

Independent schools in Australia

Characteristics of the sector include:

- a significant and growing share of the number of Australian students
- schools that have strong community links
- diversity of schools in terms of type, size and focus, educating boys and girls, students with special needs, and overseas students
- sound autonomous governance arrangements
- a comprehensive range of accountabilities of schools to parents and other stakeholders
- giving parents choice by providing a wide range of educational programs and settings
- independent schools are not-for-profit organisations.

Size of independent sector

Number of schools		School type	
Primary	261 25%	Boys' schools	6%
Secondary	88 9%	Girls' schools	8%
Combined	620 61%	Coeducational schools	87%
Special schools	55 5%		
Total	1024 100%	Boarding schools	147

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data does not categorise independent Catholic schools as independent. These schools are a significant part of the independent sector and when included there were a total of 1,099 schools and 526,794 full-time equivalent students in 2008.

Make up of independent schools

Unlike other sectors, the majority of independent schools operate autonomously. These schools do not rely on central bureaucracies or bodies, and are separately accountable to their parent and school communities. Some independent schools with common philosophies operate within systems approved by the Australian Government. These include Anglican, Lutheran and Seventh-Day Adventist Systems. There are also some other groupings of independent schools. All independent schools comply with state and federal education regulations and standards.

Location of independent schools

Metropolitan: 67%	Provincial: 30%	Remote: 3%
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School size

- 14% of schools have less than 50 students
- 42% of schools have less than 200 students
- 42% of schools have 200–1000 students
- 15% of schools have 1000–2000 students
- 1% (12 schools) have more than 2000 students
- the average size of independent schools is about 480 students
- the average size of government schools is about 330 students

Affiliations of independent schools

84% of all independent schools have a religious affiliation

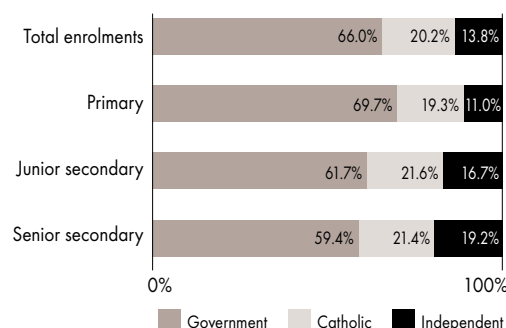
Affiliation	Schools	Student FTE	%
Anglican	154	133,416	25.3%
Non-denominational	187	70,080	13.3%
Christian	132	50,976	9.7%
Catholic	68	49,939	9.5%
Uniting Church in Australia	41	47,459	9.0%
Lutheran	84	34,220	6.5%
Inter-Denominational	26	18,015	3.4%
Islamic	31	16,917	3.2%
Baptist	41	16,713	3.2%
Presbyterian	15	10,743	2.0%
Seventh-Day Adventist	51	10,701	2.0%
Jewish	20	8,982	1.7%
Steiner	43	7,455	1.4%
Pentecostal	19	6,983	1.3%
Assemblies of God	14	6,330	1.2%
Greek Orthodox	8	4,018	0.8%
Montessori	36	3,809	0.7%
Brethren	7	3,587	0.7%
Other Catholic	7	3,488	0.7%
Other Orthodox	6	2,125	0.4%
Other Religious Affiliation*	12	4,760	0.9%
Other**	97	16,917	3.2%

*Other Religious includes Churches of Christ, Ananda Marga, Hare Krishna and Society of Friends.

**Other includes special schools, international schools, Indigenous schools and community schools.

Student enrolments

School enrolments by sector and level, 2008



Enrolments in independent schools, 2008

	Male	Female	Total
Primary	109,453	108,188	217,642
Secondary	127,329	129,235	256,565
Total	236,783	237,424	474,206
Indigenous students in independent schools			8,160
Students with disabilities in independent schools			10,548
Overseas students in independent schools			10,653
Boarding students in independent schools			17,181

Enrolment change by sector, 1970–2008



Independent school teachers

Independent schools employ about 16% of all teachers in Australian schools.

Total number (full-time and part-time)	45,714
FTE (full-time equivalent)	39,366

Teachers in independent schools by gender and level (FTE) 2008

	Primary	%	Secondary	%
Male	3,449	23	11,059	45
Female	11,390	77	13,467	55
Total	14,840	100	24,526	100

Student-teacher ratios, 1973–2008

Year	Government		Non-government		Independent	
	Primary	Secondary	Catholic	Independent	Primary	Secondary
1973	25.1	16.2	29.6	22.2	17.1	14.2
1980	20.2	12.2	23.9	16.6	17.3	13.3
1990	17.9	12.0	21.1	14.0	16.9	12.2
1998	17.7	12.8	19.9	13.7	15.9	11.6
2000	17.1	12.4	19.1	13.4	15.6	11.4
2008	15.6	12.3	17.6	12.8	14.7	10.5

Sources: Figures in **Snapshot** are derived from data provided by the ABS, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA). Depending on the availability of data, enrolment figures are either full-time or full-time equivalent (FTE). Some figures include independent Catholic schools and overseas students. Some figures may not add due to rounding.

