

The Liberals' Education Policy

*Ensuring every Western Australian child has the
best possible education, regardless of their
circumstances*

MAKING DECISIONS
GETTING THINGS DONE
SECURING WA'S FUTURE



Policy Summary

The Liberals believe that all children should have access to an education that allows them to make the most of the opportunities available in a State like Western Australia.

The Liberals have made, and will continue to make, the decisions and investments necessary to provide an education system that will empower young people with the knowledge and skills to fundamentally enhance their opportunities to live happy, healthy and productive lives.

Since 2008, the Liberals have revitalised the public school system through the nation-leading Independent Public Schools (IPS) initiative; ensured Year 7s will benefit from the specialist teachers and facilities that secondary schools offer; provided improved pastoral care with 60 additional school psychologists and invested an unprecedented \$1.4billion in school infrastructure with 26 new schools built.

If re-elected, the Liberals will:

- Undertake the next phase of the Independent Public School initiative, building the capacity of schools wanting to benefit from greater autonomy
- Reform the WA Certificate of Education to ensure our secondary students leave school with the numeracy and literacy skills they need in later life
- Provide \$22million and land to assist in establishing a university campus for the Eastern Suburbs at Midland
- Invest \$57.2million for 155 additional school nurses, boosting health care for every child across Western Australia
- Ensure our schools have appropriate counselling facilities so that school psychologists can more effectively deliver services
- Expand access to the WA School Chaplaincy Program with an additional \$2.36million over four years
- Increase funding for CARE Schools to \$4million over four years to support students with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties re-engage with education
- Build 16 Child and Parent Centres to ensure children and families have the support they need
- Build upon our record \$1.4billion investment in school infrastructure, with a focus on reinvigorating our secondary schools.

The Liberals are committed to negotiating with the Commonwealth on the potential outcomes of the Gonski report, to ensure funding arrangements are fair for WA students, the a 'one size fits all' approach is not taken and that the running of our schools remains a State responsibility. A Liberal Government will



also closely monitor the implementation of the National Curriculum to make sure that it reflects the learning needs of our students.

The Liberals will continue to use skilled economic management, State Budget surpluses and strong economic growth to invest in our children, provide them with a public school system that delivers the highest standard of education; superbly built and designed schools that enhance learning; and early intervention for children to give them the right start in life.



Independent Public Schools – the Future

If re-elected, the Liberals will:

- Provide all schools with the opportunity to become an Independent Public School with the introduction of a comprehensive transition and development program.

The Liberals Independent Public Schools (IPS) program is one of the most significant reforms the Western Australian public education system has seen in decades, moving decision making, responsibility and accountability closer to where it matters; the local school and its community. The success of IPS is now being followed by other States and the Federal Government.

An IPS has autonomy over its strategic direction and day-to-day decisions including the curriculum that best supports students' needs, staff selection and management of their financial affairs. The 2013 school year has seen 255 schools operating as IPS, representing more than half of all public school students and teachers.

The Liberals recognise that becoming an IPS is a big step with significant advantages for the school community but also considerable responsibilities. To ensure schools feel confident to take this step and are ready for the responsibilities, the Liberals will introduce a development program for any school wanting to become an IPS. The program will build each school's capacity and guide them through the selection process.

The program will provide mentoring from highly regarded and experienced IPS principals. These principals will also provide input into the selection process, lending their professional insight into assessing a school's readiness.

The process will focus on investing more time in preparing schools to become IPS and give them the opportunity to learn more about how they might use the flexibilities of IPS to best meet the needs of their students.

The IPS reform has always been about equity, making sure that all children, no matter what their circumstances, can go to a school that has sufficient flexibility to meet their needs. This next phase will build the capacity of schools that have previously missed out on selection or have not applied because they are unsure if they are ready.

This is an important and necessary next step in the IPS reform.

WA Certificate of Education

If re-elected, the Liberals will:

- Introduce minimum literacy and numeracy standards in secondary schooling and reform the Western Australian Certificate of Education so that students can make the most of their education and are better equipped for the workforce or further study.

The community has the right to expect that students will leave school with at least the minimum level of literacy and numeracy needed to meet the demands of everyday life.

