

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR THE DEFENCE OF GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

Press Release 999

VICTORIA'S PUBLIC SYSTEM THE WORST RESOURCED IN AUSTRALIA WHILE WEALTHY PRIVATE SCHOOLS HIKE UP THEIR FEES

In the 1990s the then Federal education Minister, Mr Kemp argued for an increase in State Aid to 'keep the fees of private schools' down. Private school fees have never gone down. Only up...and up In the second week of October 2023, with the excuse that the State Government was expecting them to pay payroll tax- like the public schools, wealthy schools throughout the country hiked up their fees to more than \$40,000 a year.

Meanwhile, in the same week Trevor Cobbold from Save our Schools produced a paper which [proved that Victoria's public school system is one of the worst resourced in Australia.](#)

Fee Rises

Nine of Victoria's most expensive private schools are upping their fees to charge more than \$40,000 for the 2024 school year because of the [state government's new private school payroll tax](#),

Caulfield Grammar School, Korowa Anglican Girls' School, Lauriston Girls' School, Melbourne Girls' Grammar School, Scotch College and Wesley College will all charge more than \$40,000 in year 12 fees next year, with Mount Scopus Memorial College and St Catherine's School also expected to join the list, having already charged more than \$40,000 this year. St Kilda's St Michael's Grammar is the latest school to announce a significant fee rise and shared a letter with parents earlier this week to announce a fee hike of 4.5 per cent in 2024, including \$720 per student to cover the tax. The school's 2024 fees for a local year 12 student will rise to \$38,172, up 6.9 per cent on 2023.

Geelong Grammar School maintains its position as the state's most expensive school, charging \$49,720 for 2024 Year 12 tuition.

The state government introduced the payroll tax in its 2023 budget. At the time, sixty Catholic and independent schools were initially selected to pay the tax, but a government backflip in August adjusted the rules to ensure that only school's that crossed the \$15,000 threshold would be subject to the payroll levy.

The payroll tax threshold of \$15,000 is in place until at least 1 January 2029 and will be reviewed ahead of that school year.

Public School Funding in Victoria

Tevor Cobbold's figures illustrate the fact that Victoria is the third most under-resourced public school system in Australia after the Northern Territory and Queensland. They are funded at only 85.9% of their Schooling Resource Standard (referred to as the SRS) just ahead of Queensland at 84.9% while Northern Territory public schools are funded at only 76.6% of their SRS The average funding share for public schools across Australia is 87.3%

High levels of government funding have contributed to the private school resource advantage, especially in the case of Catholic schools. Total government funding for Catholic schools is 91% of total government funding of public school and 71% in the case of Independent schools. The ability to charge fees ensures private schools can add to their government funding to ensure their resource advantage over public schools. There are no controls over the extent to which private schools can charge fees while receiving government funding.

It is incomprehensible that the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments ensure that Catholic and Independent schools have a large resource advantage over public schools when the latter account for over 80% of disadvantaged students. The resource disparity between private and public schools in Victoria highlights the structural failure of the school funding system.

His full article proves conclusively that State Aid to private schools has not only divided our children on the basis of creed, but also on the basis of – class- the ability to pay. Both the Commonwealth and the State Governments have a lot to answer for in the current public school crisis.

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