

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
- a 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
- independent schools are not for profit organisations

Size of independent sector

Number of schools	School type
Primary 279 27%	Boys schools 5%
Secondary 105 10%	Girls schools 7%
Combined 612 60%	Coeducational schools 88%
Special schools 29 3%	Boarding schools 147
Total 1025 100%	

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data does not categorise independent Catholic schools as independent. These schools are a significant part of the independent schools sector and when included there were a total of 1,100 schools and 510,989 full-time equivalent students in 2007.

Make up of independent schools

Unlike other school 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 approved systems. These include Anglican, Lutheran and Seventh Day Adventist systems. There are also some other groupings of independent schools. Independent schools comply with state and federal education regulations.

Location of independent schools

Metropolitan: 69%	Provincial: 28%	Remote: 4%
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School size

- 16% of schools have less than 50 students
- 43% of schools have less than 200 students
- 42% of schools have 200–1000 students
- 14% of schools have 1000–2000 students
- 1% (11 schools) have more than 2000 students
- the average size of independent schools is about 465 students
- the average size of government schools is about 332 students

Affiliations of independent schools

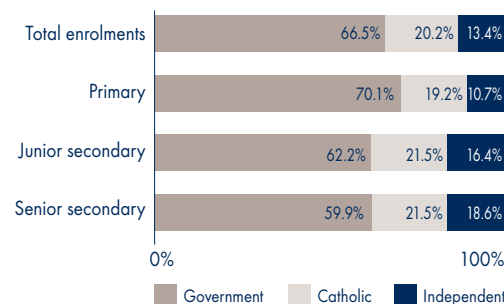
85% of all independent schools have a religious affiliation

Affiliation	Schools	Students	%
Anglican	151	129,763	25.4%
Non-Denominational	196	69,861	13.7%
Catholic	75	53,360	10.4%
Uniting Church in Australia	41	46,796	9.1%
Christian Schools	130	46,004	9.0%
Lutheran	84	32,989	6.4%
Inter-Denominational	23	16,939	3.3%
Baptist	43	16,784	3.3%
Moslem	30	15,938	3.1%
Presbyterian	15	10,602	2.1%
Seventh Day Adventist	56	10,333	2.0%
Jewish	20	8,901	1.7%
Steiner	43	7,367	1.4%
Pentecostal	18	6,786	1.3%
Assemblies of God	15	6,427	1.3%
Greek Orthodox	8	4,075	0.8%
Montessori	36	3,691	0.7%
Brethren	8	3,604	0.7%
Other Catholic	8	3,553	0.7%
Other Orthodox	6	2,024	0.4%
Other Religious Affiliation*	11	4,467	0.9%
Other**	83	11,437	2.2%

*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

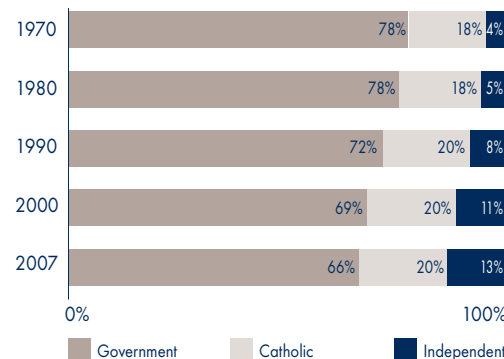
School enrolments by sector and level, 2007



Enrolments in independent schools

	Male	Female	Total
Primary	105,838	104,161	209,999
Secondary	123,170	125,170	248,339
Total	229,008	229,331	458,339
Indigenous students in independent schools	7,446		
Students with disabilities in independent schools	9,961		
Overseas students in independent schools	9,932		
Boarding students in independent schools	16,926		

Enrolment change by sector, 1970–2007



Independent school teachers

Independent schools employ about 15% of all teachers in Australian schools.

Total number (full-time and part-time)	44,083
FTE (full-time equivalent)	37,850

Teachers in independent schools by gender and level (FTE) 2007

	Primary	%	Secondary	%
Male	3,314	23	10,739	46
Female	10,995	77	12,803	54
Total	14,309	100	23,541	100

Student teacher ratios 1973–2007

Year	Government		Non-government	
	Primary	Secondary	Catholic	Independent
1973	25.1	16.2	29.6	22.2
1980	20.2	12.2	23.9	16.6
1990	17.9	12.0	21.1	14.0
1997	17.6	12.9	20.0	13.7
2000	17.1	12.4	19.1	13.4
2007	15.7	12.3	17.8	12.8

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.
For more information visit www.isca.edu.au.