The Liberals will implement major reforms to the State's senior secondary education system to ensure all Western Australian students are supported to meet minimum literacy and numeracy standards by the time they graduate from secondary schooling. These reforms lead the nation in raising secondary education standards.

To achieve this, a minimum literacy and numeracy assessment will be introduced in year 10 from 2014. Students will be required to demonstrate minimum numeracy and literacy standards to achieve graduation. Students identified as requiring additional support will be given targeted educational programs throughout the rest of their schooling and ongoing reassessment to meet graduation eligibility.

The Liberals will also reform the structure of the Western Australian Certificate of Education to ensure students can make the most of their time in school.

The existing Stage 1, 2 and 3 courses, introduced under Labor, have discouraged many students from taking courses that will challenge them to reach their full potential. The result has seen too many students leaving school without having the skills or knowledge they need to be set on a pathway to further education, training or entry into the workforce.

The Liberals will replace Stage 1, 2 and 3 courses with new, simplified year 11 and year 12 courses that will see students required to achieve an Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) or a minimum Certificate II in training programs to graduate.

Good research shows that competence in literacy and numeracy is by far the biggest help that we can give vocational students to train and re-train over their working lives.

In introducing these reforms, the Liberals have listened to parents, teachers, tertiary educators, training providers and employers, who have told us that more can be done to ensure school-leavers are better equipped to pursue further education or enter the workforce.

A University for the Eastern Suburbs

If re-elected, the Liberals will:

- Contribute \$22million and land to support the establishment of a university campus in Perth's eastern suburbs at Midland.

The Liberals are committed to providing better access to tertiary education to people in the eastern suburbs, hills and regional areas.

The Liberals will support the establishment of a university campus at Midland, operated by Curtin University. This will be achieved by making land in the Midland Railway Workshop Precinct, near the new Midland Public Hospital, available for lease at a peppercorn rent and committing \$22million for construction of the campus facilities.

The university will potentially offer a broad range of courses at the campus, such as nursing, business studies and engineering, and could include medicine if Curtin's bid to establish a medical school is successful.

The Liberals will support the project through the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority, which will work closely with Curtin University to design and build an outstanding facility to house up to 600 students and staff.

A university campus at Midland will serve people across the east metropolitan region including Ellenbrook, Forrestfield, the Swan Valley and the hills. It will also be important for regional education as Midland serves as a gateway for regional areas, making tertiary education more accessible for people in northern and eastern country locations.

The Liberals recognise that people from Perth's eastern suburbs have been under-represented in tertiary education, with participation rates 10 per cent below the rest of Perth. The offer of land and financial support is an important first step towards a university presence in the region and reflects the Liberals commitment to ensuring the community has access to the highest possible standard of education, whether that is through our primary or secondary schools, training or tertiary education.

Health Check for Every WA Pre-Primary Child

If re-elected, the Liberals will:

- Provide \$57.2million to deliver 155 additional school nurses for Western Australian schools, ensuring every child has access to school entry health assessments

A Liberal Government will help secure a healthy and successful future for our children by investing \$57.2million for an additional 155 school nurses to provide health care to school-aged children across metropolitan and regional Western Australia.

This represents an 87 per cent increase in the number of school health nurses in our schools. The nurses will focus on improving access to health care for children who need it most, and ensure every Western Australian child has access to a health assessment when they get to pre-primary.

This decision will ensure health issues such as hearing, speech or eyesight problems are detected early, giving children the best opportunity to be healthy and ready to learn when they start school. If a nurse finds a child has a health issue in one of these areas, the child will be referred for intervention and a health care plan.

Many childhood health problems are curable and manageable when they are identified early. The knock-on effect of intervention from a professional during the early years means better educational and social outcomes for Western Australian kids.

These checks will be provided to children in public and private primary schools.

This investment is part of the Liberals' commitment to deliver quality frontline education and health services throughout the State, adding to \$49.7million invested to employ more child health specialists such as speech pathologists in 2010, \$58.5million committed last year to boost the State's community health nurse workforce by 100, and a \$48.7million investment in 16 new Child and Parent Centres.

