

MEDIA RELEASE



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Funding Loopholes Need To Go – But Let's Also Compare Apples with Apples

Recent media coverage again reinforces that States and Territories need to take responsibility for funding their government schools – but also inadvertently perpetuates misunderstanding of non-government school funding.

The story yesterday in The Age and Sydney Morning Herald, [*The accounting tricks shortchanging public schools billions of dollars every year*](#), once again highlights how States and the Northern Territory governments are being allowed to underfund students in government schools. Research in the article back up Education Department data¹ from last year indicated that the Commonwealth Government was contributing their agreed share of the School Resource Standard (SRS) funding to schools, with **funding from States and Territories lagging**. The data indicated that:

- only ACT, SA and WA will be funding their government schools at or above 75% of the SRS by 2023
- NSW and Tasmania have committed to reach 75% by 2027,
- Victoria has committed to reach 75% by 2028,
- Queensland is projected to reach 75% by 2032
- Northern Territory has no commitment to reach 75% and is currently estimated to fund their schools at just 59% of the SRS.

Under the current funding model, States and Territories are responsible for funding 80% of the needs of government schools.

However, directly comparing the SRS funding between government and non-government schools is misleading. The base funding amount for a student in a non-government school is discounted by the 'capacity to contribute' of school parents, it is 'means-tested' unlike government schools.

"The calculated SRS funding for a non-government school will be less than that applicable to a government school with an identical student composition", said Mark Spencer, Director of Public Policy for Christian Schools Australia.

"Saying that a non-government school is funded at 100% of its SRS is still saying that it receives less funding than those students would receive in a government school", he noted.

"The Gonski funding model ensures that student needs are front and centre", Mr Spencer said, "and the Commonwealth government is clearly paying its fair share".

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About Christian Schools Australia

Christian Schools Australia (CSA) is the largest association of Christian schools in the country and has member schools educating over 77,000 students and employing more than 12,000 staff at more than 180 locations across Australia. CSA member schools provide high quality education within an authentic Christian learning community.



“Questions need to be asked about why States and Territories are not committed to properly funding government schools.”

“Christian schools want to ensure that **all students are properly funded**, including students in government schools.”

“All students in Australia deserve a **high-quality education**”, he said, “but we need to be **clear on where the problems lie** and not be confused by funding comparisons that are simply not valid”.

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ⁱ Department of Education, *Senate Estimates Briefs, Briefs prepared for the Senate Estimates hearing conducted in November 2022*, released 27 April 2023, available here: <https://www.education.gov.au/download/16339/senate-estimates-briefs/32625/document/pdf>, p 186.