

SAVE OUR SCHOOLS

Education Policy Comment

NSW Private Schools Profited Millions from Jobkeeper

Thirty-three NSW private schools raked in \$72 million in JobKeeper payments in 2020 while making profits of \$72 million. Every school made a profit with JobKeeper and all except two increased their profits over the previous year. Some of the state's most privileged schools got four to eight million and made millions in profits. Just ten schools got \$46.5 million and made \$44 million in profits.

The King's School topped the list of JobKeeper payments with about \$8.5 million. The school refuses to disclose exactly how much it received but according to its annual report lodged with the [Charities Commission](#) the payment is included in the item "other income" which increased by \$8.6 million in 2020. It made a profit of \$8.3 million. It also got \$12.8 million in recurrent government funding.

King's charges \$40,000 for Year 12 fees. Sixty-nine per cent of its students are from the highest socio-educationally advantaged (SEA) quartile and 93 per cent are from the two highest quartiles. It has assets valued at \$183 million.

Next on the list of top JobKeeper payments was Moriah College. It got \$6.7 million and made a massive profit of \$11.9 million. It also got \$9.4 million in government funding. Sixty-three per cent of its students are from the top SEA quartile and 89 per cent are from the top two quartiles. According to its annual report on the [school website](#), it has assets of nearly \$100 million.

St. Joseph's College got \$6.7 million from JobKeeper and made a profit of \$1.1 million. It also got \$9.7 million in government funding in 2020. Fifty-six per cent of its students are from the top SEA quartile and 85 per cent are from the top two quartiles. It has assets of nearly \$130 million.

Other highly privileged schools also received millions in JobKeeper payments (see table below). For example, Kinross Wolaroi School in Orange got \$4.9 million and made a profit of \$4.5 million; Lindisfarne Anglican School got \$3.9 million and made a profit of \$6.4 million; The Armidale School got \$3.6 million and made a profit of \$2 million; Emanuel School got \$3.4 million and made a profit of \$3.1 million; Masada College got \$2.7 million and made a profit of \$1.4 million.

These schools also serve highly privileged families. Around 50 to 80 per cent of their students are from the top SEA quartile and 80 to nearly 100 per cent are from the top two SEA quartiles. The profits made courtesy of JobKeeper enable these schools to increase their resources and expand their facilities for their privileged students.

JobKeeper has proved to be a gravy train for many NSW private schools. Each of the 33 schools made a profit with the help of JobKeeper and 31 increased their profit over that in 2019. Moriah College increased its profit by a massive \$10.7 million. None needed JobKeeper to stay afloat. Most had very secure financial cushions to weather downturns in revenue courtesy of their high fees and multi-million dollar assets.

The greed of these highly privileged schools is obscene. They grasp any opportunity to get their snouts in the taxpayer trough. Yet, they see themselves as having superior moral values that are central to their elitist culture. For example, The King's School prides itself for developing leadership skills and says it is "committed to the development of good character and those values that are consistent with a caring, Christian community". Moriah College says it promotes "Australian values

and good citizenship". St Joseph's College says that it challenges its students to become "knowledgeable and compassionate leaders for the common good".

If they lived up to their stated values and had any common decency, they would give the money back as some firms have done. As Senator Rex Patrick said:

To take the money without being affected is to abuse the goodwill of the taxpayer and to deny taxpayers other much needed services in areas such as healthcare, aged care and, indeed, education. [*Herald-Sun*, 14 November 2021]

Questions remain about whether other NSW private schools also received JobKeeper because their financial statements lodged with the Charities Commission are vague about the source of some increases in income. For example, Unity Grammar received an increase in other government subsidies of over 1000 per cent worth \$2.1 million and which helped it make a profit of \$2.6 million compared to \$0.7 million in 2019. St. Scholastica's College received an increase in government funding of \$4.5 million which helped it make a profit of \$8.5 million, up from \$4.7 million in 2019. Oxford Falls Grammar had an unexplained 365 per cent increase in "other income" of \$2.8 million which helped it make a profit of \$3.9 million.

The Morrison Government has readily resorted to prosecuting ordinary people that may have got over payments of a few thousand dollars from Centrelink. It has been unforgiving in pursuing them at length and rigorously. But if you're a wealthy, private school, you get away with massive over-payments. It is a glaring double standard that favours the wealthy and hammers the poor.

JobKeeper was just another opportunity for the Morrison Government to provide even more special funding for private schools. It is icing on the cake of a huge funding boost for private schools through a [highly flawed method](#) of determining their financial need and by special funding deals not based on need such as the \$1.2 billion [Choice and Accountability Fund](#)..

NSW private schools have been [showered with funds](#) by the Commonwealth and NSW governments over the past decade while public schools have been denied adequate funding. Government (Commonwealth and state) funding for private schools increased by much more than for public schools between 2009 and 2019. Government funding for Catholic and Independent schools increased by \$1,636 and \$1,664 per student respectively, adjusted for inflation, compared to only \$1,095 per student for public schools.

