

**AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT
SCHOOLS
PRESS RELEASE 817
COALITION GOVERNMENT SHAMELESS
ON
INEQUITABLE FUNDING OF PUBLIC EDUCATION**

Although the figures are on the record, and government indifference to disadvantaged children are in plain sight, the Coalition government is shameless when it comes to public education funding.

Creation of distractions with bans on mobile phones, teacher bashing as Australian students fall behind in international testing, and Royal Commissions of Enquiry have failed to mask one simple fact:

[The private School funding growth rate has almost doubled the Public School growth rates in the decade 2009-2018.](#) And the Sydney Morning Herald and Age are prepared to publicise the figures.

Blatant preferential treatment of private schools continued even after public schools began to increase their share of overall enrolments at the expense of the private sector in 2015.

Adding insult to injury, in the middle of the bushfire catastrophe we discover that [Public Schools were Excluded from Morrison Governments \\$10 million Education Drought Funding](#)

1. [The private School funding growth rate has almost doubled the Public School growth rates in the decade 2009-2018.](#)

Australian Education Union analysis of the most up-to-date data published by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) shows that Government funding per public school student grew 27.3 per cent between 2009 and 2017, This compares with 49.1 per cent growth per student in the Catholic school sector, and 52.3 per cent at independent schools.

The Victorian growth figures were similarly weighted in favour of the non-government sector, with funding for each state school student growing 20.9 per cent between 2009 and 2017, compared with 43.5 per cent funding growth per Catholic school student and 47.6 per cent for independent school students.

The Australian Education Union, which analysed the ACARA data, called on the Morrison government to commit more money to the public system, arguing government school students were being short-changed.

Federal Education Minister Dan Tehan's response indicates the shameless behaviour of graduates of the school system he represents and his political party. He passed the buck down the line to State Governments. He said that

“Federal government funding for government schools has grown at a much faster rate than state government funding for government schools.”

Correna Haythorpe of the AEU responded:

–“Two out of every three students attend public schools, yet the Morrison government has ensured that 99 per cent of public schools will not reach the Schooling Resource Standard by 2023,” she said.

*“This is patently unfair to Australia's 2½ million public school students, who deserve a high-quality and well-resourced education.”*and

Victorian Education Minister James Merlino also responded. He said that the Andrews government had invested an unprecedented \$12.9 billion in schools since it was elected.

“Our position has consistently been that the Commonwealth's funding model is fundamentally unfair, and we will continue advocating for a fair funding deal which sees all students – government and non-government students – treated equally,” Mr Merlino said.

Readers of the Age article by Adam Carey commented as follows:

Alex Z

Unfortunately we are locked into this ridiculous system. Both of my kids went to a high fee paying private school from ELC to Y12, and have since gone on to very high levels of University education. The truth is that their private school education was not that relevant, they learnt most of their critical skills in a learning engaged family environment. The best thing would be to divert all this funding to the public system, creating a better system for everybody. If people want private schools, then they can pay the real fees, not subsidised by the taxpayer. And before anyone comments about this 'socialist' view, consider whether taxpayers propping up a system that can't actually be viable on its own is in fact socialism. And

Neil Barker

The intention of the LNP Coalition is to get as many parents to send their kids to private schools as possible to enable reduced public spending on education, and therefore, for wealthy parents to pick up the difference. Starving public schools of essential resources, and making private schools as lavish and opulent as possible will provide the incentive for parents to make the move (unless of course you cannot afford the fees) This will in turn justify reduced funding to the State Governments for public education. How good is that Mr Morrison.

2. [Public Schools were Excluded from Morrison Governments \\$10 million Education Drought Funding](#)

On 7 November 2019, the Minister for Education, the Hon Dan Tehan MP, announced that the Morrison Government will provide \$10 million additional funding through the Special Circumstances Fund to support non-government schools facing financial hardship as a result of ongoing drought conditions.

He said the funding would address “the impact on parents of drought and worrying whether they’ll ... be able to continue to afford to send their children to school” and the toil and hardship parents suffer paying school fees.

The education department has [specified](#) the \$10m is only for non-government schools as a “supplementary financial source for schools” which have “introduced fee relief and/or curtailed their operations to cope with this drastic situation”.

The AEU says the decision is ‘disgraceful’ and the measure is ‘another slush fund for private schools’ on top of [the \\$1.2bn Choice and Affordability fund](#) for Catholic and independent schools, which also included money for drought-affected areas.

“Public schools students and parents are struggling through this terrible drought, too. Private schools do not go to the uneconomic outer reaches of drought stricken areas. And only the wealthy pastoralists and corporate managers can afford city Boarding schools.

What is Scott Morrison going to do to help the children left in country towns ?”

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2019/nov/08/government-schools-excluded-from-coalitions-10m-drought-education-funding>

DOGS note that Dan Tehan and most of his Coalition colleagues have lived closed, coddled lives in the upper reaches of an increasingly hierarchical society. As a graduate of the Catholic system he does not appear to have any knowledge, consideration or even awareness of the problems of the major public systems responsible for the education of two thirds of Australian children.

He represents a government that can only be called ‘irresponsible’ and ‘shameless’.

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