



Myths and Facts about Non-Government School Funding in the ACT

The Association of Parents and Friends of ACT Schools (APFACTS) and non-government schools are currently engaged in a concerted campaign of mis-information to convince government and the community that they are inequitably funded in comparison with government schools. Their case for increased funding is littered with false claims, misleading evidence and obfuscation. The campaign is based on several myths. Key facts are ignored or distorted:

MYTHS	FACTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most non-government schools are less well-resourced than government schools. • There is a growing imbalance and inequity in the funding of government and non-government schools. • The costs of schooling are being shifted further on to non-government school communities. • Students with disabilities receive less funding in non-government than in government schools. • The Interest Subsidy Scheme (ISS) provides equitable and needs based support for non-government schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent schools are vastly better resourced than Catholic and government schools. • Government schools are under-resourced for their social purpose compared to non-government schools. • Government funding for non-government schools has increased twice as fast as government school funding. • Taxpayers have contributed an increased share of non-government school funding. • Non-government schools are better resourced to support students with disabilities than government schools. • The ISS has supported the wealthiest schools in Canberra to obtain gold-plated facilities.

ACTION:

If you are concerned about the APFACTS campaign of mis-information about school funding, it is important to write to the Minister for Education and the Chief Minister to give them your view.



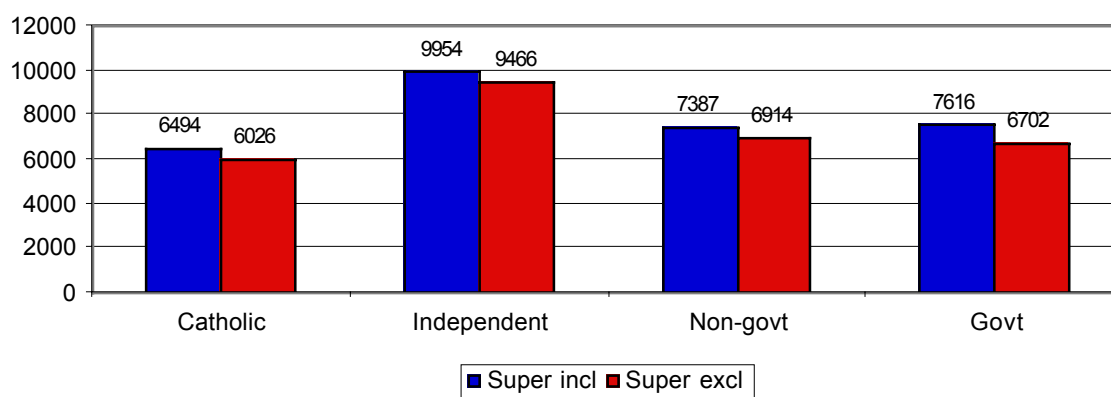
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FACT 1: Independent schools are vastly better resourced than Catholic and government schools

Total funding from all sources for Independent schools is over 50 per cent more than for Catholic and over 30 per cent more than for government schools. Average total funding per student in ACT Independent schools was \$9954 in 2001 compared to \$6494 in Catholic schools and \$7616 for government schools.

If superannuation costs are excluded, Independent schools have an advantage of nearly 60 per cent over Catholic schools and more than 40 per cent over government schools. Total funding provided to all non-government schools is over \$200 per student more than government school funding.

Figure 1: ACT school funding from all sources by sector, 2001 (\$ per student)



FACT 2: Government schools are under-resourced for their social purpose compared to non-government schools

Government schools have higher costs and greater levels of need than non-government schools because they have public obligations that do not apply to non-government schools. They enrol all comers, they provide access to a local school for all students and they have a higher proportion of students in the higher cost Years 11 and 12.

Government school enrolments have a much higher proportion of students from the lowest socio-economic status groups than Independent and Catholic schools. Students with disabilities comprise nearly 4 per cent of government school enrolments compared to 1 per cent of non-government school enrolments. Indigenous students comprise over 2 per cent of government enrolments compared to less than 1 per cent in non-government schools.

Outcomes for these students tend to be lower on average than students from more privileged backgrounds. Government schools therefore face higher costs in ensuring that all students achieve successful outcomes. Their effective resources are worse than Catholic and Independent schools at current funding levels.

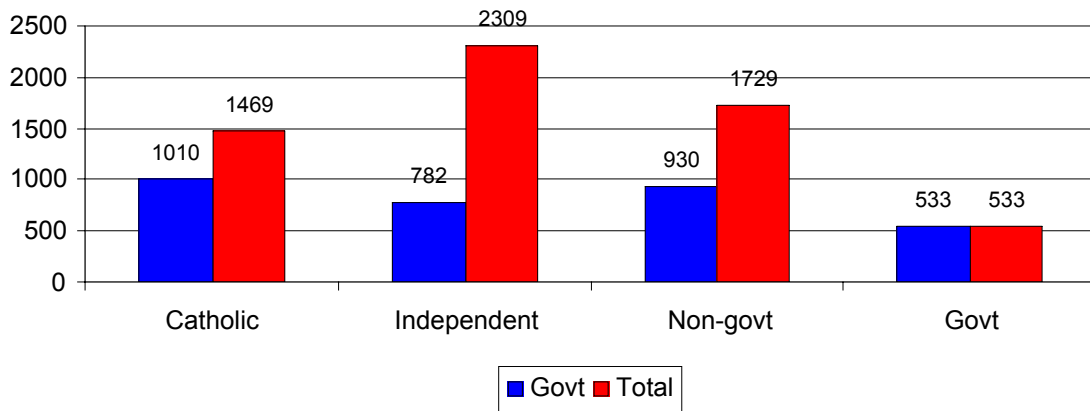
FACT 3: Government funding increases have favoured non-government schools

Government funding increases for non-government schools, adjusted for inflation, have been much higher than for government schools for 1991-2001.