School Counselling Rooms

If re-elected, the Liberals will:

- Provide \$4million over four years for School Counselling Room Grants to ensure schools have appropriate counselling rooms.

The Liberals have demonstrated a strong commitment to the health and well-being of students.

The Liberal-led Government has met and exceeded the 2008 election commitment to increase school psychologists in Western Australia by 60 FTE making our ratio of students to school psychologists the best in the country. Additional funding has also been provided for school chaplaincy programs and youth workers.

A Liberal Government will allocate \$4million for upgrades to schools to provided facilities that will ensure school psychologists can deliver effective counselling to students.

The funding will mean more schools can offer a confidential and welcoming environment suitable for individual and group counselling, assessment and consultation. It will also allow for the secure keeping of student information and improved safety.

While many schools have these facilities, a number of schools, especially the older ones, would benefit from improvements to these areas.

Schools will have the opportunity to apply for funding to refurbish existing facilities to appropriate modern standards.

Grants of up to \$20,000 will be available to schools through this application process, to a maximum of \$1million a year over the next four years.

School Chaplains

If re-elected, the Liberals will:

- Increase funding by \$2.36million for the WA School Chaplaincy Program

The Liberals recognise the significant contribution made by school chaplains in providing pastoral care for WA students.

In 2008, the Liberals committed an additional \$10million to the School Chaplaincy Program to provide for stronger pastoral care in public schools and have maintained funding at more than \$4million per annum. Since 2008 the number of schools taking advantage of the chaplaincy service has more than doubled to 600.

To expand the ability of students across Western Australia to benefit from this valuable service, the Liberals will increase funding for the School Chaplaincy Program by \$2.36million over four years.

This extra funding will allow school chaplains to increase the time they spend in each school and take a more proactive approach to improving student well-being. This will also increase the number of schools that have access to a chaplain.

School chaplains are of enormous value to school communities and contribute to the spiritual, social and emotional well-being of students. School chaplains can offer support and guidance on ethics, values, relationships and spiritual issues.

Chaplains also provide valuable support to school psychologists, school health nurses and attendance officers, and work broadly with the school community to improve student well-being and achieve positive outcomes for students.

Under the program's expansion, the invitation to all schools to access a chaplain will continue and schools already allocated chaplains will be able to increase their use of the service. This is a voluntary program and schools are not obliged to take up the offer of the services of a chaplain.

CARE Schools

If re-elected, the Liberals will:

- Increase funding for Curriculum and Re-engagement in Education (CARE) schools to \$4million over four years.

The Liberals understand that some young people can face significant social and emotional challenges that can severely affect their ability to learn in mainstream schooling. The impact of disengaging from school can have far reaching effects for the young person and the community.

To ensure young Western Australians do not fall between the cracks the Liberals made the decision in 2008 to commit \$3million over four years in funding to CARE schools. These specialised non-government schools provide education programs to help students with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties and work in parallel to State Government Behaviour Centres.

A Liberal Government will continue and expand its commitment to CARE schools by providing \$4million over the next four years.

CARE schools currently enrol more than 800 disengaged students across 10 sites, with programs aimed at increasing school attendance, improving literacy and numeracy skills and developing life skills for students to increase their work, training or study opportunities after school.

CARE schools also play an important role in ensuring that educational outcomes of students in mainstream schools are not adversely affected by students with challenging behaviour.

The Liberals are committed to seeing our young people get their lives back on track.

Child and Parent Centres

If re-elected, the Liberals will:

- Invest \$48.7million in 16 Child and Parent Centres across Western Australia to provide health and education services and support to children and their families on school sites.

The Liberals recognise that the early years of a child's life are critical to their development, learning and physical and mental health. Unfortunately, some children start school ill equipped to learn and many families find it difficult to access support and appropriate early intervention services.

To address this, the Liberals will establish 16 Child and Parent Centres on school sites in areas of high need to offer integrated health, education and parenting services for babies, young children and their parents. The first 10 centres will be fully operational between 2014 and 2015 and the remaining six between 2014 and 2016.

The centres will be a 'one stop shop' for a range of services and support including, child health nurses, GP services, therapy services (such as speech and occupational therapy) and parenting programs. Each centre will be run by a not-for-profit organisation.

