



WA shows Allan Government how to treat families fairly

The Allan Labor Government could learn a lesson about fairness from its WA Labor counterpart.

Announced just days after the School Saving Bonus, WA's Student Assistance Payment provides the same cost-of-living support to all families in both government and non-government schools.

This is in stark contrast to the School Saving Bonus which will be provided to all families in government schools regardless of income, but only a small proportion of families in Catholic and independent schools.

'The WA Labor Government has shown the way in treating all families fairly, while here in Victoria the School Saving Bonus is based on which school a student attends,' said Victorian Catholic Education Authority Acting CEO Bruce Phillips.

'We are calling for the Allan Government to treat families fairly: either by making the School Saving Bonus payment available to all families or means testing it for all families.

The Government has not given any reasonable explanation as to why families are being treated differently based on which school they attend.

The Treasurer has suggested they would need to employ "a truckload more bureaucrats to check whether or not people qualify for means testing" but this is patently untrue.

The mechanism to means test school families already exists and is currently used by the Victorian Government to administer other programs such as the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF).

'The CSEF shows the Government can provide targeted support to students in a fair and equitable manner but it has chosen to disregard its own existing mechanisms in pursuit of a budget headline.'

'The Government discriminating against families based on which school they attend is incredibly unjust.'

The School Saving Bonus is a \$400 payment for each child enrolled in a government school in Victoria and in non-government schools for families with a Health Care Card.

The WA Student Assistance Payment provides \$250 for each secondary student and \$150 for students attending primary school or Kindergarten at a Western Australian public school, non-government school or registered for home education.

There are more than 158,000 families who choose to send 215,000 students to the 496 Catholic schools in Victoria. This represents 1 in 5 Victorian students.

The Victorian Catholic Education Authority is the peak body for Catholic school education in Victoria.

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