

30<sup>th</sup> March 2015

# Get on with it COAG

Resolving funding allocation to the States and Territories for Health and Education is an absolute priority for the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) when it meets this Friday, 1st April.

It will certainly be the last COAG meeting before the 2016-17 Commonwealth budget is handed down on 3rd May and could be the last COAG meeting before the federal election, which could be held as early as July 2nd.

“Ensuring that good quality health and education services are available to all citizens is a core responsibility of Governments, yet we have had years of petty politicking about these. The 1st April COAG meeting must deliver certainty to all Australians about health and education funding for the next 3 years,” said Mark Henley on behalf of Uniting Communities.

Uniting Communities has also advised the SA Premier that the funding for the increase needs to be collected in a fair manner and not place an unreasonable burden on lower income families. We have proposed a range of tax revenue options, including reduced tax benefits for high transfers into Superannuation, reduced negative gearing allowances, increased scrutiny on loopholes currently allowing international corporations to avoid paying a fair share of tax and broadening taxes on services to include web based retail, online gambling and financial transactions.

These are all measures currently available to a Commonwealth Government with the courage to lead sustainable tax reform. “We don’t need smokescreens such as shared income tax arrangements between the Commonwealth and States to cloud the opportunity to instigate fair and reasonable changes to collect significant revenue to meet the basic health and education needs of all Australians,” said Mr Henley.

Affordable housing is also essential for good health and effective education and so we are also advising COAG that adequate Commonwealth and States funding to maintain services to reduce homelessness is crucial, noting the that State Housing Ministers meet the day before COAG.

“After years of bickering between the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments, this COAG meeting must be the one that delivers on real leadership and ensures adequate funding for Health, Education and Housing services, for all Australians. They need to get on with it,” concluded Mr Henley

### Further Information

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