

SAVE OUR SCHOOLS

Education Research Brief

The Facts About School Funding in Tasmania

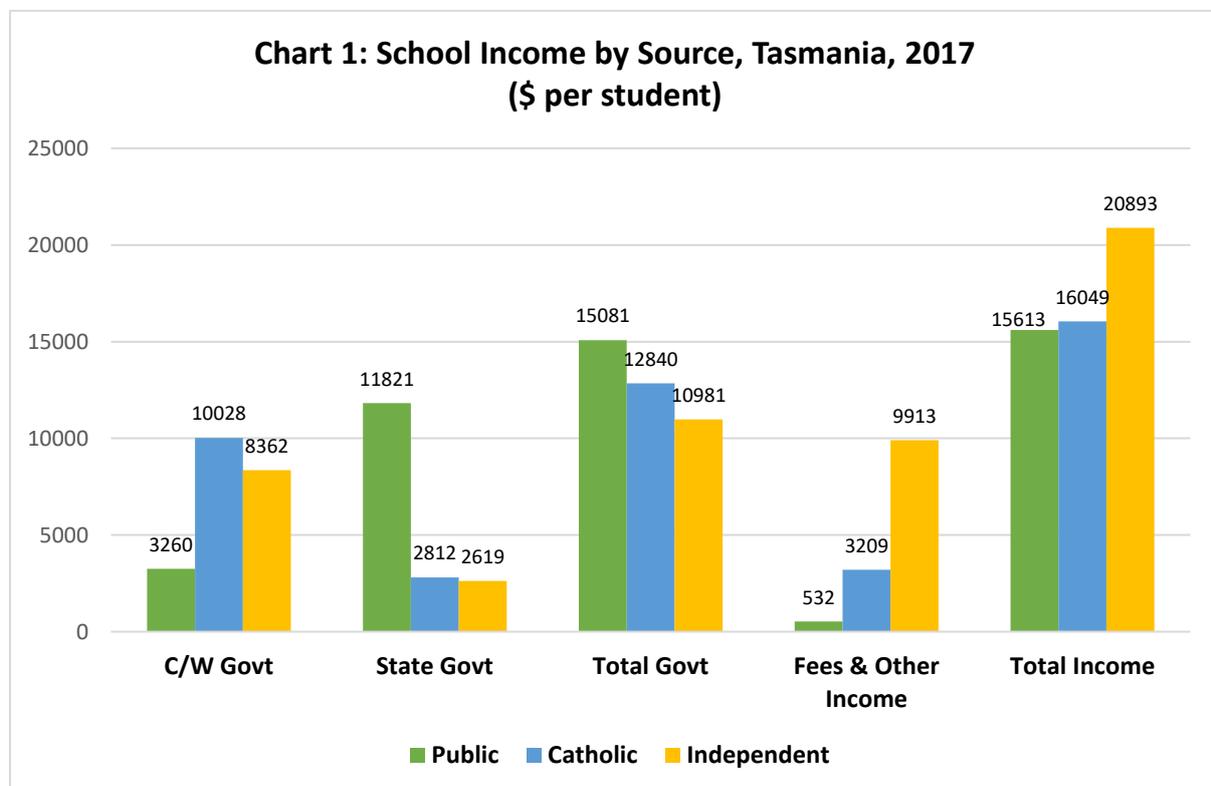
Total government funding per student in Tasmanian private schools adjusted for inflation (“real funding”) increased by about seven times that for public schools between 2009 and 2017. Even during the Gonski funding period of 2013-2017 the funding increase for private schools was about 50% more than that for public schools.

The Tasmanian Government cut real funding by \$598 (-6.3%) per student between 2009 and 2013. It increased real funding significantly in the Gonski period of 2013 to 2017 by \$465 per student, but not sufficiently to offset the earlier cut. As a result, public schools had far fewer human and material resources per student in 2017 than in 2009 and far less than available in Independent private schools and a little less than in Catholic schools.

