

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Press Release 1059

Public Education makes Economic Sense for Public School Parents

Research conducted by school finance group Futurity using school fee data from Australia's curriculum authority and interviews from 2500 parents about their spending habits indicates that a public education costs parents much much less than a private one. However, it also indicates that the principle of 'free' education is becoming a pipe dream for would be parents. The result – young couples are doing their sums and no longer having many children – if they decide to have any at all.

On January 14, 2026 [William Ton](#) at the [New Daily](#) lists the following figures:

For a child starting school in 2026, a government education will cost families in major cities \$113,594, private schooling comes in at \$247,174 and sending them to an independent school for 13 years will cost \$369,594.

In regional and remote areas, families will pay \$100,395 for a government education, \$223,874 for Catholic and \$230,144 for independent schools.

COST OF EDUCATING A CHILD IN MAJOR CITIES



The cost of educating children in by state and type of school institution. Graphic: AAP

Melbourne topped the capital cities in government school costs at \$121,202, while regional and remote Queensland parents face the steepest education bill of \$108,647.

Government school fees made up 13 per cent for metro and 5 per cent for regional costs. The remainder goes to add-ons such as outside tutoring, transport, school camps and uniforms.

Canberrans will spend the most for a Catholic education, while regional and remote Queenslanders pay the highest fees at \$273,494.

Independent schools are most expensive in Melbourne, costing 435,902 while Western Australia is the priciest for regional and remote schools at \$275,639.

A third of respondents said they turned to credit debt, while others cut back on family holidays and even worked more to afford quality education for their kids.

More than half said they relied on others, including grandparents, to pay for their children's education.

Families have tightened their spending as concerns increase about Australian schools being fully funded, according to the Australian Council of State School Organisations.

"When the household budget is under pressure, things like sport and camps and upgrades are the first things that are scaled back," interim chair Peter Garrigan said.

He said the real test was whether every child could participate fully without money being a barrier, as parents turned to the "bank of grandparents" for help.

"Australia's society should be able to support everyone to do that," Garrigan said.

In Australia, 63 per cent of students are enrolled in government schools, 20 per cent in Catholic schools and 17 per cent in independent schools, according to the Bureau of Statistics.

DOGS COMMENT:

Australian parents and their children have been used and abused by the private religious sector. They play upon the best parental instincts to cause insecurity, sectarianism and class competition rather than community spirit in family and government finances.

This is why DOGS have always promoted a free, secular and universal public education system and opposed the taxpayer funding of the private sector.

Even so the 63% of parents who choose a public education system - at the end of the day - are still receiving as good an education as they will ever receive at a private institution, for a fraction the cost. Why? The private sector is parasitic on the major public system and undermines the whole Australian educational enterprise – as our International results prove, again and again. Our nineteenth century forebears understood this and withdrew State Aid to private schools.

When will we ever learn?

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