

**AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT
SCHOOLS
PRESS RELEASE 706#**

Gonski 2.0 : Widening the Gap

The gap between the response of non-Catholic and Catholic schools to Gonski 2.0 is widening. The Protestant – Catholic Alliance which has enabled religious schools to raid the public Treasury and undermine public education for half a century, is falling apart.

Why? Largely because, although all schools charge fees as their ‘right’, some charge more than others. In other words, the gap is between fees charged by the MORE exclusive schools, and those lesser fees charged by some Catholic schools for a similar middle class parent base, has led to funding disparities. The SES funding model is a blunt instrument. Needs of children can easily be gamed into Greeds for institutions in the education market.

In the last two weeks the Fairfax Press journalists have exposed the Gonski 2.0 windfall for exclusive Protestant schools in Sydney and Melbourne. <http://www.theage.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/revealed-funding-for-some-melbourne-private-schools-to-soar-under-gonski-20-20170516-gw68ej.html>

The Melbourne facts and figures are as follows:

High-fee private school winners in Melbourne under Gonski 2.0

Caulfield Grammar School

- SES Score: 117
- Senior school fees: \$29,355
- Per student funding 2017: \$4658
- Per student funding 2027: \$6864
- Total 10-year increase: \$34.8 million

Wesley College, Melbourne

- SES Score: 120
- Senior school fees: \$29,720
- Per student funding 2017: \$3842
- Per student funding 2027: \$5282
- Total 10-year increase: \$22.1 million

Presbyterian Ladies' College, Burwood

- SES Score: 115
- Senior school fees: \$29,924
- Per student funding 2017: \$4872
- Per student funding 2027: \$7390
- Total 10-year increase: \$17.9 million

Methodist Ladies College, Kew

- SES Score: 123
- Senior school fees: \$29,700
- Per student funding 2017: \$3148
- Per student funding 2027: \$4435
- Total 10-year increase: \$13.1 million

Scotch College, Hawthorn

- SES Score: 123
- Senior school fees: \$30,528
- Per student funding 2017: \$2904
- Per student funding 2027: \$4309
- Total 10-year increase: \$13.6 million

The Catholic sector, considering their best interests as they run with billions of public funding to the bank, pause to argue about the level of fees paid by middle class parents buying OUT of the public system.

"By underestimating how much high-income families can contribute, while overestimating how much lower-income families can contribute, Catholic education contends that SES scores disadvantage Catholic schools serving lower- and middle-income families. It falsely assumes a homogeneous population with each parent having the same capacity to pay."

But the fact of the matter is that they are ALL - Catholic and Protestant- Exclusive schools, It should be the purpose of education to offer genuine opportunities to ALL children, not funds to exclusive schools to 'keep the fees down'.

And, as in the nineteenth century, the Catholic sector is furious with the government for stripping it of the right to fund schools on a system-wide basis as well as believing that private schools have received a better deal. The Catholic Church has always been a State within a State, wishing to control its own employees and enterprises without State interference.

If equality of opportunity and the common and national economic good were the proper purpose of education, all fee paying schools should be taken off the public funding teet. If Gonski 2.0 is to mean anything it should recommend public funding only for a genuinely public system which is free, secular and universal. This is the only way that anything approaching equality of educational opportunity can be achieved.

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