

Catholic Education benefits all Australians

Catholic schools are critical to Australia's education system. The community is the single largest provider of education outside of government, delivering greater choice, affordability, and value that benefits all Australians.



TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH EDUCATION

- Supporting the community for more than 200 years
- Educating **1 in 5 (820,000)** Australian students in **1,751** schools
- Employing more than **112,000** Australians
- School communities have built educational infrastructure worth an estimated **\$100 billion** for the nation
- Serving families in regional Australia with **40%** of Catholic schools located in regional, rural and remote areas
- Providing inclusive schooling:
 - **42%** of enrolled students from non-Catholic backgrounds
 - **42%** of students in the bottom two quartiles of socio-educational advantage
 - **23%** of students who are supported with disability
 - **161%** growth in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolment over 10 years
- Supporting disadvantaged families with significant fee concessions
- Contributing more than **\$17 billion** annually to Australia's economy
- Families contributing over **\$6 billion** annually in fees and capital levies that reduce the burden on government
- Research shows those who attend Catholic schools are more likely, on average, to see lifelong benefits in **employment, health** and **life satisfaction**
- In addition, Catholic school attendees are more likely to work in an industry or sector that directly benefits the public and are more likely to **donate to charity**.

Our Priorities

SECURING THE FUTURE OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

1. Ensure Affordability and Choice

Catholic Education is a cost-effective and important educational partner for government schools which requires ongoing confidence in policy decisions and funding certainty to sustain and enhance outcomes that benefits all Australians.

We are calling on our political leaders to:

- ✓ Commit to maintaining affordability and funding certainty by guaranteeing that federal, state, and territory governments will work in unison to deliver their commitments with no adverse changes, such as state payroll tax
- ✓ Address cost of living pressures on families by advancing the review of how much parents are expected to contribute to their child's Catholic schooling and maintain government choice and affordability assistance
- ✓ Support Catholic schools to continue to build communities of faith and preference the employment of staff who share and support their ethos and mission
- ✓ Promise to deliver sector-neutrality for national quality teaching and workforce initiatives, including providing Catholic school communities with access to Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships.

SUPPORT CATHOLIC EDUCATION: CHOICE, EQUITY AND THE FUTURE

2. Address hardship, wellbeing and disadvantage

Every family and student deserves access to quality education and mechanisms that address their needs, regardless of their background.

We are calling on our political leaders to:

- ✓ Commit to preserving existing programs and introduce new initiatives to improve equitable and sector-neutral access to mental health and wellbeing support to address increasing challenges faced by school communities
- ✓ Increase access to targeted support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, including Indigenous Boarding and Closing the Gap initiatives
- ✓ Review and refine funding loadings to better support student needs including disability and disadvantage, as well as smaller schools, and those located in regional, rural and remote areas.

3. Build and Innovate for the Future

As Australia's support for non-government schooling grows, so too must our investment in its delivery. Catholic Education remains a vital part of Australia's social and economic success, but requires strong investment today to prepare and empower future generations.

We are calling on our political leaders to:

- ✓ Commit to ensuring Catholic schools have fair and sector-neutral access to targeted funding for early childhood education and vocational education, including the Building Early Education Fund
- ✓ Provide targeted funding to support educational excellence and quality teaching via school upgrades and increasing the Capital Grants Program
- ✓ Deliver adequate support so Catholic schools can continue to lead and implement national reforms for educational excellence and quality teaching.

School Funding Explainer

HOW ARE AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS FUNDED?

Around **\$86.7 billion** is spent on educating children and young people in all Australian schools annually.

School funding is a **shared responsibility** between federal, state and territory governments and parental contributions in non-government schools.

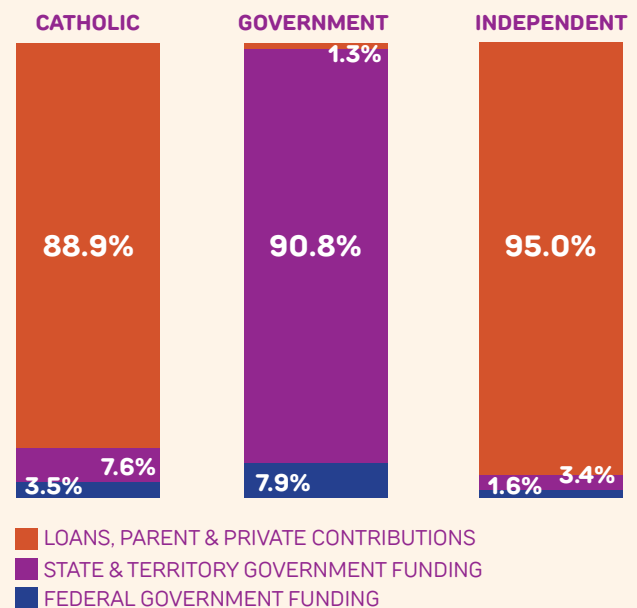
State and territory governments are transitioning to provide 75 per cent of the School Resourcing Standard (SRS) for government schools and the federal government 25 per cent.

In the non-government sector, **parent contributions reduce the level of government funding** by about 25 per cent in Catholic schools. Of the remaining share, the federal government provides 80 per cent, and state and territory governments provide 20 per cent.