Sources of income for independent schools

Private sources of funding (mainly parents)	59%
All government sources	41%

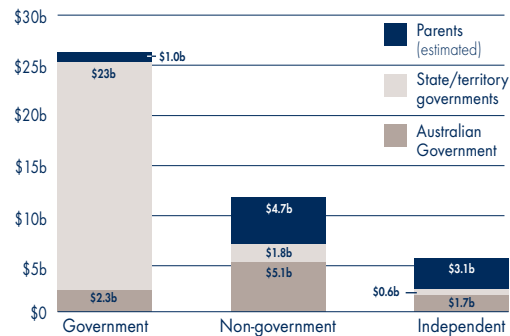
The proportions of private and government funding vary greatly from school to school.

Estimated savings to governments from the independent schools sector	\$2.6 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 2005-06



Average government recurrent funding per student 2005-06

Government schools	\$11,243
Non-government schools	\$6,287
Independent schools	\$5,292

State and territory government funding

Overall, state and territory governments provide 27% of total government recurrent funding for independent schools. However the levels of funding for schools and methods used to assess them vary between states and territories.

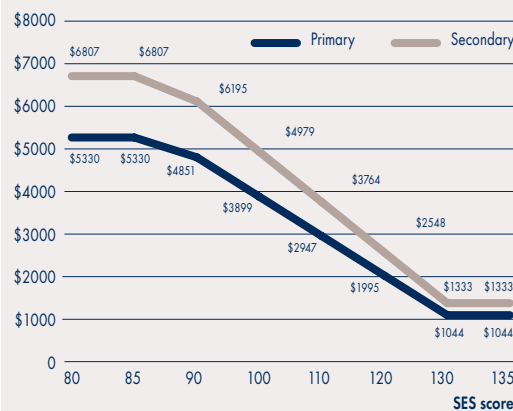
Australian Government schools funding 2005-08

Legislation authorising Australian Government funding of all schools for 2005-08 passed federal parliament in 2004 and expires in December 2008. Most of this funding is in the form of general recurrent grants.

Australian Government schools funding 2009-12

The Australian Government remains committed to continued stability by retaining the Socio-Economic Status (SES) funding model for non-government schools into the 2009-12 quadrennium. The Australian Government has also stated that no student will be eligible for less funding.

Sliding scale of funding entitlement per student according to SES score



Australian Government recurrent funding

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.

AGSRC amounts for 2007

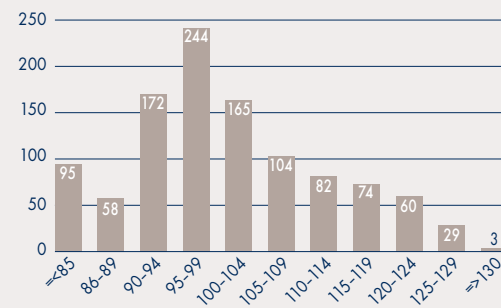
Primary	\$7,614 (5.5% increase from 2006)
Secondary	\$9,724 (4.3% increase from 2006)

Needs-based funding

The 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 for independent schools currently range from 63 to over 130. Schools with:

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

Number of schools within each SES score range 2007



Capital funding

Parents and donors

On average, parents and donors in independent school communities contribute 82% of funds for capital developments such as school buildings, grounds and equipment.

Australian Government capital grants allocations 2005-06

All schools	\$402m	
Government schools	\$285m	71%
Non-government schools	\$117m	29%
Estimated independent school share	\$42m	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.

Investing in our schools

In 2005 the Australian Government introduced a program for funding small capital projects in all school sectors of which \$100 million was available to the independent schools sector for the period 2005-08.

State and territory government assistance

Some capital grants for independent schools in Queensland are provided by the state government, and several state and territory governments provide interest subsidy arrangements.

New initiatives

The new Australian Government has introduced and begun implementing two funding programs. Independent schools are able to apply for the National Secondary School Computer Fund which funds the purchasing or upgrading of ICT infrastructure for students in years 9-12. Similarly, independent secondary schools are also eligible to apply for the Trade Training Centres in Schools Program.

