

Public Services: Issues and Facts

Quick Facts

Since 1990:

- Education costs have increased by **173%** more than the increase in the CPI
- Health costs have increased by **98%** more than the increase in the CPI
- Hospital and medical costs have increased by **137%** more than the increase in the CPI
- Dental costs have increased by **113.5%** more than the increase in the CPI
- Urban Transport Fares have increased by **134%** more than the increase in the CPI

Issues For Congress

- Increased education and health costs are born disproportionately by the poorest members of the Australian community.
- Since the 1980's, public services have been continually challenged through privatisation, contracting out, national competition policy, moves to "self regulation", deterioration in funding levels and user pays arrangements
- The ongoing goal of the current Federal Government to fully privatise Telstra highlights the vulnerability of Australian communities in regional, rural and remote areas to the impact of transfers of public services to the private sector
- Public services build Australia's knowledge infrastructure and capacity through institutions like the CSIRO and universities.

Congress Draft Policy

- Public services can and should act in the public interest and in a professional, transparent, equitable and impartial manner.
- The ACTU will work with affiliates for a public interest test that should form the basis of quality public services.
- The ACTU and unions will call on governments to provide full funding and resources to match the outcomes required
- The ACTU and unions will call on governments to conduct long term planning and training to ensure the skills base and experience of workers is not lost

More information on Public Services is available on the ACTU Website

- a comprehensive Congress background paper and
- the full draft policy

www.actu.asn.au/congress2003

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