The funding must be spent directly on students, staff and operating costs, not on capital works projects e.g. a new building. Government school capital costs are mainly funded by state governments with a small contribution from parents.

What about Capital Funding?

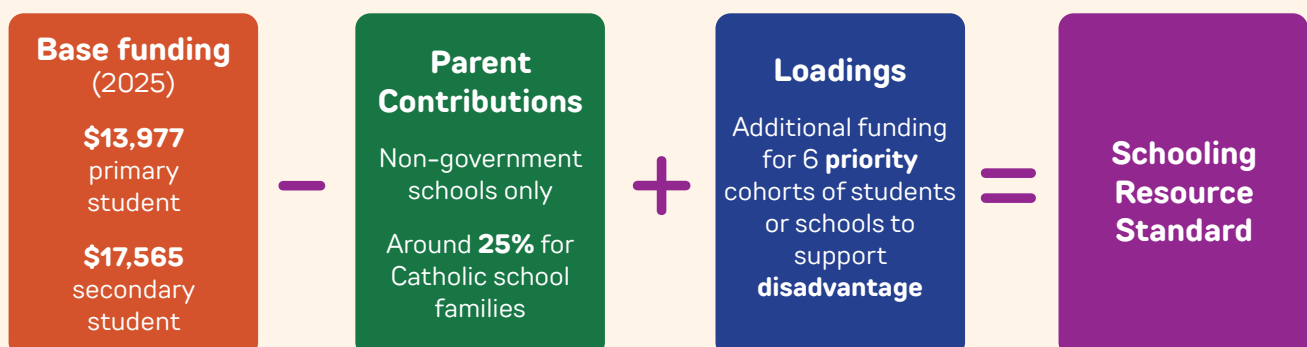
Non-government schools have reduced access to capital and infrastructure funding and rely on private income – loans, parent and private contributions. In 2023, Catholic school families contributed **\$2.37 billion** on capital projects.



How is the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) calculated?

The SRS benchmark establishes the minimum cost – known as ‘**Base Funding**’ – of educating a student. Every student regardless of where they go to school gets the same base funding – **\$13,977** for a primary student and **\$17,565** for a secondary student.

Non-government schools are then means tested to determine how much the parents of students are expected to contribute – known as the ‘**Capacity to Contribute**’ – and government funding is then reduced accordingly. Six priorities then receive additional funding – known as ‘**Loadings**’ – to support students with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, socio-educational disadvantage, low-English proficiency, as well as disadvantage due to school size and school location.



For more information visit www.keepfundingfair.org.au

Dispelling the Myths

THE FACTS ABOUT CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Myth: Catholic schools are overfunded by the federal and state and territory governments.

Non-government schools, including Catholic schools, in Australia receive government funding which significantly reduces the burden on the government education system. Catholic school families are required to contribute 25 per cent of the base funding given to each student.

Catholic schools also fund nearly 90 per cent of their capital works through contributions from families, and generate more than \$17 billion for the Australian economy every year. These financial contributions save billions of dollars for Australian taxpayers, so the idea that non-government schools receive too much funding is not accurate.

Myth: Catholic schools exclude students and staff from diverse backgrounds.

Catholic schools welcome students and staff from all backgrounds and faiths, with many non-Catholic families choosing Catholic Education for its values and strong academic reputation. The system delivers inclusive learning environments and support programs for a growing number of disadvantaged students. Almost 40 per cent of Catholic schools are located in regional, rural and remote areas. In the past decade, Catholic schools have seen a 116 per cent increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Furthermore, students with disability make up 23 per cent of the student population in Catholic schools.

Myth: Catholic schools do not face teacher shortages like government schools.

40 per cent of Catholic schools are located in regional, rural and remote areas. As such, these schools struggle to attract teachers, just like government schools. This has been a particularly concerning trend for several years, and more needs to be done to ensure all schools can attract, incentivise and support educators. For example,

the Commonwealth Teaching Scholarships program unfairly requires recipients to work only in government schools, which is a significant disadvantage for Catholic schools that face the same challenges.

Myth: The Catholic Education sector is declining.

Any suggestion the Catholic Education sector is declining is incorrect. There has been an 8.2 per cent increase in the number of students attending Catholic schools across Australia, over the last decade.

Today, there are 1,751 Catholic schools that educate one in five Australian students. As Australia's population continues to grow, government support for the system remains critical. Catholic Education is focused on supporting more than 820,000 students and 112,000 staff as it offers quality education for a growing community.

Myth: Catholic schools are only for highly educated or wealthy families; they promote exclusivity and elitism; they are not expected to cater to disadvantaged students.

The suggestion that Catholic schools only enrol students because they come from highly educated, and/or wealthy families, is simply false. More than 42 per cent of Catholic school students come from the lowest socio-educational quartiles. Recent research confirms disadvantage is a growing issue for all school sectors* yet Catholic school parents are required to contribute 25 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS), often making significant sacrifices to contribute to their children's education.

All students deserve support, regardless of where they go to school. Rather than fostering division, we should focus on ensuring all schools have the resources needed to help disadvantaged students succeed.

**Source: [Disrupting Disadvantage in Australian Schools](#)*

Authorised by J Collins, National Catholic Education Commission, Level 3, 156 Gloucester Street, Sydney.

www.ncec.catholic.edu.au
www.cspa.catholic.edu.au

