

# Professional support for teachers

Empowering and supporting teachers  
through enhanced professional learning.

## Summary

Labor has cut the real funding for professional development for teachers.

To give teachers more opportunities to enhance their career development and to keep abreast of the latest professional practices, the Canberra Liberals will:

- Significantly increase funding for teacher development, by supplementing the Teachers Professional Learning Fund with a 50 per cent increase in funding. In the 2009 school year, annual funding for teachers' professional development will stand at \$1.5 million.
- Index future funding for professional development by 3 per cent per year in order maintain its real value. And we will also index the Teachers' Scholarship fund.
- Commission a serious review of teacher professional development, to ensure that funding is being allocated in the most effective way.

***On the 12 March 2008, the Canberra Liberals held a Community Education Forum in Calwell to discuss a range of education issues with teachers, parents, students and residents. The overwhelming feedback indicated that teachers needed more support. This policy is the first part of a comprehensive plan to support teachers and improve public education in Canberra.***

## Background

In the 2000-01 Budget handed down by the last Canberra Liberal government, teachers were provided with greater access to professional development.

To improve support for teachers, significant funding was included in the Enterprise Bargaining Agreement for teachers.

Altogether, some \$3.2 million was provided over the forward estimates by the Canberra Liberal government to promote the professional development of the ACT's teaching workforce, including a new teacher award and recognition scheme.

However, the real value of that funding has not been maintained under Labor:

- The Collective Agreement from 2000 says that “By the end of the Agreement, \$1 million of additional funds per annum will be allocated to professional development for teachers.” (Para 19.5, p.18.)
- The Collective Agreement also provided an additional amount of \$500,000 each year for three years for “a scheme of rewards and recognition for outstanding teaching practice and achievement.” (Para 25, p.21)
- Together these commitments by the last Liberal government rose to an annual amount that was budgeted of \$1.5 million by 2002-2003.
- By contrast the latest Collective Agreement negotiated by Labor included a reduced total of \$1.25 million per annum, including \$1 million for teacher training and a \$250,000 scholarships fund.
- This represents an overall funding cut in real terms of around \$280,000 from where funding stood in 2003.

## The way forward

The Australian Education Union (AEU) recently proposed that the Professional Learning Fund should be returned to the real value set in the initial Collective Agreement negotiated under the last Liberal Government.

The AEU also propose that future funding be indexed. They point to a particular need for focus on dealing with the behaviour of challenging and disengaged students.

The AEU's concern about helping to improve student behaviour and outcomes is not new. However the pressures on students and staff is now greater than ever before due to the school closures program, which has dislocated communities and resulted in staffing cuts.

The AEU has observed that "morale is decreasing, teachers have lost goodwill and many teachers are seeking alternative positions outside teaching roles." [Budget Submission, 2008-09, p.5.]

The Canberra Liberals will restore the value of teacher training provided to all teachers. We will index this funding and also index funding for the scholarships program.

- The Canberra Liberals will increase the annual commitment to the Teacher Professional Learning Fund from \$1 million to \$1.5 million in 2008-09. This will involve an initial increase in annual funding of \$500,000. We will also index this amount for future years commencing in 2009-10.
  - This will permit increased training to be in the 2009 school year.
- We will index funding for the scholarships fund, commencing in 2008-09.

## New Funding

	2008-09 \$000	2009-10 \$000	2010-11 \$000	2011-12 \$000
<b>Teacher Professional Learning Fund</b>	500	515	530	546
<b>Scholarships Allocation</b>	8	15	23	31

## Allocation of funding

We will consult with the Australian Education Union and directly with teachers to confirm an appropriate allocation for the new professional learning funds.

- Presently the professional learning money is split between a Schools Allocation (\$500,000) and a Strategic Initiatives Allocation (\$500,000). The Schools Allocation is spent by schools on professional learning supplied to all staff. The Strategic Initiatives funding goes towards strategic priorities of the Education Department, as outlined in the Strategic Plan 2006-2009.
- We will consider whether some of the new funding could support professional learning undertaken by teachers themselves. The Certified Agreement obliges teachers to do one day's equivalent learning a year in their own time, but little support is provided for this.
- We will also consider support for the West Australian course "Classroom Management and Instructional Strategies", which has been commended strongly by the Australian Education Union.

***After the disruption and dislocation of recent years, teachers need more support than ever before. A Canberra Liberal government will ensure that teachers get the backing they have been seeking from the ACT Government.***