

## Education

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Australia should be a world leader and innovator in the field of education; but our ranks are slipping, as globally we become less competitive and productive. In order to provide future generations with the best possible opportunities, we must provide them with the best possible foundation – an education which is second to none!

KAP education reforms will ensure that all Australians, regardless of their circumstance, will receive a world class education; that means that not only will these reforms ensure that regardless of the school or State of enrolment, that students will receive the same benefits from the education system, but this also means, that the education system must rival any other education system in the world. Australia must aim to close the education gap, internally, within Australia, and externally, with other countries. KAP recognises the necessary reforms required for our education system nationally.

However, the focus of such reforms should not only focus on budgetary and monetary constraints. What is required is a significant overhaul of the current model used to teach Australia's children.

It is obvious that the greatest impact is upon students and young Australians, who due to a failing system, are not given every possible opportunity, which should be available to them.

Ultimately, Australia as a Nation will suffer, unless there is immediate reform to the education system. In today's world, a proper education is not an option, but rather it is a necessity. With technological advancements, and an interconnected global economy, Australia must advance to compete. As a country, Australia is facing immediate challenges in terms of productivity and efficiency, the best way to resolve this, is with a better educated, more productive and more efficient workforce; this will only occur with a significantly improved education system.

Furthermore, teachers, principals and those working to provide our future generations with the best possible opportunities are underpaid, under-appreciated and overworked. KAP seeks to recognise the contributions of these people, and ensure that the educators throughout Australia are given the appreciation and reward that they deserve.

### **Background:**

The 2011 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) provides some very sobering statistics as to where Australia stands internationally with respect to education. The following ranks are for students in year four, compared internationally

- In reading skills, Australia is ranked 27<sup>th</sup> out of 45, and
- In mathematics, 18<sup>th</sup> out of 45, and
- In science, 25<sup>th</sup> out of 45.

Furthermore, 24% of year four students did not meet the “intermediate benchmark” for the study, regarded as the minimal acceptable standard of literacy. Perhaps even more troubling, of the teachers surveyed in conjunction with the study, in year four classrooms, only 75% of students were being taught by teachers who considered themselves “very confident” in the subject matter they were teaching. The studies show that by high school, Australia improves in the rankings, but is certainly not the front runner in education.

### **The following guiding principles form the basis of the KAP education reform:**

- KAP proposes to better utilise the existing funding, more efficiently and productively. As with any organisation seeking structural change, the national education system must reallocate existing funding to facilitate better performance, and seek internal efficacy.
- KAP proposes a more grassroots approach to education; removing the current hierarchal and bureaucratic structure will provide greater control to principals and teachers, dramatically reducing

costs, and allowing for the reallocation of funds to where they are most needed; the schools, principals and teachers, and most importantly, the students.

- Primarily, the focus should be on providing a solid foundation of reading, writing and mathematics. This is required, as each stage of education should be considered as a building block, or stepping stone to the next, regardless of what that stage may be.
- The foremost reform that KAP will introduce will be to develop the single most influential determinant to great teaching – the teachers. Throughout Australia, KAP wants to recruit, promote, reward and most of all, celebrate, great teachers. Undoubtedly, the key to the future success of Australia's education system is great teaching.

KAP proposes that in order to provide a better education to young Australians, we must identify great teaching – and reward it! In order to provide better outcomes from the education system, we must improve the quality and efficacy of teaching. The single most important variable in determining the success of any student is the effectiveness of the teacher. The reason KAP is focussing on the teachers, is that we realise that they are the solution to the education problem; the problem is the system in which they are forced to work.

The question then becomes how do we measure student effectiveness? Through student growth; that being, it does not matter the standard of the student at the beginning of the school year, only that they have improved under the guidance of their teacher, and are able to do so year after year. KAP wants to work closely with teachers who are passionate about developing standards and metrics which will allow for a useful and practical evaluation for ensuring student growth.

Upon implementation of such standards and metrics teacher remuneration would be directly linked by providing teachers with a base salary, with additional bonuses paid in accordance with demonstrated student growth.