

**AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF
GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS
PRESS RELEASE 918
PRIVATE SCHOOL FEES OR
HOUSE MORTGAGE?**

There is a well documented shortage of teachers in Australia, particularly those qualified in STEM subjects. And there is a projected rise in enrolments from both domestic and migrating families. The staffing costs for most schools amount to 70% of its running costs. So, the race is on to attract well qualified teachers. The private sector, post pandemic, is filling its already well provided coffers with a rise in fees. Meanwhile, housing costs have also increased, particularly in those suburbs well provided with both private and public schools.

But parents will have to choose between private school fees and paying the mortgage. In 2022 top private schools will bill families with mortgage-sized fees after they were frozen during the pandemic. After all, with home schooling, what were families paying for in the private sector?

A survey of private school fees by by Natasha Bitá from *The Australian* December 13, has revealed that Geelong Grammar has increased fees by 2.6% to \$43,660 for senior students. And that is the equivalent of an annual interest payment on a \$2 million mortgage and well above the median annual home loan repaying of \$39,496 for Victorian homeowners. Geelong Grammar also received \$8.3 million in Jobkeeper payments in 2020.

But it is teacher pay rise responsible for a 3.5% pay rise for students at Trinity Grammar in Melbourne where parents will pay \$35,872 for senior students to attend next year. Public school teacher unions are negotiating wage rises and even going on strike for it, but the fruit of their labours are passed on to teachers in the competing private system. The staff at Trinity for example, will be granted a 3.25% pay rise next year.

In Sydney St Catherine's school in the eastern suburbs will raise fees by 2 % to \$37,322 next year And Queensland's Brisbane Grammar will increase senior school fees by 2.7% to \$29,000 rivalling the state's average home loan repayment of \$31,899. This school pocketed \$3.1 m in Jobkeeper.

It is little wonder then that Independent Senator Rex Patrick is demanding that profitable private schools repay the \$750m in federal government Jobkeeper payments handed to 700 private schools during the pandemic.

DOGS note that all these figures are of interest and it is both surprising and useful that a newspaper like *the Australian* should reveal them.

It is of interest to note however, that it is almost impossible to discover how much the Australian Catholic sector or other systemic schools received in Jobkeeper or what is happening with their fees.

But, with a shrinking and demoralised teaching force, the public sector will need all the assistance it can find to educate the majority of Australian children. Meanwhile, parents with high mortgages should be thinking seriously about where the future of their children and their family budget really lies.

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