



RADFORD COLLEGE

25 November 2020

Statement from Radford College Principal Fiona Godfrey in response to AEU ACT Branch Council resolution from 21 November 2020

The Australian Education Union (AEU) ACT Branch Council's resolution irresponsibly distorts the truth about Radford College's funding, in an attempt to mislead the public.

The union is also well aware that the College receives a relatively small percentage of its revenue from the ACT Government, and that percentage has been steadily reducing since funding reforms were announced in 2017.

At the time these reforms were announced, I made the following statement.

“While a loss of revenue for any organisation is disappointing, the College believes that the needs-based adjustment is fair and equitable. Radford was founded in the 1980s with limited resources and is now well established. The changes mean schools which have a limited resource base will have a greater financial capacity, regardless of their geographical location or the system to which they belong.”

Radford will receive 6.5% of its revenue from the ACT Government in 2021, with that percentage dropping to 3.37% in 2023.

In dollar terms, this means ACT Government funding of Radford College will reduce from \$3.2m in 2021 to \$1.683m in 2023, a 47.4% reduction. This amount of funding is for nearly 2100 students from Pre Kindergarten through to Year 12.

Commonwealth Government funding in the same period, 2021–2023, will decrease from \$8,375,706 to \$8,006,731, a total decrease of 4.4% over three years.

Put simply, the more students who attend non-government schools, the less the cost of education to government budgets. If every non-government school in the ACT shut their doors and forced their students into government schools, the budgetary implications would be huge. With just over 50% of all ACT students in non-government schools in Years 7 – 10, the ACT government would need to double the number of high schools in the Territory.

The suggestion that independent schools pay for capital works programs through government funding is factually incorrect. Put simply they don't, and they can't. There are strict rules on the use of government recurrent funding to independent schools, it cannot be used for capital works. Federal and state/territory governments recurrent funding of all independent schools is solely for the provision of education. This includes the payment of teacher salaries, curriculum-related and general school running costs. Spending recurrent funding on capital works is not allowed, and schools' compliance in this area is carefully monitored.

The Australian Government provides some support for capital infrastructure in independent schools through the Capital Grants Program, which must give priority to schools with the least capacity to raise funds from their school communities. Radford College does not currently attract any of this funding for capital works. The vast majority of capital funding, nearly 90%, in the independent school sector, is provided by parents and communities. These funds are raised through fees, capital levies, targeted fundraising and donations.