

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT

SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 789

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND THE MORRISON BUDGET

“If this budget is Scott Morrison’s idea of a fair go, then it’s time for Mr Morrison to go,” Correna Haythorpe AEU

The Morrison government’s federal budget has failed the fairness test by neglecting to put public education first. Here is the hard evidence

Private school students who represent less than one third of Australian students – with Catholic enrolments in particular falling, are worth \$12,616,322 in the financial year 2019-2020 and \$15,049,141 in 2022-2023.

Public school students who represent more than two thirds of the Australian school population with enrolments mushrooming, are worth a total of \$8,325,827 in 2019-2020 and \$10,384,932 in 2022-2023..

PORTFOLIO BUDGET STATEMENTS 2019–20 BUDGET RELATED PAPER NO. 1.5

Education and Training Portfolio

Program Expenses 1.4 Non-Government Schools National Support

	2018–19 Estimated actual \$'000	2019–20 Budget \$'000	2020–21 Forward estimate \$'000	2021–22 Forward estimate \$'000	2022–23 Forward estimate \$'000
Annual administered expenses:					
Other services (Appropriation Bill No. 2)					
Non-Government Representative Bodies	41,794	40,013	40,013	40,013	14,004
Special Circumstances Funding	6,000	2,997	1,608	1,634	1,662
Adjustment Assistance	10,492	12,458	9,131	1,676	-
Choice and Affordability Fund	-	-	156,129	107,967	111,530
Special appropriations					
<i>Australian Education Act 2013</i>	11,961,572	12,560,854	13,374,122	14,157,751	14,921,945
Total expenses for program 1.4	12,019,858	12,616,322	13,581,003	14,309,041	15,049,141

Program expenses 1.3 Government Schools National Support

	2018–19 Estimated actual \$'000	2019–20 Budget \$'000	2020–21 Forward estimate \$'000	2021–22 Forward estimate \$'000	2022–23 Forward estimate \$'000
Annual administered expenses:					
Other services (Appropriation Bill No. 2)					
Additional Support for Northern Territory	4,987	8,575	12,804	14,242	12,263
Special appropriations					
<i>Australian Education Act 2013</i>	7,679,498	8,317,252	8,982,440	9,658,272	10,372,669
Total expenses for program 1.3	7,684,485	8,325,827	8,995,244	9,672,514	10,384,932

Note the 40+ million for private school ‘representative bodies. i.e. centralised lobbying groups; their special circumstances funding; Adjustment assistance and the Choice and Affordability Fund.

DOGS argue that, apart from ‘unfairness’, there is evidence, just in these figures, of subtle corruption and not so subtle corruption of the democratic process by the private school lobby groups.

It should also be noted that at no point has the Treasurer, Josh Frydenberg, even mentioned the words ‘public education’.

These budget figures are just more of the same according to the research into the years 2010-2017 by Trevor Cobbold of Save Our Schools.at: <http://saveourschools.com.au/funding/funding-increases-for-private-schools-continue-to-outstrip-increases-for-public-schools>

Governments increased funding for private schools while cutting funding for public schools between 2009-10 and 2016-17. Total government funding (Commonwealth and state), adjusted for inflation, for public schools was cut by \$163 per student compared to an increase of \$1,451 in private schools.

According to the Australian Education Union President Correna Haythorpe:“This will be a critical federal election issue, and Prime Minister Scott Morrison has once again demonstrated his lack of leadership on the issue of public school funding.”

With this federal budget the Morrison Government’s insults to public education include:

- no restoration of the \$14 billion in public school funding cuts
- no capital works funding for public schools. Only a one-off \$200,000 per electorate for libraries, classrooms and play equipment, while private schools continue to enjoy a \$1.9 billion capital works fund
- no guarantee of ongoing permanent funding for 15 hours of preschool for four-year-old children and no funding for three-year-olds
- no reversal of the \$3 billion they have cut from VET since elected. \$525 million over five years to “upgrade the VET sector” with not a single mention of TAFE in the budget papers
- a clear indication of their privatisation agenda with industry to design the qualifications and reshape VET.

“Scott Morrison has proven once and for all that his idea of a fair go means a fair go for some, not a fair go for all. He has cut billions of dollars from public schools and given billions extra to private schools,” Ms Haythorpe said.

“This budget has left 99 per cent of public schools under the Schooling Resource Standard and without the additional funding they need for smaller class sizes, more one-on-one teaching and more support for students with disability.”

‘Unfairness’ and an attack on public education is the obvious catchcry for the Labor/Green opposition. At least Bill Shorten had the grace to mention public education in his Budget Reply speech.

But the glaring inequalities between taxpayer funding of the private sector at the expense of the public sector has been largely caused by taxpayer funding of the private sector in the first place.

The only long term answer to the problems caused by State Aid is the abolition of State Aid to private schools. Finland, Germany and other countries with successful education systems have done it. Australia did it for eighty years, during which they were world leaders in education.

When will we ever learn?

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