

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

## **Press Release 969**

### **PRIVATE SCHOOLS, AWASH WITH PUBLIC MONEY AND ENDOWMENTS, ARE POACHING PUBLIC SCHOOL STAFF**

The private school system is a parasitic system – dependent upon the main, public system and public funding for teacher training, curriculum development, and, by virtue of its expulsion policies, boasting an exclusive enrolment image.

Australia's falling results in international performance tests are evidence of the parasite's effects upon the host. The diversion of essential public funds away from the public into the private system is bringing both systems into trouble.

The latest evidence of the parasitic nature of the private system has been highlighted by the teacher shortages throughout Australia. The private schools, especially the wealthy exclusive schools, are using their superior public funding and endowments to poach teachers out of the public system.

The Australian Education Union has continued to hear [reports from AEU principals](#) of private schools across Victoria poaching teachers from the public school system amid the current staffing shortage crisis.

Many private schools are able to pay salaries that outstrip those in the public system.

Work done by Trevor Cobbold from Save our Schools refers to huge donations and endowments as well as generous public funding enjoyed by the private sector. New figures obtained from the [Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission](#) (ACNC) show that 44 Victorian private schools received nearly \$300 million in donations and investment income over five years from 2017 to 2021. Donations totalled \$215 million and investment income was \$84 million. Just nine schools received \$175 million over the period. The average income from these sources was \$6.8 million per school over the five years. Each of the 44 schools received more than \$1 million over the five years.

Five other schools received over \$10 million – Wesley College \$10.8 million, Ivanhoe Grammar \$10.6 million, Bialik College \$10.2 million, Korowa \$10.1 million and Xavier College \$10.1 million.

Donations and investment income of these wealthy exclusive schools dwarf other private income of public schools. The average such income of Victorian public schools in 2020 was

\$179 per student. By contrast the donations and investment income of Melbourne Grammar was \$5,055 per student and \$5,784 per student at Geelong Grammar.

These 44 private schools received \$484 million in funding by the Commonwealth and Victorian governments in 2020. This funding was determined without regard to their donations and investment income. The accompanying table from the Charities Commission illustrates these facts.

### Donations & Investment Income of Wealthy Private Schools, Victoria

| School                        | Donations 2017-2021 (\$) | Investment Income 2017-2021 (\$) | Total (\$) | Govt Funding 2020 (\$) | Fees per Student 2020 (\$) | C/W SRS Share 2022 (%) | Students in Top 2 SEA Quartiles (%) |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|------------|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Melbourne Grammar             | 26,679,820               | 16,501,702                       | 43,181,522 | 8,186,472              | 29,216                     | 107                    | 95                                  |
| Geelong Grammar               | 16,346,000               | 15,705,000                       | 32,051,000 | 13,157,323             | 20,198                     | 93                     | 91                                  |
| Scotch College*               | 30,153,645               | 1,231,815                        | 31,385,460 | 7,385,441              | 31,407                     | 92                     | 97                                  |
| Caulfield Grammar             | 10,398,468               | 6,590,370                        | 16,988,838 | 19,195,304             | 26,943                     | 86                     | 83                                  |
| Wesley College                | 10,324,060               | 485,552                          | 10,809,612 | 32,325,016             | 28,412                     | 89                     | 93                                  |
| Ivanhoe Grammar               | 1,706,069                | 8,875,659                        | 10,581,728 | 14,151,917             | 24,453                     | 99                     | 90                                  |
| Bialik College                | 8,074,774                | 2,109,778                        | 10,184,552 | 10,597,346             | 15,147                     | 83                     | 94                                  |
| Korowa                        | 9,679,040                | 452,588                          | 10,131,628 | 6,553,982              | 24,699                     | 78                     | 97                                  |
| Xavier College                | 10,042,020               | 60,504                           | 10,102,524 | 8,751,003              | 29,532                     |                        | 94                                  |
| MLC                           | 6,419,760                | 2,452,214                        | 8,871,974  | 17,174,697             | 29,797                     | 98                     | 97                                  |
| Siena College                 | 6,823,926                | 212,704                          | 7,036,630  | 6,823,145              | 14,208                     |                        | 91                                  |
| St Catherine's School         | 4,893,401                | 1,529,992                        | 6,423,393  | 6,003,592              | 30,270                     | 78                     | 92                                  |
| Lauriston                     | 3,671,033                | 726,320                          | 6,397,353  | 9,396,921              | 29,932                     | 86                     | 97                                  |
| King David School             | 6,083,308                | 34,395                           | 6,117,703  | 4,589,308              | 18,394                     | 77                     | 96                                  |
| Haileybury                    | 4,248,448                | 1,143,000                        | 5,391,448  | 3,270,766              | 24,661                     | 97                     | 95                                  |
| Brighton Grammar              | 4,520,698                | 714,390                          | 5,235,088  | 10,677,426             | 24,403                     | 100                    | 87                                  |
| Melbourne Girls Grammar       | 4,983,324                | 39,168                           | 5,022,492  | 8,808,419              | 29,786                     | 99                     | 96                                  |
| Huntingtower                  | 3,201,791                | 1,427,418                        | 4,629,209  | 5,155,817              | 18,402                     |                        | 96                                  |
| Firbank                       | 2,795,078                | 1,715,847                        | 4,510,925  | 8,197,213              | 21,709                     | 99                     | 92                                  |
| Carey Grammar                 | 1,029,126                | 3,258,096                        | 4,287,222  | 10,101,784             | 27,928                     | 96                     | 95                                  |
| St Margaret's Berwick Grammar | 3,336,828                | 680,983                          | 4,017,811  | 7,242,832              | 19,665                     |                        | 87                                  |
| Loreto Mandeville Hall        | 2,754,503                | 805,181                          | 3,559,684  | 12,657,580             | 25,534                     |                        | 93                                  |
| Toorak College                | 2,800,845                | 573,645                          | 3,374,490  | 10,719,792             | 22,054                     | 95                     | 89                                  |
| Fintona                       | 2,577,568                | 771,890                          | 3,349,458  | 2,447,481              | 35,757                     | 83                     | 95                                  |
| Yesodei Hatorah College       | 2,194,928                | 906,055                          | 3,100,983  | 3,288,934              | 4,872                      | 80                     | 82                                  |
| PLC                           | 1,828,496                | 1,188,041                        | 3,016,537  | 8,533,528              | 25,886                     | 79                     | 97                                  |
| Mount Scopus Memorial College | 2,565,346                | 367,069                          | 2,932,415  | 12,749,379             | 24,552                     | 98                     | 96                                  |
| Geelong College               | 2,310,888                | 564,611                          | 2,875,499  | 10,956,202             | 22,652                     | 82                     | 90                                  |

