

**AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF
GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS
PRESS RELEASE 868**

**ANDREWS GOVERNMENT'S LARGESSE FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION IS
ONLY PLAYING CATCH UP**

The Victorian public education system will get a \$3 billion boost in Tuesday's state budget after Premier Daniel Andrews announced a program to build or upgrade more than 200 state schools.

"Our system only works best when we make sure that the quality of the buildings matches the quality of the teaching and learning and that's exactly what this budget will be able to deliver," Mr Andrews said, announcing the funding at Thornbury High School on Tuesday morning.

Mr Andrews said the funding lift would also double the number of special needs students who get one-on-one attention.

"This is all about every child getting every chance, every school being supported, every parent being able to make that choice if that's where they want to send their kids," he said.

This is the information provided by the Age on November 24 at <https://www.watoday.com.au/national/victoria/victorian-government-announces-3-billion-funding-boost-for-state-schools-20201124-p56hc4.html>

Mr Merlino said the \$3 billion figure included \$1.1 billion announced earlier in the year and \$1.9 billion for new projects.

"Out of the \$1.9 billion, there's \$1.28 billion for 162 upgrades across our state," he said. About \$350 million of the allocated budget for upgrades will be for 54 upgrades in rural and regional state schools, Mr Merlino said.

Another \$388 million would be carved out specifically for upgrades to 39 different specialist disability schools. In total, 11 new schools would be built by 2026, including a vertical primary school in North Melbourne, he said.

"That will be our eighth vertical school," he said. Mr Merlino said the multibillion-dollar investment would create 22,700 additional students places at government schools.

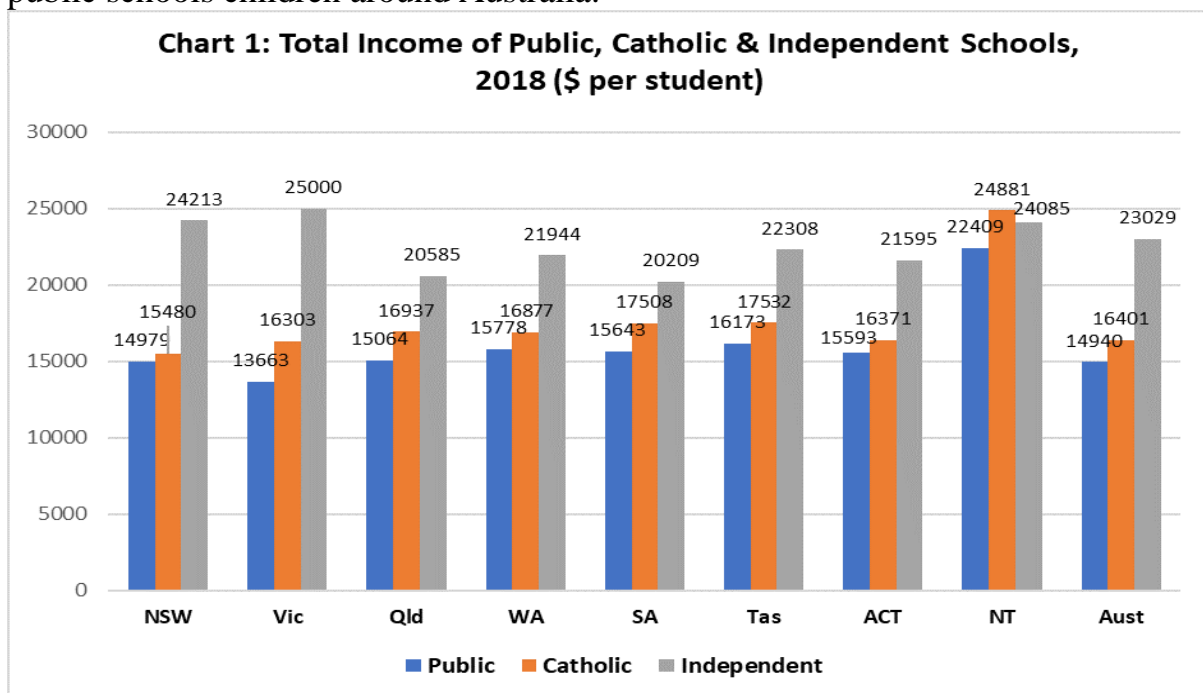
No mention has yet been made of funds for private schools. But then, that is becoming a very tricky subject, especially since there will be many cash strapped parents turning up at public schools next year.

