

SAVE OUR SCHOOLS

Education Policy Comment

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.

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