

NGO Leaders for Educational Opportunity

Media release

For immediate distribution

23 April 2013

NGO leaders congratulate Premier Barry O'Farrell, now want others to step up

Fifteen of Australia's leading non-government community organisations have unanimously commended the Premier of NSW for his leadership in signing the National Education Reform Agreement and for putting the interests of NSW's young people first.

The *NGO Leaders for Educational Opportunity* recently signed an open letter calling on COAG members to put their political differences aside and deliver on school funding reform.

The group is now urging other states and territories to step up and follow NSW's lead.

Convened by the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA), the group includes representatives from FYA's Centre for New Public Education, The Smith Family, Mission Australia, Brotherhood of St Laurence, UnitingCare Australia, St Vincent de Paul Society, ACOSS, the Public Education Foundation and others.

The group believes that current funding arrangements are inconsistent and do not effectively support disadvantaged students.

"The NSW Government's decision to sign up to this historic funding package shows Premier O'Farrell to be a man of principle when it comes to education funding in NSW," said Verity Firth, Chief Executive of the Public Education Foundation.

"The decision by the NSW Government today demonstrates that the largest jurisdiction in Australia recognises that a needs based funding formula is the fairest way to fund all schools," Ms Firth continued.

"I congratulate Premier O'Farrell on his visionary leadership. I urge other state and territory leaders to follow NSW's lead and realise their shared commitment to supporting young people to realise their full potential," said Dr Lisa O'Brien, CEO of The Smith Family.

"Significant numbers of young Australians, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, are not achieving key educational outcomes. This has to change in the interests of Australia's current and future prosperity," Dr O'Brien continued.

"I commend the NSW Government on its leadership. Premier O'Farrell has recognised the urgent need for reform," said Ricky Campbell-Allen, Director of FYA's Centre for New Public Education. "It's now up to other state governments to put the needs of their students and young people first."

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NGO Leaders for Educational Opportunity includes: Anglicare, Ardoch Youth Foundation, Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS), Beacon Foundation, The Benevolent Society, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Dusseldorp Skills Forum, Foundation for Young Australians, Good Beginnings Australia, Mission Australia, Public Education Foundation, The Smith Family, Social Ventures Australia, St Vincent de Paul Society, and UnitingCare Australia.

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NGO leaders congratulate Premier Barry O'Farrell, now want others to step up – continued

Available for interviews:

- Ricky Campbell-Allen, Director, Centre for New Public Education
- Hon. Verity Firth, former NSW Minister for Education and Training and CEO, Public Education Foundation
- Dr Lisa O'Brien, CEO, Smith Family
- Jan Owen AM, CEO, Foundation for Young Australians
- Cassandra Goldie, CEO, ACOSS
- Kasy Chambers, Executive Director, Anglicare
- Mandy Burns, CEO, Ardoch Youth Foundation
- Jayne Meyer Tucker, CEO, Good Beginnings Australia
- John Falzon, CEO, St Vincent de Paul Society
- Anne Hollands, CEO, Benevolent Society
- Michael Trail, AM, CEO, Social Ventures Australia

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