

**AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF
GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS
PRESS RELEASE 921
IN TIMES OF PLAGUE PRIVATE SCHOOLS GAME THE SYSTEM**

The behaviour of the private school sector in the current time of plague in Australia has proved once again that their sense of ‘entitlement’ knows no bounds.

Not only have they gamed the funding system again and again, with Jobkeeper the latest example. That is, after all, only money and children’s opportunities on the line.

First in Line for the “Jab”

With the return of children to school in times of limited vaccinations and testing kits, there is the question of ‘entitlement’ to life itself for public school teachers and children. Teachers and children in public schools are expected to return to school but there is no guarantee of vaccinations or even antigen tests when they do. In times of plague, this is madness.

Yet again, at least two schools, Firbank and Brighton Grammar, in the private sector can market themselves as “first in line”. They have piggy-backed themselves onto a government funded contract for aged care. After being approached by the schools TLC Healthcare administered vaccines and provided rapid antigen tests to Firbank’s staff and high-school students at their medical centres.

But with news that the government would [allow younger children to be vaccinated](#), it was decided to move the immunisation program onto the Firbank campus for its students and for those from nearby Brighton Grammar.

We discover in the *Australian Financial Review* of January 12 that

Onsite vaccination clinics for primary school-aged children from two Melbourne private schools will save parents from the hustle, lost time and multiple disappointments experienced by countless others this week as they sought access to hard-to-find Pfizer jabs for their children.

On 12 January , 130 students aged five to 11 received their first government-funded vaccination at GP-supervised clinics at Firbank Grammar School in Brighton, and another 270 staff and students received booster shots.

The scenario will be played out each day over the next two weeks as Firbank and nearby Brighton Grammar hope to protect their communities from the rampant omicron variant.

Firbank Grammar principal Jenny Williams said the school would provide vaccinations for kindergarten and primary students onsite and would provide a booster program for already-vaccinated older students and staff.

In October, rapid antigen tests were made available to any student and staff member who wished to take one – an offer that proved popular.

While the federal government has been adamant there have not been supply issues with vaccines for five- to 11-year-olds, who have been eligible for a jab since Monday, there are multiple reports of parents either not being able to secure an appointment or having them cancelled or postponed at the last minute.

So, while the general populace are confronted with local pharmacies that have run out of antigen tests and public school parents are forced to send their children to school unvaccinated because they have not been able to obtain appointments for the jab, private schools can market themselves as “first in line.”

The Latest Jobkeeper Scandal

Trawling through the papers of the Charities Commission, on January 17, Trevor Cobbold from Save our Schools has unearthed how NSW Private schools profited from JobKeeper:

NSW Private Schools Profited Millions from Jobkeeper

 Trevor Cobbold / January 17, 2022 / Funding

Thirty-three NSW private schools raked in \$72 million in JobKeeper payments in 2020 while making profits of \$72 million. Every school made a profit with JobKeeper and all except two increased their profits over the previous year. Some of the state's most privileged schools got four to eight million and made millions in profits. Just ten schools got \$46.5 million and made \$44 million in profits.

The King's School topped the list of JobKeeper payments with about \$8.5 million. The school refuses to disclose exactly how much it received but according to its annual report lodged with the [Charities Commission](#) the payment is included in the item "other income" which increased by \$8.6 million in 2020. It made a profit of \$8.3 million. It also got \$12.8 million in recurrent government funding.

King's charges \$40,000 for Year 12 fees. Sixty-nine per cent of its students are from the highest socio-educationally advantaged (SEA) quartile and 93 per cent are from the two highest quartiles. It has assets valued at \$183 million.

Next on the list of top JobKeeper payments was Moriah College. It got \$6.7 million and made a massive profit of \$11.9 million. It also got \$9.4 million in government funding. Sixty-three per cent of its students are from the top SEA quartile and 89 per cent are from the top two quartiles. According to its annual report on the [school website](#), It has assets of nearly \$100 million.

St. Joseph's College got \$6.7 million from JobKeeper and made a profit of \$1.1 million. It also got \$9.7 million in government funding in 2020. Fifty-six per cent of its students are from the top SEA quartile and 85 per cent are from the top two quartiles. It has assets of nearly \$130 million.

