

A fractured nation, broken funding

Hello, friends.

Our nation remains fractured, not only by COVID-19, but also by the financial capacities of our communities. It is unfair that our nation is still unable to identify our most needy and provide greater support.

Community engagement and financial support is at an all-time low in schools because fetes, BBQs, and other events cannot be safely run - yet the funds are needed more than ever.

This fundraising is essential for many schools, yet there is limited support today. These aren't professional fundraisers, these are volunteers working for positive outcomes to provide the best schooling experiences possible.

Adversity increases government school enrolments

And so we see non-government school businesses unable to adequately maintain their high levels of incumbent funding requirements, which leads some of those families to transition to government schools.

This is not only because of financial stress, but more importantly because the government school sector maintains a high standard. Some voices will say that the government schools cannot support the increased enrolments, and ACSSO says they can... but would have been in a much better position if funded appropriately.

Overfunding continues to support exclusion

ACSSO continues its call for the federal government to stop overfunding non-government schools and to properly fund our government schools.

The claim is that non-government schools must be funded to provide 'choices' for taxpayers. But with the additional fees set by non-government schools, despite high public funding, they are no choice at all for many families. The funding becomes means of social and economic exclusion and reinforcement of privilege. What's actually being funded is lack of choice.

Remember: Federal funding is split between 80% for non-government and 20% for government schools. There is no way to justify this inequity.

Alert to risks

Many in our nation were anticipating the end of our restrictions, yet as we stare down Term 3, we think of our Melbourne and Sydney communities. Indeed, as I prepare to send my children to school this week, I am completely mindful of the risks in my area, but more so of these currently exposed regions.

It is again a stark reminder that our schools must be adequately cleaned and protected to ensure the safety of our children and school staff. This is a clear reminder of the hidden workers at our schools, the cleaning staff. ACSSO recognises the vitally important jobs they perform to keep our schools safe.

We must celebrate what's great

There has been no better time to identify school community leaders, be it staff or volunteers. ACSSO celebrates great community supporters, and with our ongoing CYBG (Caught You Being Great) campaign, ACSSO welcomes all submissions, year around, to let us who you think has been of absolute value in your community.

There are no restrictions on who can be celebrated, send us an [email](#) about anyone who you see helping and providing support above and beyond expectations.

Please look after yourself, and others in your community.

Andrew Bidwell

Chair

Australian Council of State School Organisations

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