

## We cannot let this new reform opportunity for Australia's schools slip: CPD

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CPD welcomes today's announcement from the Federal Government regarding its *Quality Schools* reform initiative as well as the commissioning of David Gonski AC to chair a review into achieving excellence in Australian schools. We also look forward to shortly seeing more detail on the plans outlined.

Since the original Gonski Review in 2011, CPD's Education Fellows, Chris Bonnor and Bernie Shepherd, have been advocating for Australia's school system to urgently move to a needs-based, long-term funding model that is blind to school sector. This was encapsulated in our 2016 report *Uneven Playing Field: The State of Australia's Schools*, where CPD called for a revitalisation of the Gonski reforms, including a recommitment to needs-based school funding and the introduction of a National Schools Resourcing Standard.

'This announcement represents the most significant policy breakthrough since the original Gonski Review was commissioned in 2010', said CPD Education Fellow and *Uneven Playing Field* co-author Chris Bonnor.

'Today's decision by the Federal Government is also a big acknowledgement that the Gonski Reforms remain the best ideas to improve our education system. We must work actively and quickly to level an uneven playing field among our nation's schools', said Mr Bonnor.

According to Mr Bonnor, 'the decision could not come soon enough. The latest schools data shows that the problems Gonski identified in 2011 have gotten worse, with new problems also emerging that weren't there in 2011'.

'We cannot afford this time to get the implementation process wrong like we did in 2011', said Mr Bonnor, 'It's vital we make the most of this new opportunity if we are to guarantee a fair, high-quality education for all our children. The gap in outcomes between advantaged and disadvantaged students is widening, not narrowing, and equity is either plateauing or deteriorating.'

Co-author of *Uneven Playing Field* and CPD Education Fellow Bernie Shepherd said 'It will be critical to see the policy detail from the Prime Minister and Education Minister's announcement, and to see whether we will finally get serious about evidence-based and needs-based funding for students regardless of your school or background. Getting the funding mix right will be hugely influential on the future performance of our education system.'

**Fellows Chris Bonnor and Bernie Shepherd are available for interview.**

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