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## PREAMBLE

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This state education policy should be read in conjunction with the Australian Greens federal education policy. As university funding is a federal responsibility, the universities' section of this policy only relates to the state government's administrative responsibility for Victorian universities.

## PRINCIPLES

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1. Education is a public good which is an essential investment in Australia's economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, well-being and social fulfilment.
2. All people are entitled to free, secular, well-funded and high quality, life-long public education and training.
3. Differences in educational outcomes should not be the result of differences in wealth, income, power, possessions or location.
4. The state government should prioritise public education and has a primary responsibility to fund all levels of the public education system, with the exception of universities: early childhood education, schools, vocational education and training and adult, community and further education - at a level commensurate with international best practice.
5. Early childhood education is an essential component of learning and should be free and culturally appropriate.
6. Decision making in education should be open to input from teachers and academics through their unions and professional associations, and parents and students.
7. The salaries and conditions of school and TAFE teachers, educational support staff in schools, early childhood educators and other educators should be set at a level that:
  - a. recognises their professionalism, training and the importance of their work;
  - b. provides secure career structures; and
  - c. encourages committed and capable people from across the community into the teaching profession at all levels of the education system.
8. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's educational outcomes should match the rest of the Australian population.
9. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities should be able to contribute the design and delivery of educational services for their children and other community members.
10. A publicly owned and controlled and properly funded TAFE system plays an essential role in providing economic prosperity and a socially just society by offering low cost, lifelong educational opportunities and skills development. Vocational education and training (VET) should be primarily provided through the public TAFE system while the community and not-for-profit VET sector should also be supported.
11. Education unions and subject and professional association are the appropriate representatives of educators in all educational matters.
12. Competition between schools and other educational institutions based on narrow measures of performance is not an effective way to improve Australia's education outcomes. Educational effectiveness should be assessed on properly validated measures.

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## GENERAL AIMS

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1. A public early childhood, school, vocational training, adult community and further education and university system that is recognised as among the best in the world.
2. The phasing out fees and charges from public early childhood, school and TAFE education.
3. Internationally competitive conditions for school and TAFE staff.
4. Education funding across all sectors that
  - a. does not include or promote competition, privatisation, outsourcing, and other market based mechanisms; and
  - b. rejects the use of funding vouchers for schools and competitive tendering and entitlement-based funding for TAFE; noting that such mechanisms undermine standards and integrity and do not further the complex policy objectives of our education system.
5. Governance networks within each education region to develop a cooperatively, organised and integrated public education system.

6. Increased support services to address barriers to education and for vulnerable students, including education reengagement programs for children, young people and adults.
7. Refugees to be exempt from paying university and TAFE fees.
8. International TAFE and university students to be provided with a public transport concession card.

## Aims – Early Childhood Education

9. Public early childhood education to be provided by government and accredited community organisations and not-for-profit providers.
10. Two years free pre-school education to all children delivered by registered, fully qualified educators.
11. Increased funding for early childhood education to eliminate waiting lists.

## Aims – Schools

12. Schools funding provided
13. on the basis of equity and need.
14. Eliminate all fees for 'non-core' activities charged by public schools through increased funding and reinstate the Education Maintenance Allowance, to be paid at level sufficient to ensure that all students can afford to participate in the full range of extracurricular activities including but not limited to camps, excursions and instrumental music.
15. A new Independent School Resourcing body to
  - a. determine eligibility for public funding;
  - b. the per student 'SRS funding' level and 'loadings' for schools and students that need more support to educate students to a high level;
  - c. ensure the allocation of funding by State and Federal governments is based on evidence of needs rather than political considerations; and
  - d. ensure the contributions of State and Federal government to funding schools are made on a transparent basis taking which addresses the resourcing inequities between the public and non-government sectors, taking into account total resourcing and assets, not just government funding.

16. Recognising that the substantial growth in government funding to non-government schools has had an adverse impact on public education, any funding to non-government schools:

- a. to take into account the resources of each individual school, a direct measure of parental socio-economic status, and the school's capacity to generate income from all sources, including fees and other contributions; and
- b. should only be allocated to schools that fall under the given per student SRS level of funding. Schools which already possess sufficient resources to be above this level should not be provided with further funding.

17. Governments to have overall responsibility for public school finances and staffing, because inappropriate devolution of decision making can:

- a. shift blame for funding constraints more easily to individual school principals rather than government;
- b. undermine a system-wide transfer system that rewards teachers who are prepared to teach in more challenging environments;
- c. increase negative competition between schools and result in the entrenchment of school disadvantage in some geographic locations;
- d. open up the way for privatisation of key aspects of our public schools

18. All schools should be obliged to enrol, only expel as a last resort and find new schools for expelled students.

19. Current exemptions to state equal opportunity legislation afforded to non-government schools to be rescinded.

20. The same accountability and transparency frameworks for public funding to be required of non-government schools as are required of government schools, including:

- a. non-discrimination in the hiring of staff on the basis of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation;
- b. non-discrimination in the selection of students on the basis of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation;
- c. an obligation to enrol and to expel only as a last resort and to find expelled students another school;