Sources of income for independent schools

Private sources of funding (mainly parents)	60%
All government sources	40%

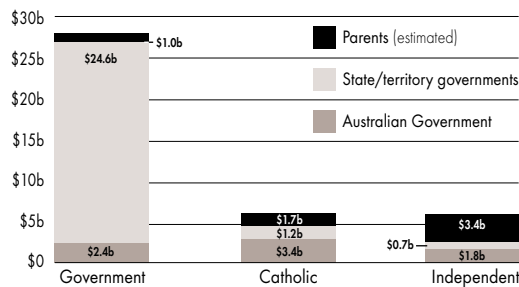
The proportions of private and government funding vary greatly from school to school.

Estimated savings to governments from the independent schools sector	\$2.7 billion pa
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Government funding of independent schools

All state and territory governments and the Australian Government share responsibility for the public funding of schools in Australia. State and territory governments are the principal public funding sources for government schools, while the Australian Government is the main public funding source for non-government schools.

Recurrent funding for school education 2006-07



Average government recurrent funding per student 2006-07

Government schools	\$11,874
Non-government schools	\$6,442
Independent schools	\$5,810

State and territory government funding

Overall, state and territory governments provide 28% of total government recurrent funding for independent schools. However the levels of funding for schools and methods used to assess them vary among the states and territories.

Australian Government schools funding 2009-12

Legislation authorising the Australian Government to maintain the SES funding model for non-government schools over the 2009-12 quadrennium passed Federal Parliament in 2008. Most of the funding is in the form of general recurrent grants.

It also includes funding for capital grants and existing targeted programs, including literacy, numeracy and special learning needs, languages education, ESL new arrivals, country areas and short-term emergency assistance.

Australian Government general recurrent goals

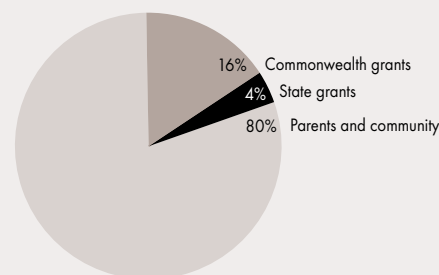
The Average Government School Recurrent Costs (AGSRC) index is used to determine the level of Australian Government recurrent grants for non-government schools. The changes in the recurrent costs of educating a student in a government school, as measured by the AGSRC, are the basis for annual increases in Australian Government funding for both government and non-government schools.

Capital funding

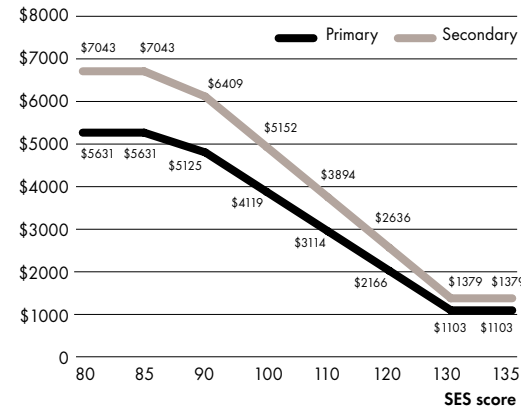
Parents and donors

On average, parents and donors in independent school communities contribute 80% of funds for capital developments such as school buildings, grounds and equipment.

Sources of funding for capital development, 2007



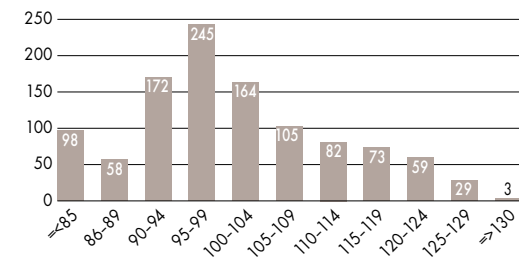
Sliding scale of funding entitlement per student according to SES score



AGSRC amounts for 2008

Primary	\$8,044 (5.6% increase from 2007)
Secondary	\$10,031 (3.5% increase from 2007)

Number of schools within each SES score range 2008



Needs-based funding

The Socio-Economic Status (SES) funding scheme for Australian Government funding measures the relative socio-economic status of independent school communities. A score is derived for each school which places it on a sliding scale of funding entitlement. SES scores range from 63 to over 130.

- Schools with SES scores of 85 and below receive 70% of the AGSRC amount.
- Schools with SES scores of 130 and above receive 13.7% of the AGSRC amount.

Australian Government capital grants allocations 2006-07

All schools	\$424m	
Government schools	\$301m	71%
Non-government schools	\$123m	29%
Estimated independent school share	\$41m	10%

Independent committees called Block Grant Authorities in each state and territory administer capital grants for non-government schools on behalf of the Australian Government.

In the independent sector Australian Government capital grants are distributed on a needs basis, with priority given to disadvantaged school communities with the least capacity to raise funds.

In 2007, 70% of total capital funding available to independent schools went to schools with an SES score of 100 or less, and 89% of grants went to schools with an SES score of 110 or less.

State and territory government assistance

In Queensland some capital grants for independent schools are provided by the state government. Several state and territory governments also provide interest subsidy arrangements.

Note: Funding figures in Snapshot use the latest available data which is for the financial year 2006-07 or for the calendar year 2007.

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