

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

PRESS RELEASE 643#

Trevor Cobbold provides Facts and Figures: State Aid to Private Schools is Disastrous Public Policy

Trevor Cobbold of Save Our Schools continues, valiantly, to expose the funding follies with public funding of private education.

<http://www.saveourschools.com.au/funding/australias-unfair-school-funding-system-must-be-overhauled> and <http://www.saveourschools.com.au/media-releases/media-release-new-figures-show-that-government-funding-has-massively-favoured-private-schools>

His findings prove that funding policy (Surprise! Surprise!) has favoured private religious schools for the last fifteen years and current funding policies are deeply flawed. His figures prove that:

Over the past 15 years, total Commonwealth and state government funding for private schools has grown at more than twice the rate of funding for public schools, and in more recent years, funding for public schools has been cut while private school funding still increased... In Victoria, (for example) the average funding increase per student for 16 selected elite private schools was 25% compared with 3% for 17 disadvantaged public schools. Six of the disadvantaged schools had their funding cut.

But Trevor Cobbold is still trammelled by a desire to find a way AROUND rather than OUT of the public funding of private education problem. He and others like him are still hoping to find a solution to gross inequity through 'Needs' policies. They believe, that Gonski and his voucher system is the answer. Sorry, history proves that Gonski is no answer!

Karmel and Blackburn and their 'Needs' policy were part of the problem in 1973. And their 'Needs' policy was never implemented anyway. The sectarian schools stick together when it comes to 'sector neutral' funding! They are all agreed of demanding their cut and inequities are part of their deal. And Karmel only kept Whitlam in power for three years anyway!

Gonski and his voucher system is part of the public education problem in 2016. And look what happened to Gillard!

The answer to the gross inequities which have developed BECAUSE of State Aid to private schools in the last half century is not to give Labor leaders a way out of their DLP, Catholic and Christian lobby vote. It is to tackle the problem at its source and demand

PUBLIC FUNDING FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS ONLY

The following is the material produced by Trevor Cobbold at <http://www.saveourschools.com.au>

It was reproduced by the Age on Tuesday February 16, 2016. Congratulations Trevor!

Australia's Unfair School Funding System Must Be Overhauled

Monday February 15, 2016

The following is a summary of an Education Policy Brief published by Save Our Schools. The Brief can be downloaded below.

Over the past 15 years, total Commonwealth and state government funding for private schools has grown at more than twice the rate of funding for public schools, and in more recent years, funding for public schools has been cut while private school funding still increased.

Between 1998-99 and 2013-14, government funding per private school student, adjusted for inflation, increased by 39% compared with only 17% for public schools. More recently, between 2009-10 and 2013-14, real funding for public schools funding per student fell by 3% while private school funding increased by 10%.

Since 2009, total government funding per student for many high fee, exclusive private schools in Victoria and NSW increased by several times more than for many highly disadvantaged schools.

In Victoria, the average funding increase per student for 16 selected elite private schools was 25% compared with 3% for 17 disadvantaged public schools [see Chart 1 below]. Six of the disadvantaged schools had their funding cut.

On average, 76% of students in the elite schools were from the highest socio-educational advantage (SEA) quartile and 1% were from the lowest SEA quartile while 61% of students in the disadvantaged schools were from the lowest SEA quartile and 3% from the top quartile. The average total income of the elite schools in 2013 was \$27,085 per student compared with \$13,897 per student in the disadvantaged schools.

In NSW, the average funding increase per student for 14 selected elite private schools was 23% compared with 11% for 15 disadvantaged schools [Chart 2]. One disadvantaged school had its funding cut.

On average, 80% of students in the elite schools were from the highest SEA quartile and 1% were from the lowest quartile while 62% of students in the disadvantaged schools were from the lowest SEA quartile and 3% from the top quartile. The average total income of the elite schools in 2013 was \$29,639 per student compared with \$15,263 per student in the disadvantaged schools.

It is apparent that Australia has an incoherent and unfair school funding system that favours advantaged students and discriminates against disadvantaged students. Funding increases

over the past 15 years have been woefully misdirected. As David Gonski has said, they “were not applied on a needs based aspirational system”.

There can be little wonder that Australia has failed to improve the results of disadvantaged students or to reduce the large achievement gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged students over the past 15 years. Public schools bear the very large burden of disadvantage but received less than half the funding increase provided to private schools.