Government funding for non-government schools increased by \$930 per student compared to \$533 per student for government schools. Government funding for Catholic schools increased by \$1010 per student and by \$782 for Independent schools.

Increases in total real funding for non-government schools (from all sources including fees) were massively higher than for government schools. The increase for non-government schools was \$1729 per student, for Catholic schools \$1469 and \$2309 for Independent schools.

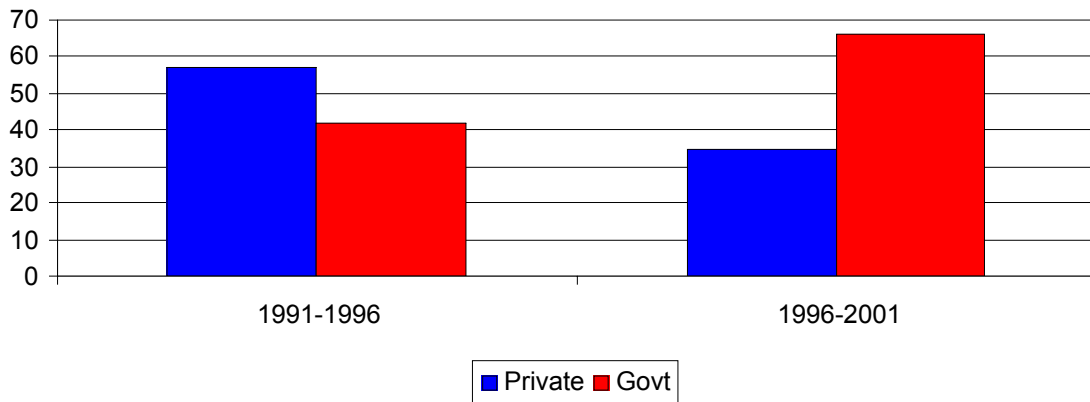
Figure 2: Increase in real funding per student in ACT schools, 1991-2001 (\$1989-90)



FACT 4: Taxpayers have contributed the large part of increases in non-government school funding

Non-government schools are heavily dependent on government funding. The Commonwealth and ACT Governments provide 58 per cent of total funding per student in ACT non-government schools, 73 per cent of Catholic school funding and 33 per cent of funding for Independent schools.

Figure 3: Contribution by source to increase in ACT non-government school funding, 1991-2001 (%)



Governments are the main source of funding increases for non-government schools. Between 1996 and 2001, governments provided 60 per cent of the total increase in ACT non-government school funding and parents contributed 40 per cent. In comparison, governments provided 42 per cent of the increase in non-government school funding between 1991 and 1996 and parents provided 57 per cent.

Governments contributed 83 per cent of the total increase in funding to ACT Catholic schools for 1996-2001 compared to 16 per cent from private sources. Governments contributed 41 per cent of the increase in Independent school funding compared to 24 per cent in the early 1990s. The parent contribution fell from 76 to 59 per cent.

FACT 5: *Non-government schools are better resourced to support students with disabilities than government schools*

Non-government schools are better funded for students with disabilities than government schools because they do not enrol as many students with disabilities and therefore benefit disproportionately from government funding. A bi-partisan Senate Committee report in 2002 found that non-government schools are better funded for students with disabilities than government schools.

Government funding for ACT Catholic schools is 59 per cent of the total funds provided by governments to government schools yet Catholic schools only enrol 29 per cent of the proportion of students with disabilities enrolled in government schools. As a result, they receive over double the special funding provided for students with disabilities in the government sector. Independent schools receive about 40 per cent more than the special funding for students with disabilities in the government sector.

FACT 6: *The Interest Subsidy Scheme has supported the wealthiest schools in Canberra to obtain gold-plated facilities*

The Interest Subsidy Scheme is a major source of inequity as it enables the wealthiest schools in Canberra to gain facilities that are not available to other non-government and government schools. Some 60 per cent of the \$17 million committed under this scheme will go to Canberra Girls' Grammar, Canberra Grammar and Radford College. These schools use the scheme to fund interest payments on extensions to existing facilities such as sports stadiums, gymnasiums and swimming pools that are not available in government schools or most other non-government schools. Less than 5 per cent of funds are committed to new schools.

ACT non-government schools have access to Commonwealth Government capital works program and establishment grants. The Commonwealth Block Grant program provides about \$2 million a year for non-government school capital projects.



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