

**AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT  
SCHOOLS  
PRESS RELEASE 853  
WHAT ARE CASH=STRAPPED PRIVATE SCHOOL PARENTS  
DOING IN TIMES OF PLAGUE?**

Private school fees are fast becoming an unnecessary luxury for Melbourne parents as their businesses plummet into Covid-19 insolvency. Only taxpayer funding is keeping them afloat. Although, even in the best of times, such funding has long been crucial to their survival. [Public schools are bracing for extra enrolments](#) as stressed private school parents fall back on the system which will not and cannot turn them and their precious children away. And soon they will discover that the public system is as good if not better than the overpriced private alternative.

Not unsurprisingly, the private sector is screaming for help from taxpayers. The market that their promoters have bowqed down and worshipped, is punishing them.

Perhaps it is time for them to forget about fees, open their schools to all comers and become genuinely public schools.

Perhaps the moment of truth has arrived, if not for their administrators, then for the parents taken in by their blandishments.

### **NEW SOUTH WALES**

In April Jordon Baker from the *Sydney Morning Herald* informed us that student recruitment by the private sector was faced with shutdowns and social distancing. Face-to-face open days and tours were out of reach. Schools reported lower enrolment interest as parents got bogged down by remote learning in term two and the COVID-19 recession.

After all, what exactly would parents be paying for?

In April [Up to 60 per cent of families at some independent schools in Sydney asked for fee relief](#), putting pressure on school budgets. Most private schools in Sydney resisted blanket discounts for families, instead focusing on those doing it toughest and extending payment

. Geoff Newcombe, chief executive of the Association of Independent Schools of NSW, said many independent schools were now suffering financial stress, "with an increasing number of parents, as high as 60 per cent in some schools, requesting part or full fee remission," he said.

"With the government's decision not to allow decoupling of the financial arrangements of boarding schools and early childhood centres from the main school accounts, a number of these facilities are now facing imminent closure.

"Independent schools in NSW provide the majority of boarding places and if facilities close, many students from regional and remote areas will be denied the opportunity to complete their education at called on the federal government to bring forward the July funding instalment, give non-government schools access to the JobSeeker threshold and give private schools in financial stress emergency interest-free loans.

Federal Education Minister Dan Tehan said the government "could look, potentially, at bringing some of those [scheduled] payments forward to help with cash flow".

Mark Spencer, director of public policy at Christian Schools Australia, which represents 155 sites across the country, said his schools were reporting between 20 and 30 per cent of families asking for fee relief or deferral. "Schools are obviously working hard with those parents to keep them there, it's really dislocating for kids to have to move schools," he said.

Mr Spencer is calling on the federal government to use enrolment figures at the beginning of term one, rather than the usual census in August, to determine the school's student numbers, and therefore its funding allocation.

He feared schools' government funding, on which they determined their budget forecasts at the beginning of the year, will be reduced if students are forced to drop out because their parents have lost their jobs.

"Schools are budgeted on what they got in the door at the beginning of term one, [knowing they will receive] no less would be a real safeguard," he said.

Independent schools were last week given permission to reduce non-teaching staff members' pay by 25 per cent and ask them to swap jobs – grounds keepers doing cleaning, for example – to help meet the fee shortfall.

That was NSW in April. But what is happening in Victoria?

## **VICTORIA**

That was NSW in April. But what is happening in Victoria? We are now in the second shutdown, so, really, what on earth would private school parents be paying for?

[Madeleine Heffernan in the Age of May 31](#), told us that :

The coronavirus recession will kill off above-inflation fee rises at Victorian private schools, and may lead to hefty staff cuts and even school closures.

Peter Goss, the Grattan Institute's school education program director, said loss of employment and tightened household budgets would probably reduce the number of people able to pay high school fees in 2021.

"That shifts the balance of supply and demand, and will put pressure on fees," Dr Goss said.