|                       |           |           |           |           |        |    |    |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------|----|----|
| Ruyton*               | 1,840,950 | 878,025   | 2,718,975 | 4,104,880 | 24,340 | 91 | 96 |
| Eltham College *      | 2,706,360 | 4,039     | 2,710,399 | 7,662,085 | 21,858 | 85 | 88 |
| St Michaels Grammar   | 982,243   | 1,519,337 | 2,501,580 | 5,732,746 | 25,110 | 96 | 94 |
| Strathcona            | 1,005,168 | 1,426,258 | 2,431,426 | 7,175,266 | 24,390 | 85 | 91 |
| Ivanhoe Girls Grammar | 152,606   | 2,275,841 | 2,428,447 | 7,904,213 | 22,310 | 98 | 92 |

| School                         | Donations<br>2017-2021 (\$) | Investment<br>Income 2017-<br>2021 (\$) | Total (\$)         | Govt Funding<br>2020 (\$) | Fees per<br>Student<br>2020 (\$) | C/W SRS<br>Share<br>2022<br>(%) | Students<br>in Top 2<br>SEA<br>Quartiles<br>(%) |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|--------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Genazzano FCJ<br>College       | 2,269,326                   | 6,582                                   | 2,275,908          | 9,570,949                 | 26,130                           |                                 | 91  |
| Penleigh & Essendon<br>Grammar | 462,337                     | 1,775,869                               | 2,238,206          | 29,339,681                | 15,737                           | 115                             | 92  |
| St Leonard's College           | 1,959,000                   | 259,000                                 | 2,218,000          | 13,827,847                | 26,171                           | 117                             | 95  |
| Ballarat Grammar               | 1,220,063                   | 929,288                                 | 2,149,351          | 22,409,280                | 12,536                           |                                 | 81  |
| Waverley Christian<br>College  | 2,026,845                   | 4,899                                   | 2,031,744          | 19,626,126                | 8,333                            | 76                              | 89  |
| Mentone Grammar                | 1,319,853                   | 643,786                                 | 1,963,639          | 10,386,945                | 22,338                           | 104                             | 90  |
| Camberwell Girls<br>Grammar    | 1,673,942                   | 178,222                                 | 1,852,164          | 4,269,130                 | 23,054                           | 79                              | 96  |
| Sacre Coeur                    | 1,081,123                   | 691,118                                 | 1,772,241          | 4,224,205                 | 21,214                           |                                 | 94  |
| Mentone Girls<br>Grammar       | 1,584,287                   | 155,590                                 | 1,739,877          | 9,121,122                 | 22,520                           | 97                              | 93  |
| Trinity Grammar                | 774,860                     | 433,839                                 | 1,208,699          | 8,305,129                 | 29,244                           | 94                              | 96  |
| Camberwell<br>Grammar          | 1,066,166                   | 44,370                                  | 1,110,536          | 6,096,874                 | 27,958                           | 95                              | 95  |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>214,568,320</b>          | <b>84,350,050</b>                       | <b>298,918,370</b> | <b>483,855,098</b>        |                                  |                                 |   |

