much, Prime Minister.

This is a momentous day for school leaders around Australia, for hard working principals and teachers. A momentous day for parents, families, Australian schoolchildren and importantly for the way in which our education systems across the country respond to and deliver the skills and capabilities that Australian students today will need to be successful Australian employees, employers and leaders into the future.

The Turnbull Government is committing new record growing funding for Australian schools.

Funding that will grow from \$17.5 billion this year in 2017, to \$22.1 billion by 2021. Growing through to \$30.6 billion by 2027.

It is a 10-year reform agenda that ensures ongoing consistent, real growth in funding for Australian schools above inflation, above wages growth, providing additional resources so that schools can deliver what they need to support their children.

But importantly it does this on a consistent basis. It ends 27 different school funding agreements that our government inherited that were largely based on ancient sweetheart deals and instead replaces them with a true,

single, national needs-based, sector-blind funding model that will deliver across government and non-government schools. Consistency in Australian school funding for the first time ever.

What we will see is that at the end of 10 years, the Commonwealth will transition to an even share across all states and territories of school funding in the government sector and a similarly even share of school funding in the non-government sector.

Of course the Commonwealth has historically been the dominant funder of public contributions to non-government schools. That will remain the case. We will transition to pay 80 per cent of the Gonski-based schooling resource standard for non-government schools. This is up from around 77 per cent at present, which will transition over that 10-year period.

For government schools we will lift from currently around 17 per cent of federal contributions, to around 20 per cent or to 20 per cent of the schooling resource standard by 2020. This is a steady growth rate for both sectors.

Over the next four years it will see growth in funding of some 4.2 per cent per student across Australia – importantly, most of it geared into the government sector where need is greater and the gap to close in terms of Commonwealth share, is larger. So we'll see a higher rate of indexation for government school students of around 5.2 per cent over the next four years.

We are applying, in a very consistent way, the types of recommendations that David Gonski and his panel brought down.

A single schooling resource standard, influenced then by loadings that reflect need.

Additional support for students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Additional support for students with disability.

Additional support for students who come from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

Additional support for smaller rural and regional remote schools.

The types of assistance and transition that is critical to make sure that each school's funding model reflects the need of those schools.

I want to particularly thank David, his fellow panel member from the original Gonski review, Ken Boston and many others who have worked closely with me to help me appreciate the intent of those initial recommendations and to ensure that is reflected in the approach that the Turnbull Government is taking to fix the broken school models we inherited and to provide a common, new, national pathway that genuinely addresses need.

I'm very pleased that David is going to take that first piece of work and build on it with a new piece of work that deals with the quality equation.

Because the evidence is very clear that while spending more money on schools seems like a nice thing, unless you use it effectively and efficiently, you of course don't get the results that you need.

For a long time now, Australia has been increasing investment in our schools, but we've seen stagnation or indeed decline in terms of our international performance on a number of measures.

That's why this new report will focus on how we can best use our record growing levels of investment in Australian schools to ensure that our teachers have the support, the knowledge, the resources they need to do the best for their students in terms of equipping them for the modern economy.

We look forward to working constructively with states and territories to see implementation of these reforms. Our intention is to legislate the trajectory of transition over the 10 years, providing absolute certainty to all school sectors, both government and non-government, of the indexation arrangements, the growth they will have and the real extra dollars that they can plan for the future, as well as then ongoing certainty into the future.

Our approach is analogous to the arrangements the Commonwealth has already for hospitals, where we pay a common share of the efficient price for hospitals right around the country.

At present, in the schooling sector, we contribute wildly different shares of school funding to different states and territories because of the many different deals we inherited.

We're fixing that by getting all states to the same position under the same needs-based formula, to ensure that in the future everyone, every student, every school is treated fairly and equitably.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thank you. David?

DAVID GONSKI AC:

Thank you, Prime Minister.

Ladies and gentlemen, can I firstly say that I really do, and always have, care about school education.

I've seen both personally and as a businessperson, how important good schooling is, both to the individual and to the country as a whole.

Therefore, I'm very pleased to hear that the Turnbull Government has accepted the fundamental recommendations of our 2011 report, and particularly regarding a needs-based situation.

I am very honoured to be asked to chair another report, whether you call it Gonski 2.0 or whatever, and I look forward to it because I believe that we can do good things with the additional money, and I'm very pleased that there

is substantial additional money, even over indexation and in the foreseeable future.

Ladies and gentlemen, you didn't come to hear me, but that's my position.

PRIME MINISTER:

Thank you, David.

JOURNALIST:

Education Minister, Mr Birmingham, you've made it very clear in the past 12 months that you think some private schools are over-resourced or overfunded. Under this model will some private schools in Australia have their funding cut?

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

All schools will transition, as I indicated, to a common share of the schooling resource standard. For non-government schools, that's an 80 per cent share by 2027.

In that transition period, there will be a small number of schools that will experience some negative growth. That's around 24 schools across Australia on our current estimates.

JOURNALIST:

Are they in Sydney or Melbourne or are they concentrated in any particular area?

