

SAVE OUR SCHOOLS

Education Policy Comment

Labor Chooses Privilege Over Fairness in Education

Labor has chosen privilege over fairness in school funding. It has chosen to continue the massive over-funding of Australia's wealthiest schools and dumped its commitment to fully fund public schools. It is a craven capitulation to the powerful interests in private schools. It denies resources to those most in need. Fairness in school funding has missed out in Labor's election campaign.

Labor has endorsed Morrison's massive over-funding of private schools, including hundreds of millions of dollars for the most exclusive schools in Australia. [Labor Education Shadow Minister, Tanya Plibersek](#), recently said that "Catholic and independent schools will not have their funding touched" by a Labor Government. In doing so, she endorsed the rapacious greed of the wealthy for taxpayer resources.

Exclusive Independent schools are massively over-funded by the Morrison Government. Just 50 schools will be over-funded by nearly \$400 million from 2022 to 2028 under the current funding arrangements, an average of \$8 million per school (see Attachment 1).

Newington College in Sydney will be over-funded by \$13.3 million. It charges fees of \$27,095 and 76% of its students are from the top socio-educational advantage (SEA) quartile and 95% are from the top two quartiles but only 1% are from the bottom quartile.

Haileybury College in Melbourne will be over funded by \$22 million. It charges fees of \$27,095 and 77% of its students are from the top SEA quartile while 95% are from the top two quartiles, but only 1% are from the bottom quartile.

Brisbane Grammar will be over-funded by \$12.9 million. Its average fees are \$26,031 and 88% of its students are from the top SEA quartile and 98% are from the top two quartiles. It has no students from the lowest quartile.

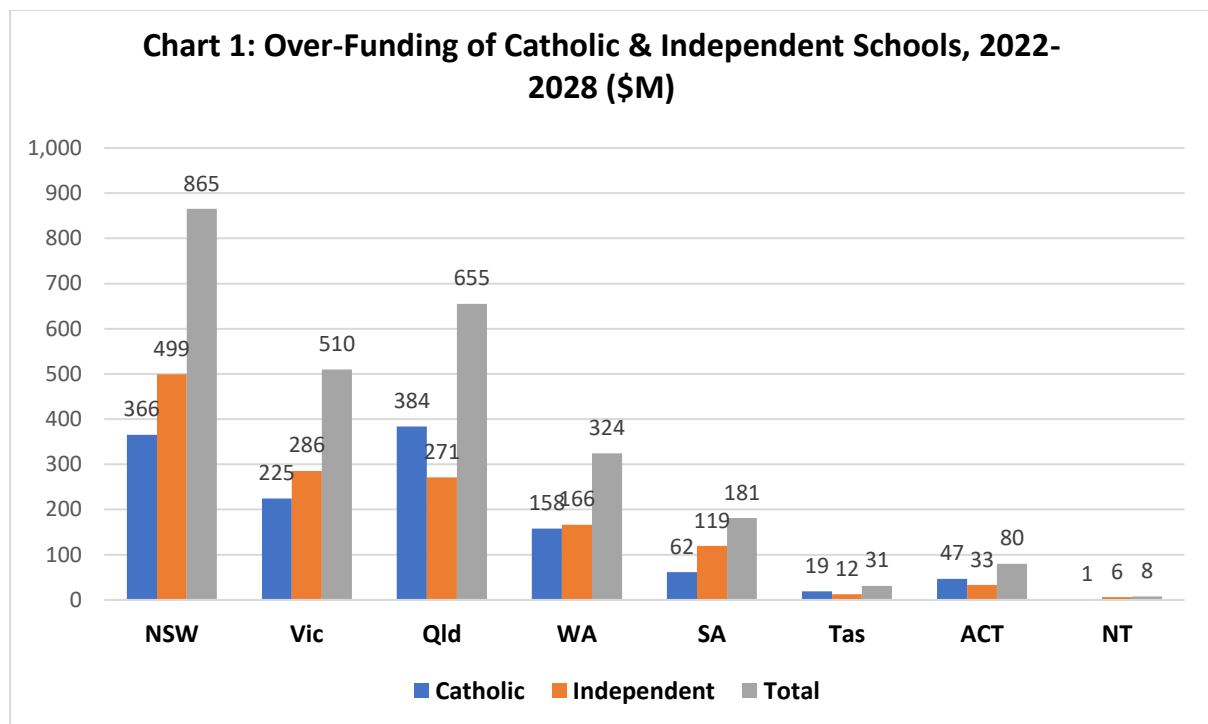
Hale School in Perth will be over-funded by \$10.8 million. Its fees are \$26,148 and 70% of its students are from the top SEA quartile and 91% are from the top two quartiles. Only 2% are from the bottom quartile.

