



## PRESS RELEASE:

### Partial privatisation of public schools will help arrest declining standards

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Like other key educational stakeholders, the Australian Tutoring Association (ATA) is alarmed by the slipping ranking of Australian students as evidenced on international tests. In response, the ATA espouses the following:

- 1) A partial privatisation of public schools through public-private partnerships
- 2) Support to families from the government through an education co-contribution

#### **1. A partial privatisation of public schools through public-private partnerships**

A partial privatisation of public schools through the insightful application of public-private partnerships can directly address slipping educational standards. ATA CEO, Mohan Dhall said, *"Schools suffering serious socio-economic disadvantage, where there is entrenched and chronic underachievement on national and international benchmarks, requires private sector accountability in addressing and ameliorating this issue. These schools should lose a proportion of their public funding and it should go to the private sector. Intergenerational inequity should not be allowed to continue. The private sector should be encouraged to partner with public schools, and run programs specifically addressing the falling educational standards. This can be done through the use of private, qualified and appropriately trained tutors working with families and schools to achieve designated educational standards."*

The ATA is of the view that a mixed public-private model would bring the best of both sectors together whilst placing the educational interests of the child at the centre.

Dhall said, *"Schools should not be afraid of thinking creatively and critically in solving problems that are growing over time despite the best efforts to date."*

As regards the legitimate concerns of teaching unions Dhall said, *"Public-private partnerships should be supervised by schools and teachers, such that accountability vests with the communities to whom it most matters. Increased investment without increased accountability and improving standards is not what schools need."*

#### **2. Commonwealth government support through an educational co-contribution**

The Commonwealth government should consider an education co-contribution such as those currently in place in Canada and the USA. Investment in education pays long-term dividends to the nation. Dhall said that, *"a co-contribution of \$2 for every \$10 invested in an approved educational fund to a capped amount of \$500 will assist families to make wise educational choices in the future. Included in such choices are the availability of university and other forms of post compulsory education as children mature, as well as the use of private tutors as required to support schooling where required."*

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