TERRITORY SCHOOLS GET LESS MONEY UNDER GILLARD’S OFFER

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Chief Minister Adam Giles has called on Prime Minister Julia Gillard to work with the Northern Territory and not impose a one size fits all model to school funding.

“The model of funding presented by the Federal Government actually disadvantages Territory schools and should be highly unpalatable to Territorians,” Mr Giles said.

“The reality is most Territory schools will actually receive less money into the future under this package.”

“The Northern Territory Government spends more money on schools than any other jurisdiction.

“On average we spend $15,365 per student while the average for other jurisdictions is $9400, so we are already punching above our weight.

“The Gillard Government’s funding model makes a wrong assumption about what we are actually spending on our schools. Their figures do not take into account reforms in the Education Department and other efficiencies to school operations. The Territory is not alone in looking at efficiency measures that do not diminish service delivery.

“In effect, we would have to go into further debt to fund our component of this and we are already dealing with Delia Lawrie’s former Government’s $5.5 billion debt mountain.

“This comes on top of the Grant’s Commission decision to slash $121 million in the Territory’s share of GST funding

Mr Giles said details in the National Education Reform Agreement show it will also require another layer of bureaucracy that will place more reporting requirements on principals and teachers that will affect the level of focus on actually teaching children.

“It is galling to hear Labor’s Fannie Bay MLA Michael Gunner calling for the Territory to blindly sign up to this deal that would result in less money for schools in his electorate like Darwin High School and Parap Primary School. The man is crazy if he thinks losing money for schools like Nakara, Nightcliff, Sanderson, Malak, Alawa, Jingili, Millner, Moil, Rosebery, Essington, Woodroffe, Palmerston and Alice Springs School of the Air is a good outcome for the Territory.

“There is no way we can put ourselves in the position to be able to sign the deal being offered that would result in more debt for the Territory and less money for Charles Darwin University.

“While I’m happy to work with the Federal Government to ensure we have a strong school system for Territorians, there is still a long way to go before an acceptable agreement can be reached.”

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