

Australian Council of State School Organisations Limited

One voice for every child in government education



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Private Schools profiteer once again, this time from JobKeeper *FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

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“At a time when government schools continue to struggle, the Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) is appalled at reports that very wealthy private schools have grabbed millions of dollars in JobKeeper payments”* stated Mrs Sharron Healy, President, Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO).

Recent disclosure of profiteering from JobKeeper payments by large businesses has been condemned by many in our community. As it should.

“Over the past 18 months government schools have reached into their already stretched funds to provide devices and internet access to so many students to facilitate *learning from home*. It is outrageous to see so many wealthy private schools taking advantage of the pandemic to add to their already huge coffers,” said Mrs Healy.

JobKeeper was set up to allow businesses and other organisations to keep employing staff if facing big decreases in income due to COVID.

“The huge assets of these wealthy schools, together with their financial investments and generous government funding, could easily have covered the costs of retaining their staff and support the loss of fees from international students,” continued Mrs Healy.

JobKeeper support was intended to assist with overall income losses, not exclusively prop up one part of a business.

“To add further insult, many of these schools also received special COVID cash flow stimulus payments of \$100,000, a payment unavailable to government schools,” said Mrs Healy.

In the last ten years, funding for Independent schools has increased by \$1893 per student, in Catholic schools \$1919 per student, compared to just \$469 per student in government schools. This has led to greater inequity in education, amplified by recent extended lockdowns and remote learning in our eastern states.

“Particularly in light of the current circumstances, we want further examination of the distribution of Federal funding for students in schools from taxpayers’ funds. There needs to be a substantial injection of funds into our government schools. Most importantly, there

needs to be the repayment of JobKeeper funds paid to wealthy private schools immediately.” concluded Mrs Healy.

Enquiries

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*This has been outlined in a report from Trevor Cobbold from Save our Schools. The figures were provided to a Senate Enquiry by the Australian Taxation Office.

Despite few schools relying heavily on student boarding fees, they claimed losses in income from boarders to justify JobKeeper payments. Boarding fee income at Brisbane Grammar had a reduction of \$400,000 yet received massive JobKeeper payments of \$3.2 million. Only 8% of the income at Ballarat Grammar came from its boarding fees in 2020. But a reduction in boarding fee income of \$400,000 was more than compensated for by JobKeeper payments of \$5.9 million.