- d. provision of all information necessary to calculate the income the school has the capacity to generate from fees and all other sources; and
  - e. accounting for their use of public funds.
21. No government funding for schools that operate for private profit.
  22. Public education infrastructure and land to remain in public ownership and control unless it is no longer needed for educational purposes due to changing demand, in which case the proceeds of its sale to be redirected into a fund for building new or upgrading existing public education infrastructure.
  23. Public education infrastructure to be adequately funded for capital works and maintenance to create an optimal learning environment whilst meeting the highest environmental sustainability standards.
  24. New or upgraded schools to be provided in population growth areas, and located on the basis of proximity to residential areas and public transport infrastructure. Existing smaller schools not be closed on the basis of narrow financial viability criteria.
  25. Smaller class sizes throughout the public education system to achieve manageable workloads for all educators and the best educational outcomes for all students. Maximum class sizes and teaching loads to be based on evidence and set down in industrial agreements.
  26. Needs based staffing to ensure children with particular additional needs, especially in schools that suffer socioeconomic disadvantage and schools with a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children of non-English-speaking background, are provided with a comprehensive education.
  27. An increase in specialist teachers and support services for students and pre-school children with particular additional needs, including those with a disability or a learning difficulty.
  28. Increased support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.
  29. Increased support for students from non-English speaking backgrounds.
  30. Provide more support for early intervention for students with literacy and numeracy difficulties, including more trained specialist staff using evidenced-based techniques.
  31. Provide AUSLAN and Braille training for staff in all schools through professional development.
  32. Rejection of performance based pay for school teachers and other educators and abolition of arbitrary caps on promotion. These practices undermine the cooperative environment that is essential to achieving the best educational outcomes, cannot be fairly implemented, discriminate against disadvantaged schools and students, and place downward pressure on overall pay and conditions.
  33. Increased pay, professional recognition, improved pre-and-in service training and increased release time for the development of, and participation in professional learning communities.
  34. All school teachers to be properly qualified and provided with adequate support and mentoring during training and the first years of their careers. Fast-track teacher training programs to be abolished.
  35. To address the over-casualisation of school and TAFE teaching by introducing a benchmark of 80 percent of teaching to be performed by permanent staff in both public and private schools and VET providers. All public school teachers should be permanent employees of the education department.
  36. Decisions about curriculum, testing, reporting and teaching to be made in consultation with appropriate educational experts, teachers, parents, students and other stakeholders.
  37. Support for schools in the provision of high quality information to parents and the community and an end to the public ranking of schools in league tables.
  38. Schools and curriculum material free from corporate sponsorship and influence including the use of sponsors' material or logos.
  39. Schools to be supported to provide experiential learning activities including excursions, outdoor education, regular activities in community settings and 'incursions' (i.e. visiting programs into a school where students are actively involved in a project such as growing a food or sensory garden) and curricula relevant to local people, places and communities

that equip students to be active, questioning and creative citizens in all facets of life.

40. Inclusion of the history, culture and contemporary experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the school curriculum, and in the training and professional development of all teachers.
41. Increased resource allocation for the teaching of community languages in public primary and secondary schools, and well-resourced centres for the study of community languages and trade-specific English language courses.
42. All preschools, primary and secondary schools to provide age appropriate and accredited education in respectful relationships, including all forms of sexual expression and which covers issues such as family violence, sexual harassment, child sexual abuse and pornography. Each school should also have at least one staff member who is able to meet the needs of LGBTI staff and students.
43. Sufficient funding for Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Public Schools to allow:
  - a. full integration of the latest ICT into learning activities;
  - b. employment of specialist ICT staff and professional development for all school staff in how to facilitate the integration of the latest ICT into learning activities;
  - c. the free provision by schools to students from low income families of the smart devices, computers and laptops required for full participation in these activities; and
  - d. schools to optimise the use of the National Broadband Network as it is rolled out.
44. Home schooling options for parents to educate their children if they meet requirements to provide a balanced education, core educational outcomes and social interaction with peers.
45. VET to be free in all Victorian schools.
46. Restore funding for VCAL coordination in schools.
47. Where schools decide to have a compulsory school uniform, these should be affordable and mechanisms should be put in place to provide uniforms to families who cannot afford them.
48. Reinstate the Youth Suicide Prevention Program in all schools.

## **Aims – TAFE and Vocational Training**

49. The reversal of all recent funding cuts to the Victorian TAFE sector.
50. Establish a program to upgrade sub-standard TAFE facilities.
51. Increase government oversight of private Registered Training Organisations.
52. The government to ensure that TAFEs in the dual sector are not disadvantaged.
53. Educators to have a key role in developing and reviewing training packages.
54. TAFE teachers to have a tertiary teaching qualification and industry experience and training.
55. Elected staff and student representative positions to be restored on TAFE councils and at all other relevant levels of TAFE administration.
56. A substantial increase in the availability of apprenticeships, in rural and regional Australia and other locations where there is a shortage.
57. Abolition of the current requirement of the Victorian Training Guarantee to only provide a government subsidised TAFE place if the student is undertaking a higher qualification than they currently hold.
58. VET funding priorities to balance student needs, employment demand, and providing skills in satisfying and sustainable employment.
59. To phase out public funding of privately provided VET where TAFE can provide the same educational and training outcomes.

## **Aims – Adult, Community and Further Education**

60. Neighbourhood Learning houses and Learn Local Centres to be funded at a level that recognises their vital contribution to adult, community and further education by providing educational opportunities to some of the community's most marginalised members.

## **Aims – Universities**

61. Elected staff and student representative positions to be restored on university councils and at all other relevant levels of university administration.
62. Victorian Universities to be prohibited from investing funds in the fossil fuel, gambling and tobacco industries.