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Thirty-six per cent of Victorian students attend a non-government school, the second-highest rate in the country. This leaves Victorians sensitive to price rises that have exceeded inflation for more than a decade.

Many school budgets have already come under pressure [as parents seek fee discounts and deferrals](#).

While most schools do their budgets in July or August, Scotch College – [the second most expensive place to educate a year 12 student, with fees of almost \\$40,000](#) – has already announced it will not increase fees for next year.

Meanwhile, high-fee co-educational school Peninsula Grammar has said 40 per cent of parents are having trouble paying fees, and forecast a minimum 10 per cent decline in enrolments next year.

Dr Goss predicted schools in the mid- to high-fee market would moderate fee increases or freeze fees. "I think they will avoid cutting fees because that would send a signal to the market we need to drop fees to attract enrolments, and being oversubscribed or being perceived as being oversubscribed is a marker of success," he said.

Dr Goss said lower-fee to mid-fee non-government schools might be harder hit. "The so-called aspirational market is where families might be hit with a double whammy of loss of income due to COVID-19 without the family wealth to ride it out."

Education consultant Paul O'Shannassy said there were a "significant number of families who are struggling to pay fees and are on deferred fee arrangements or discounts, so how many of those will withdraw their children will be very interesting to see".

"Many have lost businesses and may have to cut discretionary spending, such as school fees," he said.

"If a private school loses 5 to 10 per cent enrolments, that could equate to as many as 200 students, which could have serious implications for staffing, funding and programs.

Peninsula Grammar has predicted a fall in enrolments for next year. *Credit: Simon Schluter*

"While each school is different, girls' school are more vulnerable because that market is more competitive."

Catholic Education Victoria said fees were a matter for individual schools and families affected by COVID-19 should contact their school for fee relief. Independent Schools Victoria was contacted for comment.

Dr Goss said the government would need to carefully assess whether a school was a genuine victim of the COVID-19 recession or was marginal and should be allowed to close.

#### [Peninsula Grammar sheds staff as cash-strapped families quit school](#)

"The best thing to do would be to bring forward the Choice and Affordability Fund [\$1.2 billion for non-government schools] as needed to support viable schools that are high-quality and are hit hard by a short-term disruption."

School marketing expert Stephen Holmes said schools might need to get creative to boost their balance sheets during the downturn, such as increasing class sizes, dropping some services and charging for others.

"It's making schools look at their intrinsic worth," he said. "What would people give up for lower fees? What would they want more of if they [schools] said they were going to increase their fees?"

## WHAT FEES DO PRIVATE SCHOOLS CHARGE IN VICTORIA?

Consider the following list of schools and fees charged for secondary education. [Private School News Australia](#), has compiled all the available 2019 Private School secondary school fees, from Melbourne's largest catholic and independent Private schools. Now you can compare Private Schools fees for March 2019 in Melbourne below .

What they will be in 2021 is another questions. But the following figures will give readers some idea of pressures on parents whose businesses or jobs are going under.

### Private Schools Melbourne Compare secondary School fees

The fees listed below are for general tuition, with some school levy's included. Uniforms and additional school levy's are not included.

