



JOINT PRESS RELEASE
THE HON. TONY ABBOTT MHR, LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION
THE HON. CHRISTOPHER PYNE MHR,
SHADOW MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, APPRENTICESHIPS AND TRAINING

BUREAUCRATS OUT – PRINCIPALS IN UNDER COALITION

Government schools will benefit under a Coalition plan to allow them to self-manage their BER ‘school hall’ funding grants and keep the savings made to invest in other priorities.

Under the Coalition’s *Real Action Plan to Stop Labor’s School Halls Waste*, principals will decide on the priorities for each school, not the state bureaucracy.

Once the planned construction is complete, schools will retain any remaining money for other education or infrastructure initiatives.

It is expected that the bulk of government schools will be able to save around one third of their total funding through the efficient self-management of projects, hiring local contractors, shopping around, and controlling the budget.

The savings could amount to hundred of thousands of extra dollars schools will be able to invest in the fit-out of classrooms, additional computers, PE equipment, or anything else on the priority list.

Individual schools will have an added incentive to extract value for money in the knowledge they can keep any additional funds which currently are reclaimed by the state governments.

In the first week of a Coalition Government we will:

- Redirect unspent BER ‘school halls’ funds away from state education departments and instead give these funds directly to each school;
- Give schools the freedom to decide what infrastructure they need and what will help them enhance the education of students;
- Allow each school to self manage projects in order to deliver better value for money;
- Let schools keep the money they save for investment in other worthy projects or for more comprehensive infrastructure; and
- Launch a full judicial inquiry into the programme with the power to subpoena documents and summons witnesses including the programs creators.

The Labor Government continues to waste billions in the school hall programme and it is a national disgrace.

The scale of the Rudd/Gillard Government waste in the BER programme is worse than a scandal. It is a crime against the taxpayer.

Only a Coalition Government will take direct action to stop the waste.

7 July 2010