**Election 2019 – Schools**

# Why is this an issue for women?

* Any changes to structures or funding have serious implications for women’s working conditions and ability to deliver high quality education. Women make up the majority of the workforce in the schooling sector. [At the primary level of schooling, females accounted for 81.5% of teaching staff in government schools, 82.6% in Catholic schools, and 77.1% in Independent schools. The proportion of teaching staff who were female was less at the secondary level, where the figures were 60.1% for government schools, 58.9% for Catholic schools, and 55.8% for Independent schools](http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs%40.nsf/Lookup/4221.0Main%2BFeatures602014?OpenDocument).
* Inadequate and short-term funding also has serious consequences for Australian women and their children in relation to accessing education and other work and family commitments in the longer term. [Women are also the major care givers for children and changes to funding models impact on their relationship with schools and their ability to enter the workforce. On average women spend 8 hours 33 minutes per day caring for children under 14 years of age compared to men who care for 3 hours 55 minutes](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs%40.nsf/Lookup/by%2BSubject/4125.0~Jan%2B2012~Main%2BFeatures~Caring%2Bfor%2Bchildren~4120).

**Election commitments**

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| Full implementation | Partial implementation | No or negative response |

The table below sets out how fully parties’ current election commitments address NFAW recommendations:

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| **NFAW RECOMMENDATION** |
| Education and schooling be central to the government’s program for the 21st century. |
| **PARTY COMMITMENTS** |
| **ALP** | **LNP** | **GREENS** |
| Total spend on schools $322b to 2029 ( $1.4 b more than Coalition)  |  | A strong public education system is key to investing in the next generation and building a fair, successful and cohesive society  |
| **NFAW RECOMMENDATION** |
| That the public education sector be fully funded. |
| **PARTY COMMITMENTS** |
| **ALP** | **LNP** | **GREENS** |
| Ensure government schools are funded to 100% of the Schooling Resource Standard  | Policy remains at the same level as the National School Reform Agreement of 2018 and growth in funding is due largely to rising student numbers. | The adoption of national needs- based funding that results in public funding to private schools being scaled down in accordance with the Schools Resource Standard |
| **NFAW RECOMMENDATION** |
| That pre-school education be fully integrated and part of the schooling system. |
| **PARTY COMMITMENTS** |
| **ALP** | **LNP** | **GREENS** |
| $1.7b over 4 years for preschool for three- and four-year olds  | Access to Early Childhood Education has been extended for another year for 350,000 children for 15 hours per week of preschool. This is only a single year’s funding for those children starting school in 2021. This budget measure also includes funding for 2 years to implement strategies to increase attendance rates among disadvantaged and indigenous students and is welcomed but is not enough. | Early childhood education is a critical component of lifelong learning and should be available to all Australian families through accredited public, community or not – for – profit providers on a fee – free basis. |
| **NFAW RECOMMENDATION** |
| That all public sector schools have the services of highly qualified school counsellors and child psychologists. |
| **PARTY COMMITMENTS** |
| **ALP** | **LNP** | **GREENS** |
|  |  | To redirect funding for the National School Chaplaincy Program , to increase funding and support for qualified secular school welfare and family support professionals in schools |

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| OTHER ELECTION COMMITMENTS |
| Commitment | **Party** | **Comments** |
| Local School Community Fund - $30.2m | LNP | While NFAW welcomes extra spending on schools this money is not targeted and can result in entrenching disadvantage. Women with greater caring duties and school involvement will find themselves required to make submissions. Those schools with parents from lower education bases may find themselves unable to compete. |
| Life Education Australia ($5m – 3 years) Arts Education Programmes ($3.3m – 4 years)- Music Count Us In/Transformational Learning through Creativity/Bell Shakespeare’s National Education ProgramMobile Musical Education program ($2.4m for 2018-2019)Australian Constitution Centre ($2m over 2 years) | LNP | While all these programmes are valuable of themselves there is nothing to suggest an overall plan of how this all fits student learning objectives. While NFAW agrees all experiences are valuable to education this approach does not offer long term support to students, teachers or the providers. Teachers (largely women) will be required to accommodate these programmes with no knowledge as to how long they can rely on the providers. Such funding lacks commitment to the programmes themselves and the education community. This is further evidence of no overall policy framework. |
| Strengthening Teacher Capacity(Funded $9.5 m for 4 years)  | LNP | This is an on-line programme to teach Mathematics and Phonics online. While many teachers may welcome the use of the online resources it is a further impost on teachers (mostly women) and directive of their personal development. Many educators have suggested this is ineffective and the emphasis on phonics is ideologically driven. |
| New Evidence Institute for Schools - $280m | ALP | This measure is welcomed as it entrenches evidence- based policy development in Education  |
| Bursaries for high achieving students ( $45m – 4 years)  | ALP | This measure offers an incentive to young people to join the teaching profession |
| Teacher Training ( restricted to top 30% students)  | ALP | This measure raises the quality of teaching and enables teachers to keep up with research on effective teaching methods |

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