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APC Federal Election Card

Australian Parents Council ('APC')

Championing education by empowering families... since 1962

CALLING ALL PARTIES & CANDIDATES TO COMMIT!

Here's why.....

Australian Parents Council ('APC') urges commitment to real action on the critical issues affecting Australian students and their families. The challenges young Australians face today are unprecedented, and our education system must be equipped to support their wellbeing, safety, and success.

APC has surveyed and consulted its members across Australia. APC is calling on all candidates to prioritise the following **five key issues** in their policy platforms:

1. Mental health and wellbeing of students

The crisis: Rising rates of anxiety, depression, and school-related stress are leaving students struggling, with inadequate mental health support in schools.

What we need:

- A federally funded **National Student Wellbeing Program** that ensures all schools have access to **qualified mental health professionals**.
- **Mandatory mental health education** in school curricula to help students develop resilience and coping strategies.
- Increased funding for **early intervention programs** to prevent long-term mental health issues.

2. The impact of social media on students and their families

The crisis: Social media is exposing children to cyberbullying, harmful content, and addictive algorithms, negatively impacting their mental health and family relationships.

What we need:

- Stricter **age verification laws** and accountability for social media platforms that expose children to harmful content.
- Federal investment in **parent and student education programs** on digital safety and healthy technology use.
- Greater school-based support to help families manage the challenges of social media addiction.



3. School refusal – addressing the growing crisis

The crisis: School refusal due to anxiety, bullying, and lack of support is leaving thousands of students disengaged from education.

What we need:

- **Targeted intervention programs** to support students struggling with attendance.
- Greater flexibility in **learning options** (e.g. hybrid models, online learning support).
- **Increased investment in teacher training** to better identify and address school refusal early.

4. Vaping – protecting our children from nicotine addiction

The crisis: Vaping among students is skyrocketing, with easy access to nicotine products fuelling addiction and health risks.

What we need:

- **Stronger enforcement** against the illegal sale of vapes to minors.
- A national **school-based education campaign** to combat misinformation and highlight the dangers of vaping.
- **Mandatory plain packaging** and advertising bans to reduce appeal among young people.

5. NAPLAN – supporting parents and students

The crisis: NAPLAN has become a source of stress for students and families, often failing to provide meaningful insights into learning progress.

What we need:

- A **NAPLAN reform** to focus on student growth rather than high stakes testing.
- More **transparent reporting** for parents to understand results in a constructive way.
- Reduced pressure on schools and students by exploring **alternative assessment methods**.

The BIG ISSUE: Some political parties are calling for cuts to government funding for independent and faith-based schools, a move that would severely impact school choice for thousands of Australian families. Defunding independent schools would lead to:

- **Overcrowding in government schools**, as families are forced out of independent schools.
- **Higher fees for parents**, placing an unfair burden on families who choose non-government education.
- **Reduced diversity in education options**, limiting parental choice and the ability to find the right learning environment for their child.



What we need:

- A firm commitment that **government funding for independent and faith-based schools will not be cut.**
- Recognition that **all schools – public, independent, and faith-based – play a critical role** in Australia's education system and should be supported accordingly.
- Policies that **support parental choice** in education, ensuring families have access to the schooling options that best suit their children's needs.

APC's message to candidates

Parents across Australia are demanding action. APC represents the families of 720,000 students enrolled in independent schools who expect their elected representatives to prioritise the wellbeing and future of our children. **We urge all to publicly commit to these policy measures** and work towards real change.

We welcome further discussion from candidates on how they can support APC's advocacy efforts.

Where do they stand? APC will be asking all candidates this question.

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