

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Teacher effectiveness the key: not class sizes**

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“Measures to improve teacher effectiveness will deliver better value for our children’s learning outcomes, improve Australia’s economic productivity and be a better use of public funds than reducing class sizes,” Dr Ben Jensen, the Education Program Director of Grattan Institute said today on the release of a report entitled *Investing in Our Teachers, Investing in Our Economy*. [http://www.grattan.edu.au/pub\\_page/057\\_report\\_investing\\_teachers.html](http://www.grattan.edu.au/pub_page/057_report_investing_teachers.html)

“Improving teacher effectiveness benefits our children. Young people who stay in school longer can expect to earn an additional 8-10% per year for each additional year of education they undertake. A 10% improvement in teacher effectiveness would improve student performance and productivity, increasing Australia’s GDP by \$90 billion by 2050.”

The drive to reduce class sizes, whilst well intentioned and politically popular, is found to be without impact in producing better education outcomes for students. Studies around the world have shown that class size reductions do not significantly improve schooling and student outcomes. For example, recent evidence from Florida shows that policies reducing average class size by about 2.5-3 students had no impact on improved schooling, but cost over \$1 million dollars per school per year. We need to spend our education dollar where it will have the most impact and where it matters: on our children’s future.

Parents have a clear desire to provide the best for their children. Teacher effectiveness is the key: not class sizes. This is the best policy lever for improving schooling for students and giving parents what they want. It will provide more bang for our education buck.

Australia increased its education expenditure by 41% between 1995 and 2006. However, between 2000 and 2006, Australian student performance stagnated in mathematics and significantly declined in reading. Our current public funding targets are misguided and links to improvements non-existent.

Teacher effectiveness should be measured in a variety of ways. These include: student progress and student outcome measures, student feedback, teamwork and peer evaluation, classroom observation from senior teachers and the school principal, self-evaluation, teacher development and improvement.

This report does not point the finger at teachers. On the contrary, this report argues for improved investments in teacher effectiveness. This will have the greatest benefit for our students and is the most effective method to make Australia’s school education the best in the world.

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