The total resources of NSW private schools far exceed those of public schools. The total income of Independent schools was \$25,368 per student in 2019 and that of Catholic schools was \$16,058 compared to \$15,881 in public schools. Wealthy private schools seized on JobKeeper with the connivance of the Commonwealth Government to extend their massive resource advantage.

The Catholic Archbishop of Sydney, Anthony Fisher, has conceded that Catholic schools have "[never had it so good](#)" in terms of funding. The same can be said of Independent private schools.

The resource advantage of private schools is set to continue for the rest of the decade under the terms of the [Commonwealth-State bilateral funding agreements](#). NSW private schools were funded at 103 per cent of their Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) in 2021 while public schools were funded at 87 per cent of their SRS. Private schools will be funded at over 100 per cent of their SRS until 2029 while public schools will be funded at only 91 per cent of their SRS. As a result, public schools will remain massively under-funded while private schools continue to be over-funded.

JobKeeper for wealthy private schools has compounded the vast inequality in school funding in Australia. Their ruthless pursuit of greed must be ended by thorough-going reform of school funding to ensure it is solely based on need.

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JobKeeper Payments to NSW Private Schools, 2020

School	JobKeeper	Profit	Change in Profit 2019-20	Total Govt Recurrent Funding	Total Assets	Students in Top SEA Quartile	Students in Top 2 SEA Quartiles
						%	%
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$		
King's School	8,626,005	8,329,041	1,431,838	12,845,015	182,691,288	69	93
Moriah College	6,701,950	11,940,194	12,355,874	9,417,719	93,203,185	63	89
St Joseph's College	6,681,000	1,124,893	- 344,733	9,738,933	127,757,513	56	85
Kinross Wolaroi	4,949,000	4,539,827	5,283,603	11,417,781	79,643,275	52	83
Amity College	4,860,500	6,547,473	5,311,357	25,930,488	71,648,163	41	74
Lindisfarne Anglican School	3,892,000	6,383,671	6,320,506	17,333,061	38,086,425	51	84
Calrossy Anglican School	3,871,000	3,600,037	2,947,405	12,360,778	42,398,866	37	81
Armidale School	3,562,000	1,957,725	840,603	7,279,403	48,755,417	47	79
Emanuel School	3,360,400	3,111,608	783,616	5,094,738	53,540,610	80	96
St Columba Anglican School	3,172,000	3,723,310	2,768,289	15,436,650	55,700,342	47	80
Masada College	2,746,750	1,378,087	1,815,640	2,971,993	17,605,147	67	94
Moama Grammar	2,050,000	1,559,341	1,587,470	9,365,256	19,381,246	30	69
Glenaeon Steiner School	1,963,000	1,480,588	1,444,708	2,450,915	28,642,835	64	93
Kesser Torah College	1,944,600	2,618,215	2,810,858	4,769,634	17,175,683	41	72
St Paul's International College	1,498,750	134,699	716,442	504,509	13,111,959	na	na
Inner Sydney Montessori	1,166,632	663,700	1,054,481	1,602,281	13,175,079	80	98
Snowy Mountains Grammar	1,148,500	3,466,831	2,704,977	4,643,434	21,255,014	46	80
Northside Montessori	1,111,232	710,772	297,137	1,341,929	14,717,794	69	96
Mumbulla Steiner School	944,500	848,871	818,915	2,419,927	6,151,877	37	70
Irfan College	880,000	167,894	649,163	4,815,373	5,235,016	na	na
Christadelphian Heritage College	844,316	1,723,744	1,586,383	3,555,065	7,946,185	10	40
Mount Sinai College	794,500	2,078,070	1,115,782	2,711,480	28,354,941	66	91
Elonera Montessori	748,000	876,704	- 17,505	1,627,912	7,516,356	60	88
Chrysalis Steiner School	746,716	681,754	956,464	3,094,882	2,946,638	37	72
Newcastle Waldorf School	697,000	884,323	747,905	2,747,471	5,611,507	34	70
Sydney Montessori	608,500	1,643,549	587,278	1,861,598	5,651,737	35	75
Pal Buddhist School	514,000	1,165,744	420,726	1,756,334	5,341,791	13	35
Penrith Christian School	499,200	571,631	388,201	10,545,042	6,958,650	20	52
Manly Warringah Montessori	499,000	485,589	431,968	907,356	2,642,670	85	99
Central Coast Montessori	340,000	113,199	232,210	556,298	432,911	48	93
Tallowood Steiner School	295,000	274,693	49,428	1,069,308	1,654,443	17	49
Nature School	214,500	378,484	78,375	991,862	1,100,808	31	72
Alpine School	158,384	383,777	239,488	839,980	603,749	na	na
Total	72,088,935	75,548,038	58,414,852	194,004,405	1,026,639,120		

Source: Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission.

Notes:

1. JobKeeper for King's School is estimated as increase in Other Income for 2020.
2. SEA: Socio-Educational Advantage. Figures are for 2019 and derived from My School.