

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Press Release 1016

The Federal Budget –No Joy for Public Education

The 2024 Federal Budget failed to increase the Commonwealth share of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) to 25%, despite widespread support across the nation for this increase, from principals, teachers, parents, unions, community groups and six state and territory governments.

This means that the Albanese Government is too cautious or even frightened to upset the private religious schools' dominance of the recurrent, capital, and taxation exemption largesse of the public Treasury.

This also means that 82% of the disadvantaged children in the public education system and the 90% of the disadvantaged schools, also in that system, will continue to miss out on teachers, new classrooms and digital resources.

Only 1.3% of public schools are funded at 100% of the Schooling Resource Standard, which is the minimum level governments agreed a decade ago was required to meet the needs of students. Yet, according to the [AEU](https://www.aeuvic.asn.au/budget-fails-deliver-public-schools) at <https://www.aeuvic.asn.au/budget-fails-deliver-public-schools>, the government can find \$2.5 billion to overfund 40% of private schools. The Albanese Government is also giving private schools \$1 billion in funding for new buildings and facilities over four years, while the mere \$216m for public schools will not be continued after this year.

Correna Haythorpe, the AEU President said :

By failing to even continue the modest capital funding it is providing this year for public schools, the Albanese Government will only worsen the \$30 billion capital spending divide that exists between the sectors,”

“Public schools have had one year of dedicated capital funding since 2017, worth \$216 million. For schools which have benefitted from this funding, it has meant new facilities such as toilets and outdoor learning areas.”

“At the same time private schools have raked in \$1.25 billion, some of which went to the richest schools in the nation. Private schools will now get an additional \$1 billion over four years and public schools will get nothing.”

This means that it is Liberal and Labour Government policy to run down the public system while encouraging the private system to increase its ‘market share’ of Australian children. This is a recipe for creating a residualised public education system.

Consider the following enrolment trends since the return of public funding of sectarian private schools in the 1950s.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>Catholic</i>	<i>Independent</i>	<i>Total Private</i>
<i>1900</i>	80.5			19.5
<i>1929</i>	80.7			19.3
<i>1939</i>	79.6			20.4
<i>1940</i>	79.4			20.6
<i>1950</i>	75.6			24.4
<i>1953</i>	76.7	18.2	5.1	23.3
<i>1955</i>	76.7			23.3
<i>1965</i>	76.2	19.5	4.3	23.8
<i>1975</i>	78.7	17	4.3	21.3
<i>1985</i>	74.2	19.1	6.7	25.8
<i>1995</i>	71	19.5	9.5	29
<i>2005</i>	67.1	19.9	13	32.9
<i>2015</i>	65.2	20.4	14.4	34.8
<i>2020</i>	65.6	19.4	15	34.4
<i>2023</i>	64	19.7	16.3	36

DOGS POSITION

The current residualisation of the Australian public education system was predicted by the DOGS in the 1950s when State Aid to the private sectarian sectarian sector was reinstated after an eighty year break.

The only answer to Australia's current educational crisis is to follow the Finnish example. Charging of fees should be illegal for all private schools that take any public money and those with more than 50% public funding should be taken over and made into genuine public schools.

The Federal Budget fails to deliver the funding that public schools need and will widen a \$30 billion capital infrastructure divide between public and private schools.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said it was deeply disappointing that this year's Federal Budget had failed to increase the Commonwealth share of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) to 25%, despite widespread support across the nation for this increase, from principals, teachers, parents, unions, community groups and six state and territory governments.

"This is a missed opportunity to deliver a nation-building investment for our children and our country. The issue of full funding of public schools is unfinished business for the Albanese Government and must be resolved this year." Ms Haythorpe said.

"We recognise that funding negotiations between the Albanese Government and state and territory governments are still underway, and we are united in our resolve to campaign to achieve full funding. Our members know that fully funding public schools is the only way to ensure that every child gets every opportunity to succeed, and that teachers and education support staff are backed with the resources they need to deliver high quality education for all.

"The public knows that there is deep inequity in how public schools are funded when compared with private schools in Australia. If the government can find \$2.5 billion to overfund 40% of private schools they can find the money to meet their election commitment to end the underfunding of public schools. This commitment will only be realised when the Albanese Government puts the dollars on the table.

"Right now.

"The challenges are too great and the cost of inaction too high for governments to continue to fail on funding. There are unacceptable achievement gaps

between children from different backgrounds and locations, acute teacher shortages and alarming declines in student wellbeing and engagement.” Ms Haythorpe said the government’s decision to not continue with Capital Works funding for public schools beyond this year, while giving private schools \$1 billion in funding for new buildings and facilities over four years, is unacceptable and must be reconsidered.

“By failing to even continue the modest capital funding it is providing this year for public schools, the Albanese Government will only worsen the \$30 billion capital spending divide that exists between the sectors,” she said.

“Public schools have had one year of dedicated capital funding since 2017, worth \$216 million. For schools which have benefitted from this funding, it has meant new facilities such as toilets and outdoor learning areas.”

“At the same time private schools have raked in \$1.25 billion, some of which went to the richest schools in the nation. Private schools will now get an additional \$1 billion over four years and public schools will get nothing.”

“The Albanese Government should be levelling the playing field between public and private schools, not tilting it further in favour of private schools.

“There is a huge unmet need for new and upgraded public schools where teachers and principals can meet the increasingly diverse needs of students in safe, modern, purpose-built classrooms, libraries and learning spaces,” Ms Haythorpe said.

Ms Haythorpe said the positives in the budget were paid practicums for students studying to become teachers, funding for the second round of teaching scholarships and the First Nations Teacher Strategy.

“We welcome the Albanese Government’s commitment to mechanisms which support initial teacher education students as they are developing their teaching craft.”

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