Other highly privileged schools also received millions in JobKeeper payments (see table below). For example, Kinross Wolaroi School in Orange got \$4.9 million and made a profit of \$4.5 million; Lindisfarne Anglican School got \$3.9 million and made a profit of \$6.4 million; The Armidale School got \$3.6 million and made a profit of \$2 million; Emanuel School got \$3.4 million and made a profit of \$3.1 million; Masada College got \$2.7 million and made a profit of \$1.4 million.

These schools also serve highly privileged families. Around 50 to 80 per cent of their students are from the top SEA quartile and 80 to nearly 100 per cent are from the top two SEA quartiles. The profits made courtesy of JobKeeper enable these schools to increase their resources and expand their facilities for their privileged students.

JobKeeper has proved to be a gravy train for many NSW private schools. Each of the 33 schools made a profit with the help of JobKeeper and 31 increased

their profit over that in 2019. Moriah College increased its profit by a massive \$10.7 million. None needed JobKeeper to stay afloat. Most had very secure financial cushions to weather downturns in revenue courtesy of their high fees and multi-million dollar assets.

The greed of these highly privileged schools is obscene. They grasp any opportunity to get their snouts in the taxpayer trough. Yet, they see themselves as having superior moral values that are central to their elitist culture. For example, The King's School prides itself for developing leadership skills and says it is "committed to the development of good character and those values that are consistent with a caring, Christian community". Moriah College says it promotes "Australian values and good citizenship". St Joseph's College says that it challenges its students to become "knowledgeable and compassionate leaders for the common good".

If they lived up to their stated values and had any common decency, they would give the money back as some firms have done. As Senator Rex Patrick said:

To take the money without being affected is to abuse the goodwill of the taxpayer and to deny taxpayers other much needed services in areas such as healthcare, aged care and, indeed, education. [*Herald-Sun*, 14 November 2021]

Questions remain about whether other NSW private schools also received JobKeeper because their financial statements lodged with the Charities Commission are vague about the source of some increases in income. For example, Unity Grammar received an increase in other government subsidies of over 1000 per cent worth \$2.1 million and which helped it make a profit of \$2.6 million compared to \$0.7 million in 2019. St. Scholastica's College received an increase in government funding of \$4.5 million which helped it make a profit of \$8.5 million, up from \$4.7 million in 2019. Oxford Falls Grammar had an unexplained 365 per cent increase in "other income" of \$2.8 million which helped it make a profit of \$3.9 million.

The Morrison Government has readily resorted to prosecuting ordinary people that may have got over payments of a few thousand dollars from Centrelink. It has been unforgiving in pursuing them at length and rigorously. But if you're a wealthy, private school, you get away with massive over-payments. It is a glaring double standard that favours the wealthy and hammers the poor.

JobKeeper was just another opportunity for the Morrison Government to provide even more special funding for private schools. It is icing on the cake of a huge funding boost for private schools through a highly flawed method of determining their financial need and by special funding deals not based on need such as the \$1.2 billion Choice and Accountability Fund..

NSW private schools have been showered with funds by the Commonwealth and NSW governments over the past decade while public schools have been denied adequate funding. Government (Commonwealth and state) funding for private schools increased by much more than for public schools between 2009 and 2019. Government funding for Catholic and Independent schools increased by \$1,636 and \$1,664 per student respectively, adjusted for inflation, compared to only \$1,095 per student for public schools.

As a result, the total resources of NSW private schools far exceed those of public schools. The total income of Independent schools was \$25,368 per student in 2019 and that of Catholic schools was \$16,058 compared to \$15,881 in public schools.

Wealthy private schools seized on JobKeeper with the connivance of the Commonwealth Government to extend their massive resource advantage. For example, JobKeeper provided the King's School in Parramatta with an additional \$4,727 per student to add to its income of over \$43,000 per student. In contrast, Parramatta High School has an income of about \$13,000 per student.

The Catholic Archbishop of Sydney, Anthony Fisher, has conceded that Catholic schools have “never had it so good” in terms of funding. The same can be said of Independent private schools.

The resource advantage of private schools is set to continue for the rest of the decade under the terms of the Commonwealth-State bilateral funding agreements. NSW private schools were funded at 103 per cent of their Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) in 2021 while public schools were funded at 87 per cent of their SRS. Private schools will be funded at over 100 per cent of their SRS until 2029 while public schools will be funded at only 91 per cent of their SRS. As a result, public schools will remain massively under-funded while private schools continue to be over-funded.