\*Donations and investment income for 2017-2020

Sources:

Donations and Investment income: Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission  
Government funding, fees, % of students in top 2 socio-educationally advantaged (SEA) quartiles

According to the ABC, in the past 12 months, jobs advertised in inner-city private schools have offered base salaries up to \$160,000, and rural principals have reported high offers in the regions too. Those salaries are tens of thousands of dollars higher than what the state system can offer most teachers.

In New South Wales, a state school classroom teacher's base salary tops out at \$113,000, and in Victorian schools it is \$112,000.

Some teachers will be able to top up their salaries through bonus and retention mechanisms but, with Australia facing an "unprecedented" teacher shortage, public school principals have told the ABC they still cannot compete on pay and conditions. Regional schools in particular are losing teachers

John Freyne, the principal at Traralgon Secondary College in Victoria's Gippsland region, said several teachers had come to him asking for more money, having been offered higher salaries to work at local private schools. He said he could not match the offers.

"We're certainly not as free as private sector schools would be ... [to] offer higher salaries," he said. Mr Freyne said his school was between four and six teaching positions short at the end of 2022. While shortages at Traralgon have been filled by relief teachers lured via state government-funded bonus payments, other principals are turning to teaching students to fill the gaps.

Fellow regional principal, Wodonga Middle Years College's Maree Cribbes, said she had recently lost a staff member to a private school, making her 13 positions short ahead of the school new year.

"Actually finding qualified teachers is not possible at the moment," she said.

Principals have 'never seen anything like this' Mr Freyne said the fact private schools get significant government funding, on top of their student fees, enabled them to pay higher wages to attract teachers.

"What they receive from the government would be 60-70 per cent of my total budget, so the federal funding provides them with a greater capacity to pay staff," he said. And while the Victorian public schools' enterprise agreement does allow teachers to earn an extra \$10,000 as a "retention incentive", Mr Freyne said it was not a realistic solution because paying the bonus to every teacher would make school budgets unworkable.

Mr Freyne said he had "never seen anything like this" in his 34 years in the profession.

In December, the Albanese government announced it would extend the current funding agreement by one year, to allow time for a funding review.

It means the government's in-principle commitment to lifting government funding for public schools will be delayed for another year, which unions say will mean public schools continue to lose teachers to the private sector.

Federal Education Minister Jason Clare has acknowledged the scale of the problem.

"This is a real issue, principals and teachers have both talked to me about this," he said.

Mr Clare agreed "pay is important", but said fixing entrenched equity problems would take time and money.

AEU Victorian branch President Meredith Peace said these reports are extremely concerning, with this practice exacerbating the already serious staffing challenges faced by the state's public schools.

"This is causing considerable stress and workload for principals, and puts at risk the right of every child to have a qualified teacher in their classroom and/or access certain parts of the curriculum," says Ms Peace.

"What we are seeing here highlights the current inequity that exists between public and private schools.

"Victoria's public schools are only funded to 90 per cent of the federally determined resource standard, whilst the majority of private and Catholic schools are already at or in excess of 100 per cent. This means public schools are not operating on a level playing field and students are missing out on aspects of the education they are entitled to, thus diminishing their educational opportunities.

"It should therefore come as no surprise that private schools are able to use their abundant resources to offer financial incentives and opportunities, that public schools have no capacity to match.

**DOGS note that the current situation was predicted by their organisation in 1964. The overwhelming greed of the parasitic religious sector together with the privatisation policies of both the Labor and Coalition governments since the 1980s have led to an emptying of the public Treasury in favour of the wealthy and sectarian at the expense of the poor and vulnerable.**

**The only way forward is to abandon a failed policy and adhere to the policy of No State Aid for private schools and separation of religion from the State.**

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