St Peter's College in Adelaide will be over-funded by \$11.9 million. Its fees average \$23,670 and 69% of its students are from the top SEA quartile and 90% are from the top two quartiles.

Every one of these 50 exclusive schools have over 60% of their students from the top SEA quartile. Many have around 80% and more. Every school has around 90% or more from the top two quartiles and only 1-3% from the bottom quartile. They all have fees of around \$20,000 and up to \$30,000. Their over-funding ranges from \$4 billion to \$22 billion. Yet

Labor won't touch it. Instead, it chooses to continue the chronic under-funding of public schools.

The Catholic system is also heavily over-funded and will remain so until at least 2028 under the current funding arrangements. Its cumulative over-funding from 2022 to 2028 will amount to about \$1.3 billion. The Independent sector will be over-funded by about \$1.4 billion. In total, private schools will be over-funded by about \$3.7 billion. These estimates do not include other sources of over-funding for private schools by the Commonwealth Government such as the \$1.2 billion Choice and Accountability slush fund nor over-funding by state governments.



Source: See Attachment 2.

In contrast, public schools will continue to be massively under-funded by state governments under the terms of the [fraudulent Commonwealth-State bilateral funding agreements](#). While Catholic and Independent schools will be funded at over 100% of their Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) until 2029, public schools will be funded at less than 91% of their SRS until at least 2029. SOS estimates the cumulative under-funding of public schools from 2022 to 2029 at \$53 billion.

Labor has offered only token increases for public schools compared with what is needed. The dire state of public school funding is virtually ignored. It was not even mentioned in Anthony Albanese's campaign launch. The idea of fairness in school funding was entirely absent from his speech.

Tanya Plibersek won't even guarantee that public schools will be fully funded under a Labor Government. She has resiled from promises that Labor would ensure that [public schools are fully funded](#) at 100% of their SRS. Now, all she will say is that under-funded public schools will be [better off under Labor](#). This is not good enough.

A Labor Government must choose between privilege and fairness in education. It will face budget challenges to properly fund health, aged care and the NDIS, having ditched previous policies to reduce tax concessions worth billions for the wealthy. Apart from looking at other sources of revenue, stopping the sheer waste in over-funding private schools would help make some progress, albeit small, towards better funding of public schools.

If Labor still believes in fairness it must step up much more for public schools. It must ensure that public schools are fully funded within the next five years. It should increase the funding loadings for disadvantaged students and it must immediately revise the Commonwealth-State bilateral funding agreements that are [defrauding public schools of billions in funding](#). A Labor Government must ensure that the states also fulfil their responsibility to public schools.

[The Greens](#) say they will support funding public schools at 100% of their SRS but have committed to stopping the over-funding of private schools. Independent candidates are campaigning hard in several electorates and they may have the balance of power in the new Parliament. They cannot remain silent on the over-funding of wealthy private schools and the chronic under-funding of public schools. They also have to choose between privilege and fairness in education.

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Attachment 1: Over-Funding of Australia's Most Exclusive Private Schools