This is a decision by the Liberals to help vulnerable children get the best start in life.

Centre locations 2014 -2015:

- Challis Early Childhood Education Centre, Armadale
- Neerabup Primary School, Banksia Grove
- Roseworth Primary School, Girrawheen
- Westminster Junior Primary School
- Dudley Park Primary School, Mandurah
- Carey Park Primary School
- South Hedland Primary School
- Brookman Primary School, Langford
- Calista Primary School
- Warriapendi Primary School, Balga

Centre locations 2014-2016:

- East Maddington Primary School
- East Waikiki Primary School
- Gosnells Primary School
- Mt Lockyer Primary School, Albany
- Rangeway Primary School, Geraldton
- Wilson Park Primary School, Collie

Building High Quality Schools across WA

If re-elected, the Liberals will:

- Continue to invest in education infrastructure to ensure public school students are learning in some of the State's best facilities.

The Liberal-led Government has made an unprecedented investment of \$1.4 billion over the past four years to build new schools and refurbish and redevelop older schools. This work includes 640 new classrooms and 26 new and refurbished schools.

The Liberals have prioritised making high-quality education available to all Western Australian children no matter where they live. Over the last four years the Liberal-led Government has placed an emphasis on the important early years in education, including raising the standard of primary school facilities. This is reflected in 15 new primary schools being built or redeveloped; another five currently under construction for opening in 2014; and another four to open in 2015.

A Liberal Government will continue to invest in rebuilding the State's public education system, beginning a new phase focusing on our capital works program on reinvigorating our secondary schools to ensure they offer the best possible learning opportunities for young Western Australians.

We are investing \$265 million in a capital works program to prepare our secondary schools for Year 7s, making sure they are ready to provide specialist facilities such as science laboratories. Included in this is \$42.6 million for regional schools.

The Liberals plan to improve secondary education is already underway with Applecross Senior High School undergoing a \$56 million redevelopment due to be completed by March 2015; work soon to commence on stage 1 of the \$80 million redevelopment of Willetton Senior High School; \$45 million for the complete rebuild of Kalgoorlie-Boulder Community High School and \$7.5 million for eight new classrooms at Collie Senior High School.

The Liberals are committed to rebuilding our secondary schools in the next term of Government. A key focus will be on redeveloping those secondary schools built before the 1980s to make sure they can provide the best possible learning environments to cater for students' education and social development needs.

Our Record: Raising Standards in Education

The Liberals have a strong record in Government:

- Introduced the Independent Public Schools initiative which now leads Australia in giving more decision-making power, autonomy, leadership and flexibility to school communities. 255 schools across WA, representing one-third of all public schools and half of all students and teachers are now in IPS
- The Liberal-led Government has made an unprecedented investment of \$1.4billion over the past four years in school infrastructure. This work includes 640 new classrooms and 26 new and refurbished schools
- Made the decision that year 7 will be the first year of high school from 2015, allowing students to learn in a greater depth in maths, science, English and history and benefit from the specialist teachers and facilities secondary schools offer
- Recognised the importance of early childhood education, starting formal literacy and numeracy education in pre-primary, and making pre-primary compulsory from 2013 to ensure all children have access to high-quality, full-time education at least two years before they start year 1
- Properly recognised the importance of Western Australian teachers with a \$1.067billion salaries package in 2008 and ensured subsequent wage agreements have kept them the highest paid in the nation
- Invested \$52million to air-cool every Western Australian school by 2015, ensuring all students and teachers in Western Australia can enjoy a quality learning environment
- Focused on better behaviour and pastoral care in public schools with \$46million invested to provide an additional 60 school psychologists, bringing the total number to 266; six new behaviour centres for students with complex needs; and an additional \$10million to the School Chaplaincy Program
- Invested \$4million to provide 242 schools with interactive whiteboard technology and \$1million for 900 iPads for year 1 and 2 classes. Western Australia is now recognised as leading the nation in the use of assistive technology
- Committed \$2million to assist schools in low socio-economic areas to provide students with modern, stimulating and safe playground equipment