

EDUCATION

Quality, free public education for all can be a reality. The Greens are committed to ensuring that the benefits of innovative, comprehensive, free and secular public schools and TAFE colleges are available to the next generation to secure a cohesive and fair future.



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The Abbott government cheated on the money promised to public schools from the Gonski process, threatening to leave an \$850 million hole in annual government spending on public education in NSW by 2019. We will not allow schools to be robbed of funding for additional specialist teachers, smaller class sizes and a critical boost to resources for students with special needs. We recognise the importance and difficulty of the job of a professional educator and will not allow teachers' salaries and professional development to be starved of funds. The school autonomy program, driven by the former federal Labor government and implemented by the NSW Coalition government, puts money before quality; it undermines the promise of qualified permanent teachers and has already reduced the resources available to children from a non-English speaking background who need additional assistance with language.

We are determined to make sure every person in NSW has access to high quality, free public education and training, delivered by professionals who are free from the threat of job losses and funding cuts. Countries such as Finland have supercharged their public education systems, creating not only world-leading outcomes, but record levels of fairness. In NSW, we too can have public education that delivers for every student and every adult seeking new skills. It just takes some political courage to stand up to the vested interests.

We will restore funding justice to education.

After years of NSW Labor's savage budget cuts, the NSW Coalition government dumped TAFE into an unfair market where it has to compete for money and students against low quality corporate providers focused on minimising their costs and maximising their profits. The so-called "Smart and Skilled" market pushed by former Prime Minister Julia Gillard is part of a national agreement to cash up private colleges; "Smart and Skilled" limits the options available to students. The Greens warned that the government's "Smart

and Skilled” market would destroy a world-leading public education training provider. TAFE Institutes across NSW have already been forced to cut thousands of teaching and support positions, reduce student contact hours, slash support available to students with special needs and drop critical courses as a result. Fees for many students have jumped to unaffordable levels, and the threat of massive debt is turning thousands of young people away from skills training and education.

If “Smart and Skilled” is not stopped in the new parliament, the Greens will move legislation to protect TAFE by:

- **Limiting non-TAFE providers to just 20% of the government’s budget for skills training.**
- **Stopping any new training providers from receiving public funding.**

Prohibiting for-profit training corporations receiving public funding.