Overall, government funding increases have been badly mis-directed in favouring the more privileged, better-off school sectors and students. About 85% of disadvantaged students in Tasmania are in public schools and 96% of disadvantaged schools are public schools.

Total income of schools 2017

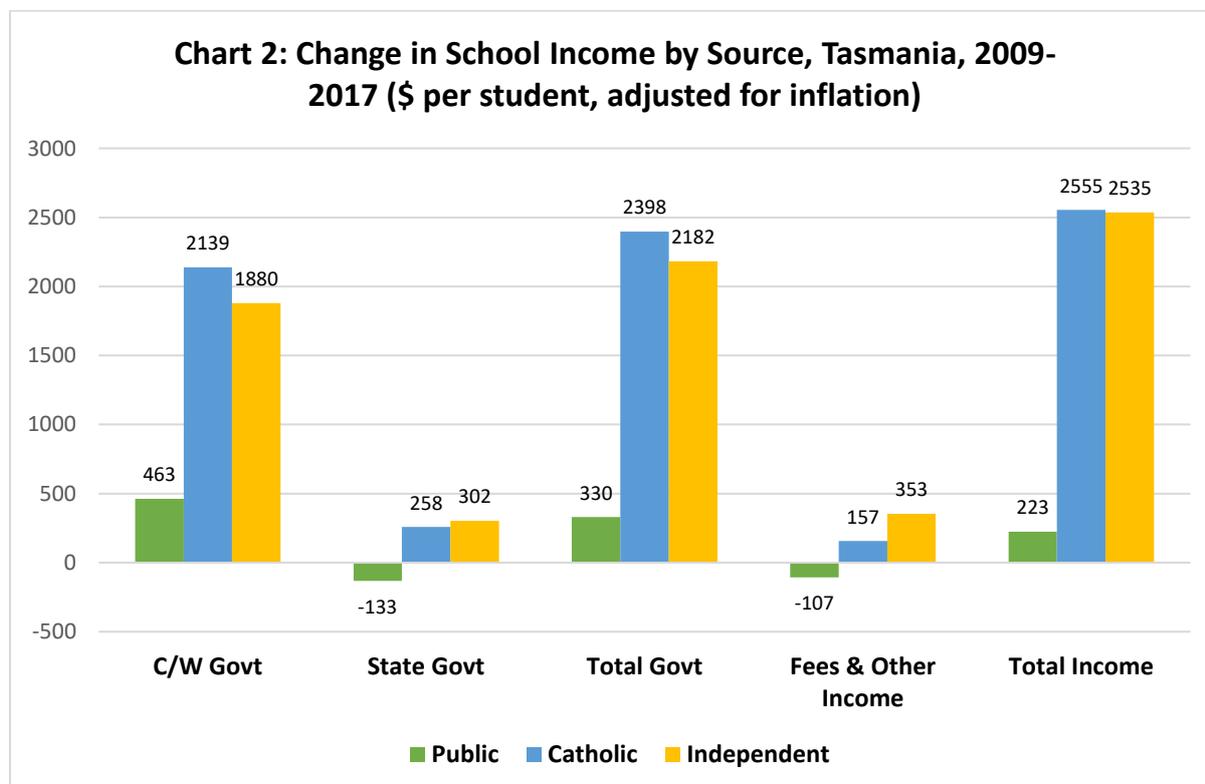
- The total income per student of Tasmanian Independent schools was 25% more than in public schools in 2017 while that of Catholic schools was 3% higher. The total income of public schools was \$15,613 compared to \$20,893 in Independent schools and \$16,049 in Catholic schools [Chart 1].



Source: ACARA, [National Report on Schooling data portal](#).

