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All Schools Need Funding

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The headline figures from the latest Productivity Commission 2020 report on government services for school education (C-M, Feb 4) are clear and simple – the Australian and Queensland governments together spent \$9.9 billion on state schools in 2017-18 and \$3.1 billion on independent and Catholic schools.

Total government funding per state school student in Queensland was in the order of \$6,300 more than for each non-state school student.

What's more, Australian Government expenditure per state school student in Queensland – which has been the subject of numerous nationwide campaigns – rose by 41 percent between 2013-14 and 2017-18. This compared with 18 percent per non-state school student.

Often ignored in school funding debates is that the Queensland independent schooling sector is enrolling higher numbers of disadvantaged students, including at-risk and disengaged students, indigenous students and students with disability. Appropriately these students attract higher levels of government funding to support their education.

The “quiet Australians” also overlooked or paid lip service in school funding commentary, are the parents of independent school students who fund about 50 percent of the cost of their child's education – some at significant personal sacrifice.

By forgoing a free public education, parents of children in Queensland independent and Catholic schools are saving their fellow taxpayers and governments in the order of \$1.7 billion a year.

The bottom line is all children, regardless of which school their taxpaying parents choose, deserve a level of public investment in their education future – government policy determines how much.

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