

4 February 2020

New Report Dispels Funding Myths with Clear Facts

About 76% of total public funding for school education in Queensland is spent on state schools with the remaining 24% shared between Catholic and independent schools, the latest comprehensive report on government services reveals.

Independent Schools Queensland Executive Director David Robertson said the Productivity Commission's 2020 report on government expenditure on school education clearly showed the lion's share of taxpayer funds was spent on students in state schools in Queensland.

"The comprehensive annual tally of state and federal government recurrent expenditure on schooling revealed the Queensland and Australian Governments spent \$9.9 billion on state schools and \$3.1 billion on non-state schools in Queensland in 2017-18," Mr Robertson said.

"The majority of public funding for state schools is provided by the Queensland Government (84%). In the non-state school sector, the majority of public funding comes from the Australian Government (74%)," he said.

"When this recurrent funding is broken down by student, governments spent a total of \$18,071 on each full-time equivalent state school student in 2017-18 – this was about \$6,300 more than the contribution per non-state school student at \$11,758. That's a significant saving to governments and taxpayers.

"If the parents of the 268,000 children who attended Queensland independent and Catholic schools in 2018 had enrolled their children in state schools, the additional annual recurrent cost to governments would have been \$1.7 billion. This doesn't include the significant additional building costs that would be needed to accommodate these students."

Mr Robertson said despite the Australian Government being the primary funder of non-state schools, government schools had benefited from a greater increase in federal funding over the past four years of the "Gonski" funding model.

"The report shows that Australian Government funding per Queensland state school student rose 41% between 2013-14 and 2017-18, compared with 18% per non-state school student," he said.

Mr Robertson said Queensland independent schools served families from all income levels as well as increased numbers of disengaged and at-risk students, Indigenous students and students with disability.

"These students appropriately attract increased levels of public funding to ensure they have the same access to education and learning opportunities as other children."

Mr Robertson said all children, regardless of which school they attend, deserve a level of government investment in their future.

"In the independent sector, parents remain the single biggest financial contributors to their child's education meeting about 50 percent of the costs. Many parents will sacrifice other areas of their lives to give their child an education which aligns with their values and beliefs and that they believe will bring out the best in their child."

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