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

They are largely within the eastern seaboard, in fact, they are entirely along the eastern seaboard. We will be contacting and discussing arrangements with those schools.

Within that there are one or two schools of particular special need, that are not the schools you would usually expect to find on such a list. So we have budgeted some adjustment assistance to make sure we can deal with any circumstances where we have schools that may have higher levels of students with a disability who fall inside that category. So that there is zero disadvantage or impact in relation to them.

But ultimately we've made the difficult decisions that previous governments avoided.

We have made sure that the arrangements we put in place treat everybody fairly, consistently, equitably for the future.

And in that case, we've come up with a model that ensures virtually every Australian school experiences growth. For most of them, they experience very significant growth in their funding.

Last year, in last year's Budget, the Turnbull Government increased the Budget for schools by \$1.2 billion. At the time, that provided for costs that clearly met, indeed clearly exceeded, wages and inflation growth.

In this Budget, over the Forward Estimates period alone, we are adding to that \$1.2 billion with an additional \$2.2 billion in support for Australian schools, making a real, tangible difference and it will flow to those schools who are furthest away from the standard the Commonwealth is setting in terms of the share of funding that we want to pay them under the needs-based formula.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, or Minister, you are talking about this being a decade of funding until 2027. I noticed that the Treasurer previously, he has been critical of this sort of funding, saying that budgets work in four year cycles. So is the money there to fund it until 2027? Because it is essentially \$15 billion between 2017 and 2027 – that's going to be extra?

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

As I indicated, our intention is to legislate these reforms.

So think of them then, if you like, like the way in pensions are legislated, where for each additional aged pensioner funding flows.

For each additional student in an Australian school funding will flow under the common, consistent approach that we are outlining.

We want to give Australian schools the certainty to be able to plan, to be able to heed the advice that comes from David Gonski and the panel that will work with him, to plan on how it is they will implement that advice over a decade of increasing Commonwealth funding, we hope increasing state funding as well. We will be expecting states to at least maintain their real funding. That will be a legislated condition of our arrangements, to make sure that no more – as we've seen in some jurisdictions over recent years – can we see a cost shift where the Commonwealth invests more and the state withdraws.

This is about real extra money to help Australian schools and students.

JOURNALIST:

So just to clarify, after 2021, so after the next four-year cycle of the Forward Estimates, there will be funding through 'til 2027?

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

As I said, just as we budget for pensions or others, this is not about a new four or six-year agreement with states and territories, it is about legislating what the Commonwealth share entitlement is.

We do it already in an arrangement in relationship to hospitals of having a common approach.

It has been sorely lacking in absence in relation to schools.

When I've tried to ask officials and others as to why is it that we pay different levels of school funding in different states and territories, they largely shrug their shoulders and say that's just the way it's always been. It has purely been a circumstance of history.

We are fixing that. We've taken, as I say, some difficult decisions to do so, but I believe that the model provides fair levels of indexation across all of the different schooling sectors, but, of course, it will get us to a point where need is genuinely being addressed.

JOURNALIST:

Minister, your emphasis since taking the portfolio has been that more money isn't going to fix declining results, what changed your mind?

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

We obviously needed to address the problems we had in relation to the school funding formula as well, and I've been very clear, particularly in my discussions with states and territories around the time of education councils that previous funding models were broken and that it was impossible for us to move forward under all of the different hotchpotch of special deals and ancient sweetheart arrangements.

So to fix that model and to ensure that there can be without question investment in schools to address some of the real issues they face, we have put the extra money into the Budget.

But importantly we are not doing it in isolation. We are doing it by commissioning the work of David Gonski who I think we can say with absolute confidence is respected by all of the nation's education ministers and all of the nation's education commentators and who I trust can bring a strong, common-sense approach that will also build a level of acceptance around the types of reforms that might be necessary in Australian schools, coming from additional funding to lift our school performance in the future.

So it is about making a wise investment and we are putting faith in the fact that with an expert panel of educators working alongside David, that we will ultimately have a strong package of reforms to ensure additional money and hopefully existing money in the system as well, is put to a use that lifts student outcomes in the future.

JOURNALIST:

So will it be tied funding to school reforms?

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

We will negotiate agreements with the states and territories after we receive David's report from which we will work through exactly the content of those reforms.

I want this to be a collaborative process with the states and territories. I trust that they will see that this is being done in good faith to get a better, fairer funding model, as well as to get evidence that backs the types of reforms that lifts student outcomes.

JOURNALIST:

Mr Gonski, it might be too early to comment on this but funding on a needs-basis, can you give us an example for those people who might be curious to know how that would work? An example of how that would pan out?

DAVID GONSKI AC:

Well, when we did the 2011 review, our whole concept was that there would be a school's resource standard which would be nominated and we nominated one, and I'm very pleased that the Turnbull Government has taken that – which was a dream at the time – and we worked out what that would cost and then we added to that five different areas where we could put a loading. And that loading, one of them was basically low SES score, where people who were not well endowed with wealth and other things, that that loading could allow them, even though they were born to disadvantage, to rise above it.