MELBOURNE PRIVATE SCHOOL FEES 2019	SUBURB	YEAR 8	YEAR 10	YEAR 12
Geelong Grammar School	CORIO	\$34,120	\$41,260	\$41,260
Mount Scopus Memorial College	BURWOOD	\$34,980	\$36,950	\$37,880
Melbourne Girls Grammar	SOUTH YARRA	\$33,896	\$35,448	\$36,276
Bialik College	HAWTHORN	\$33,100	\$35,950	\$35,950
Lauriston Girls' School	ARMADALE	\$32,664	\$34,528	\$34,528
Melbourne Grammar School	MELBOURNE	\$32,160	\$36,720	\$34,260
Wesley College	MELBOURNE	\$29,900	\$33,520	\$33,520
Ruyton Girls' School	KEW	\$31,119	\$32,148	\$33,246
Camberwell Grammar School	CANTERBURY	\$31,945	\$32,605	\$33,135
Brighton Grammar School	BRIGHTON	\$32,691	\$33,685	\$32,693
Haileybury College	KEYSBOROUGH	\$32,245	\$32,580	\$32,580
St Michael's Grammar School	ST KILDA	\$32,920	\$32,684	\$32,535
Trinity Grammar School Kew	KEW	\$30,960	\$31,832	\$32,280
Methodist Ladies' College	KEW	\$29,790	\$31,170	\$32,130
Firbank Grammar School	BRIGHTON	\$30,387	\$31,803	\$32,085
St Leonard's College	BRIGHTON EAST	\$29,493	\$30,968	\$31,991
Carey Baptist Grammar School	KEW	\$30,896	\$30,896	\$31,936
Caulfield Grammar School	ELSTERNWICK	\$28,755	\$31,254	\$31,842
Presbyterian Ladies' College	BURWOOD	\$28,620	\$31,652	\$31,652
Fintona Girls' School	BALWYN	\$28,188	\$29,216	\$30,340
Xavier College	KEW	\$28,100	\$29,870	\$29,870

Mentone Grammar School	MENTONE	\$29,040	\$29,580	\$29,472
The Geelong College	NEWTOWN	\$26,412	\$29,284	\$29,284
Genazzano FCJ College	KEW	\$25,470	\$28,680	\$28,680
St Margaret's School	BERWICK	\$27,160	\$28,520	\$28,520
Yarra Valley Grammar	RINGWOOD	\$24,568	\$26,596	\$28,101
Shelford Girls' Grammar	CAULFIELD	\$25,054	\$27,154	\$27,948
Loreto Mandeville Hall	TOORAK	\$25,070	\$27,420	\$27,420
Ivanhoe Grammar School	IVANHOE	\$26,540	\$27,400	\$27,400
Peninsula Grammar	MOUNT ELIZA	\$25,533	\$27,120	\$27,120
Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School	IVANHOE	\$24,200	\$26,100	\$27,120
Woodleigh School	LANGWARRIN SOUTH	\$23,483	\$25,181	\$26,345
Penleigh & Essendon Grammar School	KEILOR EAST	\$20,996	\$21,936	\$21,564
Westbourne Grammar School	TRUGANINA	\$20,236	\$21,208	\$21,208
Ballarat Grammar	WENDOUREE	\$16,960	\$20,180	\$20,600
The Hamilton and Alexandra College	HAMILTON	\$18,312	\$19,616	\$19,617
Ballarat Clarendon College	BALLARAT	\$16,400	\$19,130	\$19,570
St Kevin's College	TOORAK	\$19,100	\$19,100	\$19,100
Gippsland Grammar	SALE	\$15,100	\$15,560	\$16,730
Overnewton Anglican Community College	KEILOR	\$12,684	\$15,568	\$16,416
Luther College	CROYDON	\$14,830	\$15,670	\$15,890
Christian College Bellarine	DRYSDALE	\$13,348		
Christian College Highton	HIGHTON	\$13,348	\$14,144	\$15,468
Girton Grammar School	BENDIGO	\$14,384	\$14,384	\$14,384
Kardinia International College	BELL POST HILL	\$10,507	\$12,413	\$13,477
Braemar College	WOODEND	\$11,200	\$12,400	\$13,184
The Kilmore International School	KILMORE	\$9,970	\$10,715	\$12,820
Whitefriars College Inc	DONVALE	\$11,780	\$12,280	\$12,780
Marcellin College	BULLEEN	\$11,180	\$12,480	\$12,480
St Paul's Anglican Grammar School	WARRAGUL	\$10,450	\$11,641	\$12,406
Star of the Sea College	BRIGHTON	\$11,134	\$12,223	\$12,275
Donvale Christian College	DONVALE	\$10,965	\$10,965	\$12,135
Oxley Christian College	CHIRNSIDE PARK	\$9,158	\$10,822	\$11,970
De La Salle College	MALVERN	\$11,957	\$11,957	\$11,957
Beaconhills College	PAKENHAM	\$9,640	\$11,610	\$11,610

Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School	WARRANWOOD	\$9,727	\$10,079	\$10,975
Waverley Christian College	WANTIRNA SOUTH	\$8,550	\$8,550	\$10,440
Bacchus Marsh Grammar	BACCHUS MARSH	\$9,060	\$9,908	\$10,232
Balcombe Grammar School	MOUNT MARTHA	\$9,588	\$9,588	\$10,140
Heathdale Christian College	WERRIBEE	\$9,580	\$9,990	\$9,990
Catholic Ladies' College Ltd	ELTHAM	\$9,740	\$9,982	\$9,982
St Columba's College	ESSENDON	\$9,300	\$9,600	\$9,600
Our Lady of Sion College	BOX HILL	\$9,090	\$9,410	\$9,410
Our Lady of Mercy College	HEIDELBERG	\$9,400	\$9,400	\$9,400
St Bernard's College	ESSENDON	\$8,601	\$9,505	\$9,125
Flinders Christian Community College	TYABB	\$7,835	\$8,405	\$8,925
Gilson College	TAYLORS HILL	\$8,280	\$8,280	\$8,900
Hillcrest Christian College	CLYDE NORTH	\$7,747	\$8,356	\$8,772
Newhaven College	NEWHAVEN	\$7,572	\$8,020	\$8,652
St Joseph's College	FERNTREE GULLY	\$8,320	\$8,320	\$8,320
Aitken College	GREENVALE	\$7,132	\$8,006	\$8,006
Lakeside College	PAKENHAM	\$7,380	\$7,740	\$7,990
Sacred Heart Girls' College	OAKLEIGH	\$7,950	\$8,250	\$7,950
Hume Anglican Grammar	CRAIGIEBURN	\$6,520	\$7,190	\$7,920
Emmaus College	VERMONT SOUTH	\$8,325	\$7,650	\$7,870
Salesian College	CHADSTONE	\$6,780	\$6,780	\$7,690
Heritage College	NARRE WARREN SOUTH	\$6,693	\$7,357	\$7,688
Avila College	MOUNT WAVERLEY	\$7,390	\$7,390	\$7,590
Loyola College	WATSONIA	\$6,939	\$6,939	\$7,538
Chairo Christian School	DROUIN	\$6,590	\$6,950	\$7,527
Sacred Heart College	NEWTOWN	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,500
Assumption College	KILMORE	\$6,993	\$7,254	\$7,413
Mazenod College	MULGRAVE	\$7,350	\$7,350	\$7,350
St Bede's College	MENTONE	\$7,400	\$7,610	\$7,030
Loreto College	BALLARAT	\$6,395	\$6,615	\$7,030
Lighthouse Christian College	CRANBOURNE	\$5,593	\$6,338	\$6,976
St Patrick's College Ballarat	BALLARAT	\$6,100	\$6,550	\$6,950
St Monica's College	EPPING	\$6,055	\$6,390	\$6,850
Parade College	BUNDOORA	\$6,143	\$6,534	\$6,806
Mount Lilydale Mercy College	LILYDALE	\$6,800	\$6,800	\$6,800
Santa Maria College	NORTHCOTE	\$6,610	\$6,610	\$6,610
Salesian College	SUNBURY	\$6,400	\$6,400	\$6,400
Padua College	MORNINGTON	\$5,770	\$5,770	\$6,380

