

**AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT
SCHOOLS
PRESS RELEASE 830
THE MYTH OF EQUALITY**

'*The myth of equality*' was the title of a book produced by Tom Roper, the research officer for the National Union of Australian University Students in 1971. It outlined the gross disadvantages experienced by large numbers of students in both the public and private sector.

State Aid had been trickling into private religious schools since 1963 but this funding had been exacerbating the gross inequalities between the wealthy private schools and schools attended by disadvantaged students.

The work of Tom Roper together with the protests of the DOGS before the 1972 federal election and submissions to the Federal Government by State Education Departments, led to the establishment of the Schools Commission and the Labor Party's 'Needs' Policy in 1973.

As early as 1973, it became blatantly obvious that the wealthy schools would have to be paid off with an assurance that 'no one would lose a penny' before any Treasury crumbs could flow to disadvantaged children in disadvantaged public schools. Two Gonski Reports and billions of dollars later, little has changed. 80% of the Australian disadvantaged students now attend 90 % disadvantaged public schools.

In 1973, when the Karmel Committee wished to cut back funding to the wealthy schools these schools were given the chance to *ask for a review of any funding cut the new system imposed*. With the first Gonski Report, the Gillard Government promised that 'No school would lose a penny' .

Now, Morrison is paying off the wealthy schools before any change has even been implemented. They are being given an extra \$1.2 billion to 'transition' until 2029. This **\$1.2 billion private school 'choice fund' can be used as investment nest egg**. Peak private school bodies will be able to bank money for years as long as they spend it before the end of 2029.

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Trevor Cobbold from Save Our Schools outlines the current situation as described by the OECD:

Data from the [OECD's Programme for International Assessments \(PISA\) in 2018](#) confirm everyday impressions of the vast gap in the resources of public and private schools in Australia. They show that private schools have far more, and better quality, teacher and physical resources than public schools. Despite the fact that public schools enrol over 80% of the most disadvantaged students, they are constrained by a lack of education resources.

. Much higher proportions of students in public schools have their learning hindered by a lack of educational materials, poor quality educational materials, lack of physical infrastructure and poor quality infrastructure than in private schools. There are also significant differences between the resources available to lower fee and higher fee private schools.

<https://saveourschools.com.au/equity-in-education/private-schools-continue-to-have-a-massive-resource-advantage-over-public-schools/>

. At periodic intervals the blatant rorting of the State Aid billions together with growing disadvantage in the public sector compared to the resources boom of the wealthy private schools has sparked public outrage. But on every occasion, in the 1980s, the 1990.s and in recent decades, the Lib-Labs paid out the wealthy schools before a trickle was passed to disadvantaged children in our public schools.

Now, with the Morrison government, even this trickle is in danger of drying up. The only disadvantaged schools and children of concern to Morrison are those in the so-called Catholic and independent sector. And, in spite of billions of dollars paid to the administrators of these sectors, we are told that poor disadvantaged private schools still exist.

Public school are sent away to go with their begging bowl to the cash strapped State Governments.

In the face of glaring inequalities and a broken system the Morrison Government is engaging in funding rules window dressing. The socio-economic status of a community is being switched from parents' taxable incomes.

Taxable income – a very Interesting criterion, especially since the taxable incomes of the wealthy, thanks to clever accounting and taxation arrangement – are often minimal.

So we, the tax paying citizens of Australia are informed that,

Non-government schools are set for a \$3.4 billion boost over the next 10 years as the Morrison government prepares to rewrite the funding rules for the Catholic and independent sectors. The extra funding would be distributed to private schools based on parents' taxable incomes, giving schools with a greater number of lower-income families the biggest slice.

About 20 per cent of wealthier and high-fee private schools would have their public funding cut, but they would share in a \$1.3 billion “choice and affordability fund” over the next two years to ease the transition.

Those schools would also be able to ask for a review of any funding cut the new system imposes.

<https://www.smh.com.au/education/non-government-schools-set-for-multibillion-dollar-funding-boost-20200301-p545t4.html>

DOGS note that if Needs based funding based on parents’ taxable income was given to public schools throughout Australia, the vast bulk of any genuinely ‘Needs’ based funding would be given to the public sector

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855 ON THE AM DIAL: 12.00 NOON SATURDAYS

<http://www.3cr.org.au/dogs>