JobKeeper for wealthy private schools has compounded the vast inequality in school funding in Australia. Their ruthless pursuit of greed must be ended by thorough-going reform of school funding to ensure it is solely based on need.

One Reply to “NSW Private Schools Profited Millions from Jobkeeper”  **David Margan** said:

January 17, 2022 at 6:54 pm

The privileged corporate and christian mates of this dodgy incompetent conservative government reap the rewards while the Morrison team rots our tax dollars in a desperate and corrupt effort to hold onto power via 'public service' announcements sports and car park pork barrelling rorts.

As a nation we need some leadership that is wise, imaginative, ethical and driven solely by the broad public interest.

Vote for anyone you like just dont vote for any of the Coalition candidates they dont deserve a scintilla of support.

Then, on 19 January Trevor Cobbold discovered the JobKeeper rot extended to Canberra.

Jobkeeper Jackpot for Canberra Grammar

Canberra Grammar was a big winner from JobKeeper. It received one of the biggest COVID assistance payments of all private schools in Australia in 2020. It raked in \$7.6 million which enabled it to make a profit of \$8 million, an increase of \$5 million over the previous year.

Grammar's financial statement published by the [Charities Commission](#) just before Christmas shows that it received the funding from JobKeeper and other COVID funding such as the Early Childhood and Care Relief Package.

It is absolutely disgraceful and immoral that Canberra Grammar got JobKeeper. The profits made courtesy of JobKeeper enable Grammar to increase its resources and expand its facilities for students from some of the most privileged families in Canberra – 83 per cent of students are from the top socio-educationally advantaged (SEA) quartile and 97 per cent are from the top two quartiles.

The school was already wallowing in private and government funding and had multi-million dollar assets to cushion against any downturn in revenue.

Just a few months before COVID struck, Canberra Grammar got a [\\$20 million private donation](#) from businessman Terry Snow. It is the largest donation ever given to a private school in Australia.

The school also got \$8.2 million in recurrent government funding in 2020, including \$6.4 million from the Commonwealth and \$1.8 million from the ACT Government. It has assets worth \$80 million, including financial investments of nearly \$9 million. Clearly, it didn't need JobKeeper to stay afloat.

Save Our Schools has identified 168 schools around Australia that accounted for two-thirds of the \$750 million in JobKeeper payments to private schools. Canberra Grammar got the eighth largest payout of all these schools. This was over double the average payment of \$3 million per school.

Grammar's grab for JobKeeper reveals an obscene level of greed by one of the three most exclusive schools in Canberra. It claims it is "a community guided by Christian values". If it lived up to these values or had any common decency, it would give the money back to the taxpayer.

Canberra Grammar seized on JobKeeper with the connivance of the Commonwealth Government to extend its huge resource advantage over public schools. Its JobKeeper payment amounted to an additional \$5,954 per student to add to its income of \$33,000 per student. In contrast, nearby Telopea Park School and Deakin High School have an income of about \$16,000 per student.

As local Labor MP, Andrew Leigh, told the [Canberra Times](#):

JobKeeper was meant to keep battlers in jobs, not boost profits. The Morrison government says it can't afford to provide free rapid antigen tests to essential workers, yet the Liberals had no problem putting millions of dollars into the pockets of elite private schools.

Another school that got JobKeeper was Orana School in Weston. It got \$2 million from JobKeeper and Cash Flow Assistance. This enabled it to make a profit of \$2 million after making a small loss in 2019 before COVID and JobKeeper. Orana School also received \$4.5 million in recurring government funding in 2020, including \$3.5 million from the Commonwealth and \$1 million from the ACT Government.

Questions remain about whether other ACT private schools also received JobKeeper because their financial statements lodged with the Charities Commission are vague about the source of some increases in income.

Canberra Girls' Grammar got a one-off grant of \$0.9 million which is not explained and Radford College got a one-off government subsidy of \$0.4 million which is not explained.

DOGS COMMENT

The above examples of schools in the private sector manoeuvring to get 'first in line' for not only the good job but for life and health itself proves that they are designed for an elitist rather than a democratic society. It should also be noted that The Jobkeeper figures in the Charities Commission apply only to so-called independent schools, namely schools which are independent of the private systemic bureaucracies. Taxpayers have no information on these figures which could be considerably greater than those exposed by Cobbold.

The selfishness and self-interest of the private sector knows no bounds. Their subsidisation by taxpayers money casts a shadow over the future of our public system, our children and our liberal democracy.

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