

**AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT
SCHOOLS**

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THE LAST WORD ON STATISTICS

FROM TREVOR COBBOLD:SAVE OUR SCHOOLS

New Figures Show Huge Funding Increases for Private Schools & Cuts to Public Schools

 [Trevor Cobbold](#) / [February 13, 2020](#) / [Funding](#)

The following is a summary of a new Education Research Paper published by Save Our Schools. The full paper can be downloaded below.

New figures show that government (Commonwealth and State) funding increases massively favoured private schools over public schools between 2009-10 and 2017-18. Government funding for private schools increased by \$1,779 per student, adjusted for inflation, while funding for public schools was cut by \$49 per student. The increase for private schools was 18.9% while funding for public school students was cut by 0.4%.

Private schools received much larger funding increases than public schools in all states. The inflation adjusted increases for private schools exceeded \$1,500 per student in all states while funding for public schools was cut in five states, including massive cuts in Western Australia (\$1,540 per student), the ACT (\$795) and the Northern Territory (\$1,288). The increases in the other three states were much smaller than for private schools.

The Commonwealth Government increased funding for both public and private schools but the increase for private schools was nearly double that for public schools. Commonwealth funding for public schools increased by an average of \$863 per student compared to \$1,589 in private schools. The Commonwealth increased funding for both public and private schools in all states but the increases heavily favoured private schools in every state.

The overall cut in funding for public schools was due to a large cut of \$912 (-7.7%) per student by the States which more than offset the Commonwealth increase. All State governments, both Labor and Liberal-NP, cut funding for public schools by large amounts between 2009-10 and 2017-18 while providing small increases for private schools. Massive cuts to public schools were made by the Victorian (\$1,125 per student), Western Australian (\$2,032), ACT (\$1,197) and the Northern Territory (\$4,553) governments. The average state increase for private schools was \$190 per student.

The Victorian Labor Government has increased funding for public schools since 2014-15 but the increase of \$293 per student is a long way from compensating for the large cut in funding of \$1,419 per student that occurred under the previous Labor and Liberal-NP Governments. There has been a continuing decline in State government funding for public schools in all other states.

The new figures are based on new data published in the [2020 Report on Government Services \(ROGS\)](#). They differ from the ROGS figures in two ways. First, they are more comparable between public and private schools because the ROGS data includes book entry items (user cost of capital, depreciation) and other items (payroll tax, school transport) for public schools but not for private schools. As a result, the ROGS over-estimates funding for public schools in comparison with private schools.

Second, an education cost index is used to adjust for inflation instead of the index of general government costs used by the ROGS. Education costs increase by more than for general government costs. As a result, the ROGS under-estimates cost increases for schools and, therefore, over-estimates the actual increase in real resources available to schools.

There is little prospect that public schools will be adequately funded over the next decade. The bilateral funding agreements between the Commonwealth and State governments ensure that [public schools will be massively under-funded indefinitely](#). At best, public schools will only be ever funded at 91% of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) while private schools are guaranteed to be funded at 100% of the standard or more by 2023.

The agreements formally require public schools to be funded at only 95% of their SRS by 2027 or later, with the states committing to fund their share to 75% and the Commonwealth to 20%. However, all states except the ACT are permitted to claim up to four percentage points for other expenditures not included in the measure of the SRS as part of their target. This means the states will only ever fund public schools to 71% of the SRS, leaving them a long way short of being fully funded at only 91% of their SRS. The agreements also allow several states to continue to over-fund private schools.

The chronic underfunding of public schools threatens huge costs to individuals, society and the national economy because it means continuing failure to address disadvantage in education. Over 80% of disadvantaged students are enrolled in public schools and over 90% of disadvantaged schools are public schools.

Increased funding for public schools is fundamental to improved education outcomes for disadvantaged students because it provides the human and material resources needed to make a difference in learning. [Numerous overseas and Australian studies](#) show that increased funding for disadvantaged students brings improved outcomes.

It is imperative that teacher, parent, principal and other organisations supporting public schools hold the Commonwealth and State governments fully accountable for their failure to provide adequate funding for public schools. They should demand that the Morrison Government stop its special funding deals for private schools and expand its role in funding public schools. They should be pressuring State governments, both Labor and Liberal-NP, to increase funding for public schools and stop their over-funding of private schools.

In addition, the bilateral funding agreements between the Commonwealth and the states should be re-negotiated to ensure that public schools are fully funded at 100% of their SRS by 2023. New agreements should end the accounting tricks in the current agreements that allow the states to underfund public schools indefinitely.

<https://saveourschools.com.au/funding/new-figures-show-huge-funding-increases-for-private-schools-cuts-to-public-schools/#more-4134>

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