Funding 2009 to 2017

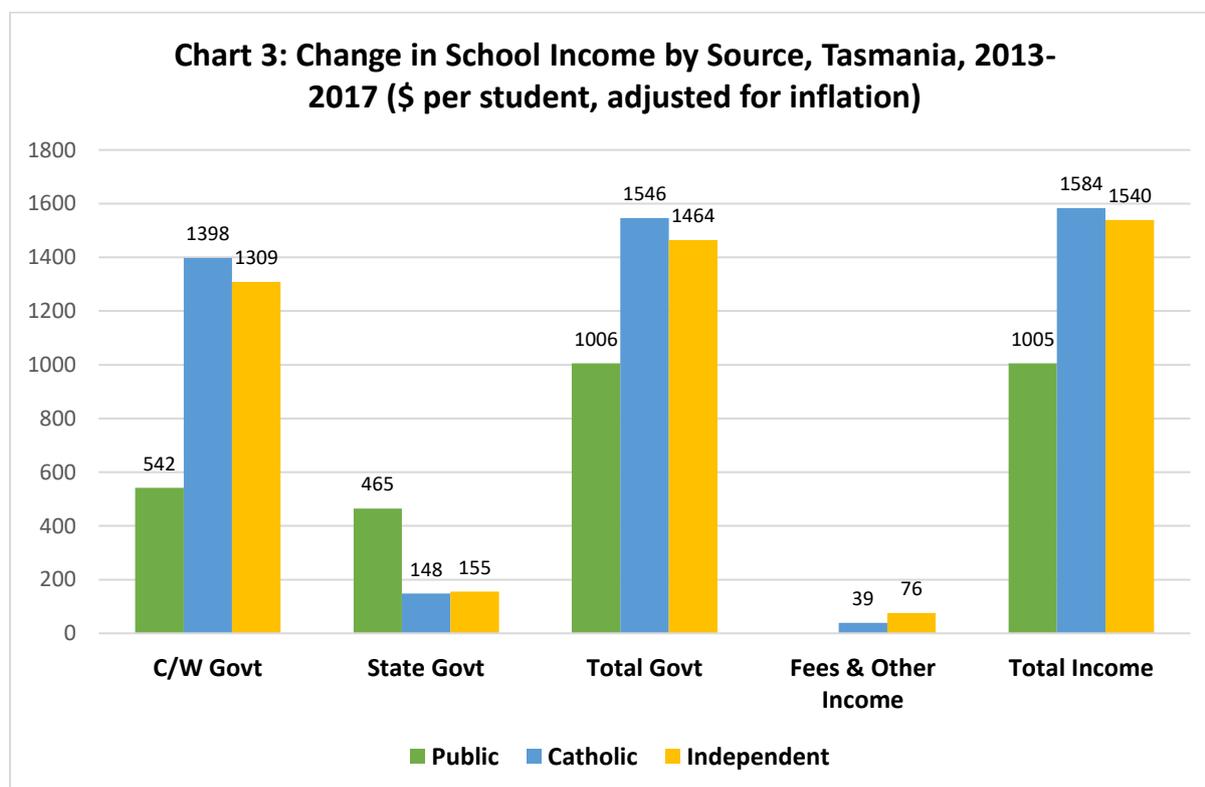
- The income disparity between public and private schools has widened substantially since 2009. The total real income of Catholic and Independent schools increased by 11 times that of public schools. Total real income per student in public schools increased by \$223 (1.8%) per student but increased by \$2,555 (25%) in Catholic schools and by \$2,535 (18%) for Independent schools [Chart 2].
- The increased income disparity between public and private schools was mainly due to much larger Commonwealth funding increases for private schools than for public schools, reduced funding of public schools by the Tasmanian Government while increasing funding for private schools and fee increases in private schools [Chart 2].
 - Real government funding for public schools increased by \$330 (2.9%) per student while funding for Catholic schools increased by \$2,398 (30.7%) per student and for Independent schools by \$2,182 (33.3%).
 - The Commonwealth increased real funding for Catholic schools by \$2,193 (36.7%) per student and by \$1,880 (39.4%) for Independent schools compared to \$463 (22.1%) for public schools.
 - The Tasmanian Government cut real funding for public schools by \$133 (-1.4%) per student while increasing its funding of Catholic and Independent schools - \$258 (13.1%) and \$302 (17%) respectively.
 - Private schools also increased fees and other income by more than cost increases. After allowing for inflation, Catholic schools increased fees and other income by \$157 (6.6%) per student and Independent schools by \$353 (4.7%).



