



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**BILLS**

**Australian Education Bill 2012**

**Consideration in Detail**

**SPEECH**

**Wednesday, 5 June 2013**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

**Date** Wednesday, 5 June 2013  
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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Pyne, Christopher, MP

**Source** House  
**Proof** No  
**Responder**  
**Question No.**

**Mr PYNE** (Sturt—Manager of Opposition Business) (10:41): I now put on the record what a swindle these amendments are and this legislation is in attempting to pretend that it is introducing the recommendations of the Gonski report. The Gonski report required \$6.5 billion of new spending each year to implement Mr Gonski's recommendations. Over the next four years, over the forward estimates, that would be \$26 billion of new money. This government is delivering a \$326 million cut to school funding alone in this budget over the forward estimates. This government is, in fact, taking money from schools over the forward estimates and in the never-never, in year 5 and in year 6, is attempting to get credit for apparently rivers of gold that will flow to schools in years 5 and 6 that are not even in the forward estimates.

To believe that, you have to suspend everything you know about the Prime Minister and this government. You have to suspend all the broken promises in the last six years to believe that in five or six years, outside the forward estimates, this government will be re-elected three times and will deliver rivers of gold to schools. What we do know is that in the next four years there is a \$326 million cut to schools. That is not including cuts to universities, cuts to apprentices and traineeships and cuts to early childhood education. That all adds up to \$4.7 billion. So the total cut to education in this budget is \$5 billion. To claim that the government is trying to introduce Gonski reforms is a fraud and a swindle. That is the reason that David Gonski has been so silent on the government's legislation and amendments, because he does not want his good name to be associated with amendments that are not even close to, that are a pale imitation of, the Gonski reforms. If they were implementing the Gonski report they would be costing \$26 billion over the forward estimates, but this government is delivering a \$326 million cut to school funding over that time.

Do not just take my word for it. The whole sector is up in arms about the shemozzle that this minister is presiding over. Bishop Fisher, the chair of the Catholic Education Commission in New South Wales, wrote to the diocesan directors and principals of congregational schools, and he said:

This is a most unsatisfactory situation and this dissatisfaction has been strongly expressed by the National Catholic Education Commission to the Commonwealth government.

Further:

Compared to present funding mechanisms, the new model itself has become extremely complex and annually variable. It is made even more difficult for schools to predict future funding levels because so much of the model is based on loading which themselves involve poor or imprecise measures of student needs.

That is the Catholic Education Commission of New South Wales speaking on behalf of the National Catholic Education Commission.

The member for Mitchell has read into the *Hansard* record a letter from one of his local schools. I asked the minister last Thursday to answer a question that Mary MacKillop College in my electorate asked. It was a very simple question: how much in additional funds will Mary MacKillop College receive in 2014, 2015 and 2016? His answer was so vague that I gave him an extension of time that the parliament granted, over the objections of some of his colleagues, so that he could answer in the 4½ minutes he was given to answer that very simple question: how much money in additional funds will schools receive next year, when they have to pay their bills? They will not get to pay their bills in five years or six years. But this minister was entirely incapable of answering that question.

Hearing the minister answering that question was a little resonant of their pink batts disaster. It reminded me of his handling of the pink batts disaster. Now, 101 days from the election, he has his hand on the levers again.  
(Time expired)