Damascus College	MOUNT CLEAR	\$5,505	\$6,065	\$6,355
Marymede Catholic College	SOUTH MORANG	\$5,726	\$6,037	\$6,338
Kilbreda College	MENTONE	\$6,300	\$6,300	\$6,300
St Joseph's College Geelong	NEWTOWN	\$6,280	\$6,280	\$6,280
MacKillop Catholic Regional College	WERRIBEE	\$5,330	\$5,730	\$6,165
Emmanuel College	ALTONA NORTH	\$5,700	\$5,290	\$5,720
Catholic College Wodonga	WODONGA	\$5,200	\$5,640	\$5,710
Sirius College	BROADMEADOWS	\$4,775	\$5,040	\$5,700
Australian International Academy of Education	COBURG	\$4,056	\$5,290	\$5,644
Lavalla Catholic College	TRARALGON	\$5,322	\$5,589	\$5,589
Mount St Joseph Girls' College	ALTONA	\$5,508	\$5,020	\$5,568
Mercy College	COBURG NORTH	\$5,550	\$5,550	\$5,550
Thomas Carr College	TARNEIT	\$5,680	\$5,530	\$5,530
Marist-Sion College	WARRAGUL	\$5,390	\$5,390	\$5,390
Caroline Chisholm Catholic College	BRAYBROOK	\$4,530	\$5,140	\$5,200
Catholic College Sale	SALE	\$5,185	\$5,185	\$5,185
St Peter's College	CRANBOURNE	\$5,150	\$5,150	\$5,150
Saint Ignatius College Geelong	DRYSDALE	\$5,100	\$5,100	\$5,100
St Joseph's College Mildura	MILDURA	\$5,021	\$5,021	\$5,021
Holy Trinity Lutheran School	HORSHAM	\$4,142	\$4,796	\$4,796
St Francis Xavier College	BEACONSFIELD	\$5,300	\$5,300	\$4,750
Galen Catholic College	WANGARATTA	\$4,070	\$4,540	\$4,750
Emmanuel College Inc.	WARRNAMBOOL	\$4,253	\$4,503	\$4,600
Catholic Regional College Melton	MELTON WEST	\$4,070	\$4,070	\$4,330
FCJ College	BENALLA	\$4,300	\$4,300	\$4,300
Penola Catholic College	BROADMEADOWS	\$3,080	\$3,499	\$3,999
Al-Taqwa College	HOPPERS CROSSING	\$3,175	\$3,255	\$3,885
Kolbe Catholic College	GREENVALE	\$3,300	\$3,600	\$3,880
St John's Regional College	DANDENONG	\$3,434	\$3,645	\$3,845
Notre Dame College	SHEPPARTON	\$3,840	\$3,840	\$3,840
Sacred Heart School	YARRAWONGA	\$3,810	\$3,810	\$3,810
Simonds Catholic College	WEST MELBOURNE	\$3,390	\$3,390	\$3,780
Clonard College	HERNE HILL	\$3,660	\$3,660	\$3,660
St Mary MacKillop College	SWAN HILL	\$3,720	\$3,880	\$3,650
Victory Christian College	STRATHDALE	\$3,330	\$3,330	\$3,440

Darul Ulum College of Victoria	FAWKNER	\$2,800	\$2,800	\$3,280
Ilim College	DALLAS	\$3,728	\$3,728	\$3,278
St Joseph's College	ECHUCA	\$3,250	\$3,250	\$3,250
Highview Christian Community College	MARYBOROUGH	\$3,180	\$3,180	\$3,180
Cobram Anglican Grammar School	COBRAM	\$3,125	\$3,125	\$3,125
Mercy Regional College	CAMPERDOWN	\$3,144	\$2,839	\$3,121
Minaret College	SPRINGVALE	\$2,500	\$2,800	\$2,800
Killester College	SPRINGVALE	\$2,130	\$2,130	\$2,130
Marian College	ARARAT	\$1,815	\$1,815	\$1,815
St James' College	BENTLEIGH EAST	\$6,400	\$6,500	
Trinity Lutheran College	MILDURA	\$4,875	\$5,845	
Catholic Regional College St Albans	ST ALBANS	\$2,318	\$2,318	
Islamic College Of Melbourne	TARNEIT	\$2,000	\$2,000	
St Mary's College	SEYMOUR	\$1,530	\$1,530	

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