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DESPITE RECORD FUNDING, DECLINING RESULTS HIGHLIGHT EDUCATION FAILURE

"A 'back-to-basics' approach to education in Australia has never been more urgent. Today, governments at all levels are spending record amounts but results continue to decline. Without serious reform our students will continue to fail," said Dr Bella d'Abrera, Director of Western Civilisation Program at the Institute of Public Affairs.

New research by the Institute of Public Affairs, released today, reveals record levels of state and federal funding of Australian schools has coincided with a long-term decline in educational outcomes. The analysis finds:

- **From 2012 to 2022, total state and federal government spending on school education increased by 43%, but key OECD PISA results declined by 3% over the same period.**
    - **In this period, federal government funding has increased by 75% and state government spending increasing by 32%.**
- **In dollar terms, adjusted for inflation, total state and federal governments spending increased from $55bn in 2012 to $79bn in 2022.**
- **Between 2012 and 2022, federal and state governments spent a cumulative total of over $716 billion on school education.**

"For too long, the debate in Australia about improving our education system has focused solely on the sum of money being spent, rather than what is taught to our students and the results it generates," said Dr d'Abrera.

The IPA's analysis follows the concerns of the Productivity Commission, which noted in February 2023:

> "[The] *lack of improvement in academic results has been accompanied by a concurrent increase in the amount of money spent on schools. Overall, gross school income per student has increased by nearly 20 per cent in real terms since 2011, with little discernible improvement in test scores."*

The analysis follows a series of IPA research into Australia's education system that has found:

- **The equivalent of just 10 weeks of classes across a four-year Bachelor of Education degree are dedicated to the teaching of core literacy and numeracy skills.**
- **Fewer than one-in-ten university teaching subjects focus on literacy and numeracy education.**
- **The teaching of woke ideology accounts for 31% of all teaching subjects on offer at Australian universities, which is equivalent to one-and-a-quarter years of a four-year Bachelor of Education degree.**
- **Complex new Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority rules mandate over half of texts offered to students promote identity politics and less than one-in-five form part of essential Western literature.**

"The analysis again highlights the fact that the problem with our schools is not a lack of funding, rather a curriculum cluttered with woke ideology, and training that isn't equipping teachers with the skills they need for the classroom," said Dr d'Abrera.

"Discussion of a 'back-to-basics' approach is welcomed, but talk is cheap. Australian students deserve nothing less than fair-dinkum reform that puts their academic success, not ideology, at the core of their education."

To download the IPA's research click here.

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