School	C/W	C/W	C/W	Fees	Students	Students	Students
	SRS	Over-	Over-		in	in Top	in Top 2
Share	Funding	Funding	Funding	SEA	SEA	SEA	
2022	2022	2022-2028	2022-2028	Quartile	Quartile	Quartiles	
%	%	\$	\$	%	%	%	
	points						
New South Wales							
Trinity Grammar	115	35	16,366,494	27,008	1	71	93
Newington College	126	46	13,538,762	27,095	1	76	95
Newcastle Grammar	164	84	12,316,000	19,096	2	70	91
Loreto Kirribilli	143	63	11,612,204	22,435	0	83	97
Loreto Normanhurst	143	63	10,064,223	25,491	1	70	92
St Aloysius' College	140	60	10,062,297	19,274	1	89	97
Monte Sant Angelo							
Mercy College	139	59	9,886,988	22,941	0	75	94
Brigidine College	128	48	7,936,427	19,248	1	62	92
Pittwater House	143	63	7,601,407	19,759	1	70	95
St Andrew's Cathedral School	102	22	6,482,652	28,759	1	76	95
International							
Grammar	117	37	6,040,164	21,745	1	73	94
St Catherine's School	122	42	5,698,471	31,330	1	74	95
St Vincent's College	111	31	5,611,476	19,998	2	63	89
Saint Ignatius' College	97	17	4,574,100	29,941	1	75	94
Knox Grammar	97	17	5,233,226	29,106	1	78	95
MLC School	97	17	5,233,226	27,259	0	79	96
Pymble Ladies College	97	17	5,233,226	29,411	1	80	96
Ravenswood	97	17	5,233,226	30,303	0	77	96
Victoria							
Haileybury	97	17	22,033,933	24,661	1	77	94
Ivanhoe Grammar	99	19	10,386,779	24,453	2	65	90
Mentone Grammar	104	24	9,085,457	22,338	1	63	91
St Leonard's College	117	37	8,488,284	26,171	1	77	95
Melbourne Grammar	107	27	7,284,300	29,218	0	76	95
Wesley College	89	29	6,931,316	28,412	2	70	92
Carey Grammar	96	16	6,194,469	27,928	1	75	95
MLC	98	18	5,738,648	27,259	0	79	96
Lowther Hall	100	20	4,774,692	19,143	1	65	92
Geelong Grammar	93	13	4,681,244	20,198	2	69	91
Brighton Grammar	100	20	4,278,741	24,403	2	65	91
Mount Scopus College	98	18	4,213,514	24,552	0	78	96
Queensland							
Brisbane Grammar	133	53	12,895,086	26,149	0	88	98
St Margaret's School	133	53	9,204,664	20,695	2	70	92

School	C/W	C/W	C/W	Fees	Students	Students	Students
	SRS	Over-	Over-		in	in Top	in Top 2
	Share	Funding	Funding	2020	Lowest	SEA	SEA
	2022	2022	2022-2028		SEA	SEA	SEA
	%	%	\$	\$	Quartile	Quartile	Quartiles
		points			%	%	%
Brisbane Girls Grammar	120	40	7,953,111	25,034	0	85	97
Brisbane Boys College	101	21	5,747,806	22,142	1	73	94
Somerville House	101	21	5,747,806	20,920	1	81	97
Clayfield College	101	21	5,747,806	18,916	3	65	90
Western Australia							
St Mary's Girls School	140	60	12,899,707	20,613	1	67	91
Hale School	121	41	10,788,794	26,148	2	70	91
Wesley College	123	43	9,094,518	21,459	2	65	89
All Saints' College	113	33	8,702,458	18,142	1	69	92
Perth College	115	35	7,638,309	20,723	3	63	87
Penrhos College	113	33	7,357,237	21,974	2	65	90
St Hilda's Girls School	102	22	3,399,647	22,561	1	82	96
South Australia							
St Peter's College	121	41	11,859,271	23,670	2	69	90
Pembroke School	111	31	9,611,667	22,190	1	78	95
Scotch College	112	32	6,753,247	22,385	1	73	94
Wilderness School	120	40	6,674,701	22,025	1	74	93
Pulteney Grammar	110	30	5,696,013	20,634	1	69	93
Waldorf Girls School	136	56	4,321,726	19,882	1	69	91
Prince Alfred College	92	12	3,911,697	20,830	1	64	92

Source: See Attachment 2: Data Sources and Methodology.

Note: The SRS shares and the estimated over-funding for Brisbane Boys College, Clayfield College and Somerville House are the average for the Presbyterian & Methodist Schools Association

Attachment 2: Data sources and methodology

The over-funding estimates are based on data provided to Senate Estimates by the Commonwealth Department of Education for the 2021-22 Budget. Data on Commonwealth Government funding for school systems and individual schools and the Commonwealth shares of the Schooling Resource Standard were supplied in answer to a question on notice by Senator Mehreen Faruqi (2021-22 Budget Estimates, SQ21-000848).

The two sets of data were used to calculate the funding due to systems and schools at the target 80% Commonwealth share. The over-funding is estimated as the difference between their projected Commonwealth funding estimates and that at the 80% share of their SRS. The over-funding estimates ignore other sources of Commonwealth Government funding such as the Choice and Accountability Fund which operates until 2029.

Data on school fees and student composition were obtained from My School.