Putting this \$3 billion in perspective

Any funds for public education are in fact good news, but the overall picture means that Mr Andrews is merely playing a bit of catch up in a time of great crises for the majority of Australia's school children in public schools.

The work of Trevor Cobbold from Save Our Schools indicates a much bigger, nastier future, particularly from Canberra and the Morrison Government.

In the first place, the following bar graph indicates that in 2018, Victorian public school children received less, per capita, i.e. \$13,663 per pupil on average, not only than private schools i.e. \$25,000 per pupil on average but also less than other public schools children around Australia.



And his latest Press release reveals that not only has Gonski's Needs policies gone, but the future decade is very bleak indeed for public schools.

Cobbold writes:

Gonski Gone: Morrison Abandons Public School Students

 Trevor Cobbold / November 19, 2020 / Funding

With its blatant favouritism of funding Catholic and Independent schools to the detriment of public schools, which educate over 80% of disadvantaged students, the Morrison Government has completed the demolition of the Gonski funding model that began with the Abbott and Turnbull Governments.

The Morrison Government has abandoned public education and is blatantly favouring private schools with special billion-dollar funding deals over the next decade. They will ensure that the existing resource gap between public and private schools will widen dramatically.

Yet public schools enrol more than 80% of the nation's disadvantaged students – those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, Indigenous students, those with a disability and students living in remote areas. Furthermore, 95% of disadvantaged schools are public schools.

The massive funding bias coincides with continuing huge achievement gaps between rich and poor. The latest PISA international tests show that low socio-economic status and Indigenous students are two to three years or more behind their high socio-economic status peers. There has been virtually no change in the gaps since 2006.

A critical factor behind this social inequity is that government funding increases have not been fully targeted at need. Since 2009, after adjusting for inflation, recurrent funding per student by the Commonwealth and state governments increased by 25% for Independent schools, 21% for Catholic schools and just 3% for public schools. Government funding increases have favoured privilege over disadvantage.

With its blatant favouritism, the Morrison Government has completed the demolition of the Gonski funding model that began with the Abbott and Turnbull Governments. Those governments ditched the large funding increase for 2018 and 2019 that was planned under the original Gonski funding model, an increase that would have mainly benefitted public schools.

Commonwealth funding to 2029

Private schools are already much better resourced than public schools. In 2018, the total income of Independent schools was \$23,029 per student

and \$16,401 per student in Catholic schools compared to \$14,940 per student in public schools.

Massive funding increases for private schools planned by the Morrison Government to 2029 will exacerbate the resource disparity. By 2029, Commonwealth funding for Catholic schools per student will be nearly five times that provided for each public school student (\$19,732 compared to \$4,882). Funding for Independent schools of \$13,063 per student is nearly three times that for public school students. See Chart 1.

Save Our Schools' estimates used official data provided by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment.

The planned increases in Commonwealth funding for Catholic schools especially is extraordinary. Catholic schools will receive an increase of \$10,373 per student, Independent schools will receive an increase of \$5,328 per student while public schools will receive an increase of a measly \$1,962 per student.

Total Commonwealth funding for Catholic schools is due to increase by nearly \$8 billion between 2018 and 2029 compared to \$3.1 billion for Independent schools and \$5.1 billion for public schools. See Chart 2. However, because enrolments in public schools are nearly double the enrolments in private schools, the actual increase per student is significantly lower for public schools.

LISTEN TO THE DOGS PROGRAM
855 ON THE AM DIAL: 12.00 NOON SATURDAYS
<http://www.3cr.org.au/dogs>