Better Schools Tasmania
– with fairer funding for all students

FAQ

What is Better Schools?

Better Schools will improve how education is funded in Tasmania.

Funding arrangements will be simpler. There will be more funding for all schools over time and disadvantaged students will get extra resources to support their learning, regardless of whether they attend a government, Catholic or independent school.

Better Schools is a partnership between the Tasmanian and Australian Governments.

The new funding agreement will deliver an additional $382 million for the Tasmanian Education System.

It is what we do with the funding that will make the most difference.

That’s why Better Schools Tasmania includes a National Plan for School Improvement which outlines five nationally agreed reform directions:

- Quality teaching
- Quality learning
- Empowered school leadership
- Meeting student need
- Transparency and accountability

Every school will need to develop a plan for becoming a better school, reflecting on these five areas.

Why do we need reform?

In 2010 the Australian Government commissioned an independent Review of Funding for Schooling, led by Australian businessman David Gonski, known as the Gonski Review.

The Gonski Review found that existing school funding arrangements were too complicated and were not meeting the education needs of all Australian children.
The Review concluded that many schools, particularly those with larger populations of disadvantaged students, were missing out on much needed resources.

Better Schools Tasmania addresses the issues identified by the Gonski Review.

**How much funding is provided?**

Better School will improve how education is funded in Tasmania. Funding arrangements will be simpler. There will be more funding for all schools over time and disadvantaged students will get extra resources to support their learning, regardless of whether they attend a government, Catholic or independent school.

The new funding agreement will deliver an additional $382 million the Tasmanian Education System.

The additional funding will be phased in over a six year transition period from 2014-2019.

**How do the new arrangements work?**

The new funding model links all funding to a Schooling Resource Standard. The Schooling Resource Standard includes a ‘base’ and ‘loadings’. The base amount is the benchmark amount per student based on the efficient costs of delivering education in a set of Australia’s best performing schools. Extra funding is also provided through loadings to support the following disadvantaged groups:

- Students from low socio-economic backgrounds
- Students with disabilities
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Students who need help with English
- Schools that are disadvantaged by their size or remoteness.

**How much will my school get?**

The new funding agreement will deliver an additional $382 million for the Tasmanian Education System.

The additional funding will be phased in over a six year transition period from 2014-2019.

This is long-term reform and full benefits will not be seen immediately as it is six-year reform.

The reforms will also benefit education in Tasmania at a system level, funding improvements in the services and support required by schools to implement the reforms.

Some of the funding will go towards the system-level costs required to meet the obligations set by the Commonwealth.
What conditions are attached to the funding?

Funding alone is not sufficient to fully address Tasmania’s schooling challenges. It is what is done with the money that will make the most difference.

The Better Schools Plan for Tasmania will focus on actions by education systems and schools in the following five areas that evidence shows leads to better schools:

- Quality teaching
- Quality learning
- Empowered school leadership
- Meeting student need
- Transparency and accountability

Every school will need to develop a plan for becoming a better school, reflecting on these five areas.

The strong school improvement focus means there will be clear compliance and accountability obligations for schools around the use of funding.

The Australian Government has set out in the Australian Education Act the requirements that schools and systems must meet in return for receiving funding.

What will change as a result of the reform?

This is long-term change which will be implemented over a six year period.

There are two components to the reforms; a change in how schools are funded, and the plan to make our schools better.

The change in how schools are funded will address educational disadvantage and facilitate a high quality education for every student in every school in Tasmania.

The reforms include a plan to make our schools better by focusing on:

- Quality teaching
- Quality learning
- Empowered school leadership
- Meeting student need
- Transparency and accountability

Every school will need to develop a plan for becoming a better school, reflecting on these five areas.

This is long-term reform and full benefits will not be seen immediately as it is a six-year reform.
How will funding be distributed to Tasmanian Government schools?

Tasmania will use its Fairer Funding Model in Tasmanian Government schools to distribute the Better Schools funding.