This incoherent and unfair funding system is set to continue. The Abbott and Turnbull governments have completely sabotaged the Gonski funding plan. First, public schools will lose \$5.8 billion because of the Coalition’s refusal to fund the last two years of the Gonski plan. The only Commonwealth commitment is to increase funding according to CPI increases and enrolment growth. This is a recipe for funding cuts because the CPI is increasing less than education costs. Second, State/territory governments are no longer required to increase school funding as a condition of Commonwealth funding.

State and territory governments are the main source of funding for public schools, but nearly all cut public school funding in real terms between 2009 and 2013 and most refuse to commit the final two years of the Gonski plan.

Failure to overhaul this incoherent and unfair school funding system will incur major social and economic costs. The life chances of hundreds of thousands of disadvantaged students will continue to be severely curtailed. It means a future of unemployment, low income and poverty for many which contributes to social alienation and division. Poor education outcomes mean low workforce skills and participation which, in turn, results in lower productivity and an under-performing economy. Poor education outcomes also lead to poor health, more crime and greater welfare dependency all of which increase government expenditure over the long term.

This unfair school funding system must be overhauled to improve the life prospects of hundreds of thousands of students, promote economic prosperity, and strengthen the fabric of Australian society.

Trevor Cobbold

[Charts on Funding Increases for Elite Private Schools & Disadvantaged Public Schools.pdf](#)

[Australia’s Unfair School Funding System Must be Overhauled.pdf](#)

<http://www.saveourschools.com.au/media-releases/media-release-new-figures-show-that-government-funding-has-massively-favoured-private-schools>

Media Release: New Figures Show that Government Funding Has Massively Favoured Private Schools

Tuesday February 16, 2016

Updated school funding figures published today by Save Our Schools show that government funding per student in private schools has far outstripped that for public schools over the past 15 years. SOS National Convenor, Trevor Cobbold, said that increases in government funding for many elite private schools has far exceeded that for many disadvantaged public schools.

“The new figures show that Australia has an incoherent and unfair school funding system. Past government funding increases have been woefully misdirected to favour more advantaged students over disadvantaged students.

“There can be little wonder that Australia has failed to improve the results of disadvantaged students or to reduce the large achievement gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged students over the past 15 years. Public schools bear the very large burden of disadvantage but received less than half the funding increase provided to private schools.

“Between 1998-99 and 2013-14, government funding (Commonwealth and state/territory) per private school student, adjusted for inflation, increased, by 39% compared with only 17% for public schools. More recently, real funding for public schools actually decreased while funding for private schools continued to increase. Between 2009-10 and 2013-14, public school funding per student fell by 3% while private school funding increased by 10%.

“Other figures drawn from the My School website show even more perverse funding patterns, with government funding per student for many high fee, exclusive private schools in Victoria and NSW increasing by several times more than for many highly disadvantaged schools.

“In Victoria between 2009 and 2013, the average funding increase per student for 16 selected elite private schools was 25% compared with 3% for 17 disadvantaged public schools [Chart 1]. Six disadvantaged schools had their funding cut.

“For example, government funding for Korowa Anglican Girls School, with 83% of students from the highest socio-educational advantage (SEA) quartile and 1% from the lowest quartile, increased by 38%. In contrast, funding for Northern Bay P-12 College in Geelong, with 73% of students from the lowest SEA quartile and 1% from the highest quartile, had its funding cut by 18%.

“In NSW, the average funding increase per student for 14 selected elite private schools was 23% compared with 11% for 15 disadvantaged schools [Chart 2]. One disadvantaged school had its funding cut.

“For example, government funding for Ravenswood Girls School, with 85% of students from the highest SEA quartile and none from the lowest quartile, increased by 28% while funding for Punchbowl Boys HS, with 63% of students in the lowest SEA quartile and only 2% in the highest quartile, had its funding cut by 3%.

Mr. Cobbold said that the incoherent and unfair funding system is set to continue because the Turnbull Government has refused to fund the last two years of the Gonski plan which would have seen an extra \$5.8 billion delivered to public schools.

“Continuation of this unfair funding system will incur major social and economic costs because of the failure address disadvantage in education. It severely limits the life prospects of hundreds of thousands of students, it harms the economy, and it weakens the social fabric of Australian society.

“A bi-partisan commitment to a national school funding plan directed at reducing disadvantage in education is desperately needed. A high performing education system with minimum levels of disadvantage means a high performing economy.”

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