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Darwin boarding school closure reflects national under-funding crisis

The union representing Northern Territory non-government school staff says the closure of the St John's Catholic College boarding facility in Darwin highlights the under-funding crisis facing boarding facilities for remote students across Australia.

Independent Education Union – Queensland and Northern Territory (IEU-QNT) Branch Secretary Terry Burke said for students from remote communities, boarding isn't a preference – it's their only path to a secondary education.

"No state, territory, or federal government will establish and fund a full secondary education facility in these regions," Mr Burke said.

"As a result, boarding schools remain the only feasible option for secondary education.

"While boarding schools receive significant sums of money to operate, the amounts are clearly inadequate.

"Additional funding support is essential, and notwithstanding that the cost would still be a lot less than a fully provided secondary school in remote locations.

"The national reliance on under-resourced boarding schools is unsustainable and unfair.

"If governments are serious about closing the gap in educational outcomes for First Nations students, then meaningful investment in secondary education provision for remote communities is essential.

"That starts with fully resourcing boarding facilities – without such systemic change, students from remote communities will continue to be left behind," Mr Burke said.

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The Independent Education Union – Queensland and Northern Territory (IEU-QNT) represents more than 17,000 teachers, school support staff, principals, early childhood education and VET and RTO employees across Queensland and the Northern Territory.

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