In 2009 the Department of Education commissioned Dr Stephen Lamb from the University of Melbourne to conduct a review of Tasmania’s resourcing model. Fairer Funding is the result.

Fairer Funding aims to ensure that young Tasmanians in Tasmanian Government schools from all backgrounds receive an education that is equitable, of high quality and maximises their potential in life.

This model features a core allocation to all schools that is supplemented where there is disadvantage or need:

- Students from low socio-economic backgrounds
- Students with disabilities
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Students who need help with English
- Schools that are disadvantaged by their size or remoteness.

Fairer Funding is strongly aligned with the principles of Better Schools.

Tasmania will continue to follow its current process in regard to funding distribution and schools will receive a notional School Resource Package in late October 2013 after the August census.

The reforms will also benefit education in Tasmania at a system level, funding improvements in the services and support required by schools to implement the reforms.

Some of the funding will go towards the system-level costs required to meet the obligations set by the Commonwealth.

How will funding be distributed to non-government schools?

The Catholic and Independent school sectors will be funded by both the State and Commonwealth money according to the Commonwealth model.

The Commonwealth is dealing directly with the Catholic Education Office and Independents Schools Tasmania in regard to implementing the reforms in non-government schools in Tasmania.
What is the Fairer Funding Model?

Tasmania will use its Fairer Funding Model in Tasmanian Government schools to distribute the Better Schools funding.

Since 2009, in consultation with the education community, Tasmania has been working on its own funding reform – the Fairer Funding model is the result.

The Fairer Funding Model aims to ensure that young Tasmanians in Tasmanian Government schools from all backgrounds receive an education that is equitable, of high quality and maximises their potential in life.

This model features a core allocation to all schools that is supplemented where there is disadvantage or need:

- Students from low socio-economic backgrounds
- Students with disabilities
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- Students who need help with English
- Schools that are disadvantaged by their size or remoteness.

How will students with disability be funded?

Under Better Schools, additional funding will be supplemented for students with disability.

How will Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students be funded?

Under Better Schools, additional funding will be supplemented for students who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

When will schools receive the funding?

Better Schools Tasmania will start in January 2014. This is long-term reform and implementation will occur from 2014-2019.

Tasmania will continue to follow its current process in regard to funding and schools will receive a notional School Resource Package in late October 2013 after the August census.
**Are all schools treated equally?**

Yes, all schools will be funded in accordance with the Commonwealth model. Under the model any school or school system is compensated for the educational disadvantage their students face.

This agreement focuses on providing funding according to a common measure of student need, irrespective of sector.

**What will the funding do for my school?**

Schools will be able to use the additional resources to meet the individual learning needs of their students. For instance, schools could use extra funding to:

- Improve professional development for teachers and school leaders.
- Improve mentoring and support to beginning teachers.
- Increase access to better skilled school support staff to provide assistance to teachers.
- Deliver early literacy and numeracy intervention programs.
- Deliver targeted programs to support students at risk of leaving school early.
- Develop partnerships between schools, parents and the community.
- Provide support for students with a disability so that they can participate in schooling on the same basis as other students.
- Purchasing digital resources to make the most of the opportunities of connecting to the National Broadband Network.

**What happens now – Tasmanian Government schools?**

In Tasmanian Government schools, principals will be supported by the Department of Education to meet the demands and obligations of Better Schools Tasmania.

An implementation plan is being as part of the agreement with the Commonwealth.

Key stakeholders will be involved and consulted as part of the implementation.

Tasmania will continue to follow its current process in regard to funding and schools will receive a notional School Resource Package in late October 2013 after the August census.
What happens now – non-government schools?

The Commonwealth is dealing directly with the Catholic Education Office and Independents Schools Tasmania in regard to implementing the reforms in non-government schools in Tasmania.

Where can I get more information?

These changes do not take effect until January 2014 so there will be no immediate changes. Over the next five months principals will keep school communities informed as information becomes available.

www.education.tas.gov.au – Better Schools Tasmania

www.betterschools.gov.au