Sources: ACARA, [National Report on Schooling data portal](#). Adjusted for inflation by combined index of ABS Wage Price Index for private and public education and training and ABS Consumer Price Index.

Funding 2013 to 2017

- The income disparity between public and private schools also widened since the introduction of the Gonski funding plan in 2014. Total income per student in public schools increased by \$1,005 (8.9%) compared to \$1,584 (14.2%) in Catholic schools and \$1,540 (10.2%) in Independent schools [Chart 3].
- The increased disparity in this period was mainly due to much larger Commonwealth funding increases for private schools than for public schools.
 - Real government funding per student in Catholic and Independent schools increased by about 20 times that in public schools - \$29 (0.3%) in public schools compared to \$530 (6.4%) in Catholic schools and \$664 (9.6%) in Independent schools.
 - The Commonwealth increased real funding for Catholic schools by \$1,398 (7.1%) per student and \$1,309 (10.6%) for Independent schools compared to \$542 (9.6%) in public schools.
 - The Tasmanian Government increased real funding for public schools by more than for private schools, but it was not sufficient to offset the much larger Commonwealth increase for private schools. The Tasmanian Government increased funding for public schools by \$465 (5.3%) per student compared to \$148 (7.1%) for Catholic schools and \$155 (8%) for Independent schools.



Sources: ACARA, [National Report on Schooling data portal](#). Adjusted for inflation by combined index of ABS Wage Price Index for private and public education and training and ABS Consumer Price Index.

Tasmanian public schools will remain under-funded indefinitely while private schools will continue to be over-funded

- Under the new Commonwealth/Tasmanian funding agreement Tasmanian public schools will only ever be funded at 91% of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) at best while private schools will continue to be funded at over 100%.
 - Under the agreement, the Commonwealth will increase its funding of public schools from 19.3% of the SRS in 2018 to 20% by 2023 while the Tasmanian Government will increase its

current share from 72.9% to 75% by 2027. However, an accounting trick in the agreement allows the Tasmanian Government to claim other non-school based expenditure up to 4% of the SRS towards its commitment. This means it can effectively reduce its current funding to 71% of the SRS. Consequently, Tasmanian public schools will only ever be funded at 91% of their SRS. The cumulative under-funding to 2027 will amount to about \$1.2 billion.

- The Commonwealth has guaranteed that Tasmanian private schools will be funded at 80% of their SRS by 2023 (they are currently funded at 76%). They are also funded at 21% of their SRS by the Tasmanian Government and is due to decrease to 20% by 2023. Thus, Tasmanian private schools will be fully funded at 100% of their SRS by 2023.
- In addition, Tasmanian private schools will receive an additional \$62 million under the funding arrangements announced by the Morrison Government last year to apply over ten years from 2020. It will ensure that Tasmanian private schools are over-funded in the future.
- Catholic and Independent schools can continue to supplement their large increases in government funding with increases in income from fees, charges and donations in excess of rising costs to extend their resource advantage over public schools in the future.

Policy direction

- There is no prospect that the new Morrison Government will fund public schools beyond 20% of their SRS. The immediate priority is to pressure the Tasmanian Government to commit to funding public schools at 80% of the SRS by 2023 and to ensure that it reduces its over-funding of private schools.
- Public education organisations must to continue to advocate for a nationally integrated funding model directed at reducing disadvantage in education, ending special deals and over-funding of private schools, and boosting funding for public schools.

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