Because I was absolutely convinced, and I remain that way, that just because you are disadvantaged educationally doesn't mean you are dumb, doesn't mean you're not capable of being prime minister or whatever of Australia. What you need is assistance often to get there, and that's the sort of thing that we had in mind.

JOURNALIST:

Sounds like it will be a very complicated thing to work out?

DAVID GONSKI AC:

Well, it's interesting. I get – because obviously people are interested in what we did – I get regularly, from all over Australia, examples of what is happening with additional funding that came through. And obviously this is going to give it a much bigger boost, and I would advise you, have a look at it. All sorts of – even the union has published documents on what this sort of funding is doing, and it's fantastic. Taking people, classes as a whole, or individuals to new heights. And if we can do it, it's well worth doing. Great resources, I think the Prime Minister mentioned earlier.

JOURNALIST:

How will you pay for it?

PRIME MINISTER:

We will announce all of the whole Budget in the Budget, as you've heard me say, this is Budget speculation time, but – so that will all be set out next week.

But this is all fully funded. This is real money.

And the critical thing is – and, David, you spoke with such warmth and such passion, which we respect because you know, you know that we can together change lives for the better.

And we do that by making sure that the funding is fair, that it's allocated in a consistent, equitable way across Australia, across different school systems and Simon has explained how that's going to happen, but also we have to make sure that we are backing those great teachers, and we are making good schools great and good teachers great because that is the critical difference.

We have got plenty of money allocated now. This is a record commitment. There will be people who say it's too much, no doubt, but we are making a record commitment here, and now the challenge is – David, we look to you and your panel for guidance here, and I know this will become then the next debate, the next discussion – it shouldn't be acrimonious, it should be constructive, because what we've all got a common interest in is making sure that these billions of dollars are translated into extraordinary outcomes, extraordinary life-changing outcomes for our children, our grandchildren and generations to come, and that comes from having great teachers and great schools.

That's what our whole Quality Schools agenda is about, and that is the next stage.

David canvasses this in his first report back in 2011, in chapter six – David flagged that this was the next step, having identified the need for a school resourcing standard, so you worked out what it was that how you allocated funding according to need, and we are doing that, but then you've got to make sure that you are getting the maximum outcome, the greatest outcome, you are getting the greatest value for those kids, the greatest value for those children of ours and our grandchildren, getting the great outcome for them from the schools.

Now I just wanted to have one more.

JOURNALIST:

Western Sydney Airport, the Government has decided to bankroll Badgerys Creek?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, we've decided to build it, yes.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister regarding Cassandra Sainsbury in Colombia what is the government doing-

PRIME MINISTER:

I'm sorry?

JOURNALIST:

Cassandra Sainsbury in Colombia on cocaine charges – has the government, has there been a member from DFAT, has there been any connection or spoken to her yet?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, we offer consular assistance to Australians who are in trouble all over the world and at any given time there are a – I can't comment on that particular case, but I can assure you that from the Foreign Minister down through the whole Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, it is one of the big responsibilities of our embassies and consulates and our consular services right around the world.

So on that note, thank you very much.

[ENDS]

[Labour to halt the Tories hospital closure plan](#)

Labour

will today announce that a future Labour Government will immediately halt the proposed closure of A&Es in England and carry out a full scale review of all proposals.

Having

listened to campaigners and concerned patients up and down the country, Jonathan Ashworth, as Labour health secretary will immediately halt the Tories chaotic 'sustainability and transformation plan' (STP) programme.

Shadow

Health Secretary Jonathan Ashworth, will say:

"Labour

will put the best interests of patients at the heart of our NHS so today I'm announcing we will halt planned closures to hospitals and other services. We will have a moratorium on the STPs.

"We

have listened to the hundreds of patients and campaigners up and down the country that have been pleading with the Government to hear their concerns about their local services. Threats of hospitals being closed, A&E services

moved miles up the road, and children's wards being shut, have caused widespread concern and confusion. What is more, these decisions have been decided behind closed doors, with no genuine involvement of local people. It's a disgrace.

"The public deserves better. My first job as Secretary of State will be to review every single STP proposal looking at what's in the interest of quality of patient care.

"We'll ask a new body – NHS Excellence – to lead that review. And patients and local communities will be involved at every stage. Local people should be at the heart of decisions about how care is provided."

[Theresa May is less Margaret Thatcher and more Veruca Salt – Emily Thornberry](#)

Emily Thornberry, Labour's Shadow Foreign Secretary of State, speaking on Channel 4 News, said:

"The truth is that Theresa May paints herself as a bloody difficult woman or a Margaret Thatcher figure, but I think this is less Margaret Thatcher and more Veruca Salt. You can't just stand there and simply say: 'I want, I want, I want' when you are negotiating.

"What you have to do is to persuade the other side that you have some ideas that would be good for both sides. You need to be able to calm down and you need to be able to make friends and be prepared to compromise.

"Otherwise we are heading for a hard Brexit; we are heading for no deal and she must back off. A strong Brexit is about a deal that works for the British economy. We are talking about people's jobs – that's the important thing."