

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS SNAPSHOT

2024 EDITION

LATEST AVAILABLE
FACTS AND FIGURES



The Independent school sector is a diverse and growing group of non-government schools. This snapshot provides an overview of the key characteristics of the sector, those who are enrolled, those who work in Independent schools, and how these schools are funded.

The Independent school figures in this snapshot include Independent Catholic schools, except where otherwise indicated.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL SECTOR

BROAD CHOICE FOR PARENTS

STRONG COMMUNITY LINKS

DIVERSITY OF SCHOOL TYPE,
SIZE AND FOCUS

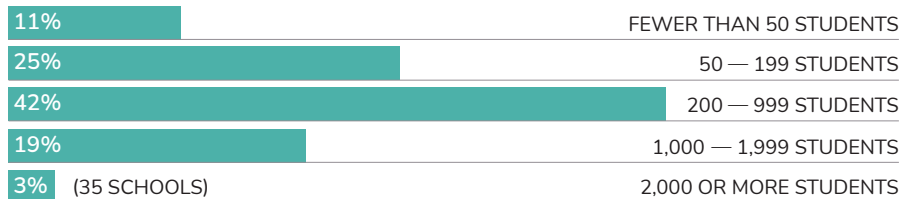
AUTONOMOUS GOVERNANCE
ARRANGEMENTS

COMPREHENSIVE ACCOUNTABILITY

SCHOOL METRICS

In 2023, there were 1,216 Independent schools of which 139 were boarding schools. Most Independent schools are co-educational.

SIZE OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS



NUMBER OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

PRIMARY	226	19%
SECONDARY	77	6%
COMBINED	770	63%
SPECIAL SCHOOLS	143	12%
TOTAL	1,216	100%

TYPE OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

BOYS' SCHOOLS	4%
GIRLS' SCHOOLS	6%
CO-EDUCATIONAL SCHOOLS	90%

1,216



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

590



AVERAGE NUMBER
OF STUDENTS ENROLLED AT
AN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

389



AVERAGE NUMBER OF
STUDENTS ENROLLED AT A
GOVERNMENT SCHOOL

STUDENT ENROLMENTS

The rate of growth of the Independent school sector has been increasing. In 2023, enrolments in Independent schools grew by 3.8 per cent.



3.8%

GROWTH IN ENROLMENTS IN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS



716,848

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS



19,299

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDENTS



4,352

OVERSEAS STUDENTS



15,204

BOARDING STUDENTS



157,000

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY (ESTIMATED)



ENROLMENTS BY SCHOOL SECTOR AND LEVEL 2023

Level	Government	Catholic	Independent
SENIOR SECONDARY	56.9	19.2	23.9
JUNIOR SECONDARY	58.4	19.4	22.2
PRIMARY	68.8	17.8	13.4
TOTAL ENROLMENTS	63.9	18.5	17.6

ENROLMENT CHANGE OVER TIME BY SCHOOL SECTOR 1970–2023

Year	Government	Catholic	Independent
1970	78.1	17.8	4.1
1980	77.7	17.5	4.8
1990	72.1	19.6	8.3
2000	69.3	18.2	12.5
2010	65.5	18.9	15.6
2020	65.6	18.2	16.2
2023	63.9	18.5	17.6

SHOWN AS PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL ENROLMENTS. ENROLMENT CHANGE FIGURES IN 1970, 1980 AND 1990 ARE SOURCED FROM AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS WHERE INDEPENDENT CATHOLIC SCHOOLS ARE INCLUDED IN CATHOLIC SCHOOL CATEGORY.

PERCENTAGE SHARE %

TOTAL NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL ENROLMENTS BY SCHOOL SECTOR 2000–2023

GOVERNMENT	348,965
CATHOLIC	161,723
INDEPENDENT	310,485

ENROLMENTS IN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS 2023

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
PRIMARY	151,349	151,729	303,078
SECONDARY	205,060	208,710	413,770
TOTAL	356,409	360,439	716,848

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY IN INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS (EST)* 2023

SUPPORT PROVIDED WITHIN A QUALITY DIFFERENTIATED TEACHING PRACTICE	58,800
SUPPLEMENTARY	68,100
SUBSTANTIAL	22,900
EXTENSIVE	7,200

*MORE INFORMATION ON THE LEVELS OF ADJUSTMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY IS AVAILABLE AT WWW.NCCD.EDU.AU

SCHOOL PROFILE

Independent schools have diverse religious or philosophical affiliations. They represent a range of approaches to teaching and learning.



82%

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS WITH A RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

AFFILIATIONS OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS BY NUMBER OF ENROLMENTS

2023

AFFILIATION	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	STUDENTS FTE	STUDENTS FTE
ANGLICAN	154	173,549	24.2%
NON-DENOMINATIONAL	234	109,061	15.2%
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL	162	88,330	12.3%
ISLAMIC	54	49,077	6.8%
UNITING CHURCH	40	48,050	6.7%
CATHOLIC, ROMAN	55	46,967	6.6%
LUTHERAN	78	44,310	6.2%
BAPTIST	41	26,337	3.7%
INTER-DENOMINATIONAL	24	19,061	2.7%
SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST	44	16,312	2.3%
PRESBYTERIAN	13	12,479	1.7%
STEINER SCHOOL	51	9,924	1.4%
PENTACOSTAL	20	9,553	1.3%
JEWISH	18	9,007	1.3%
ASSEMBLIES OF GOD	11	7,557	1.1%
BRETHREN	20	5,655	0.8%
MONTESSORI SCHOOL	39	5,023	0.7%
ORTHODOX, GREEK	8	4,037	0.6%
CATHOLIC, OTHER	8	3,817	0.5%
ORTHODOX, OTHER	6	2,620	0.4%
OTHER RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION*	13	5,985	0.8%
OTHER**	123	20,140	2.8%

* 'OTHER RELIGIOUS' AFFILIATIONS INCLUDE CHURCHES OF CHRIST, ANANDA MARGA, HARE KRISHNA AND SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

** 'OTHER' INCLUDES SPECIAL SCHOOLS, INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS, ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SCHOOLS, AND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS.



SCHOOL LOCATIONS



66.1%

MAJOR CITIES



30.4%

REGIONAL



3.5%

REMOTE

GOVERNANCE

Independent schools are generally not-for-profit institutions founded by groups in the community. All Independent schools are registered with the relevant state or territory education authorities.

Independent schools are primarily accountable to their parent and school communities.

About 17 per cent of Independent schools operate within an approved system authority. These include the Anglican, Lutheran or Seventh Day Adventist Systems.

All Independent schools comply with relevant state and federal education legislation and regulation.

SOURCES OF INCOME

Most of the income of Independent schools comes from families. Most of the recurrent income of Independent schools comes from families. Governments save an estimated \$7.1 billion due to the contribution of families and other private sources.



\$7.1 BILLION

SAVINGS TO GOVERNMENTS



\$5,537

MEDIAN ANNUAL FEE
2022

GOVERNMENT FUNDING OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Government funding for schools is provided by the Australian Government and state and territory governments. The Australian Government is the main government funding source for non-government schools, currently providing 78 per cent of total government recurrent funding for Independent schools while states and territories provide 22 per cent. State and territory governments are the main funding source for government schools. The proportions of private/government funding vary greatly from school to school.

RECURRENT FUNDING FOR SCHOOL EDUCATION \$ BILLION

FY 2021–22

GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS



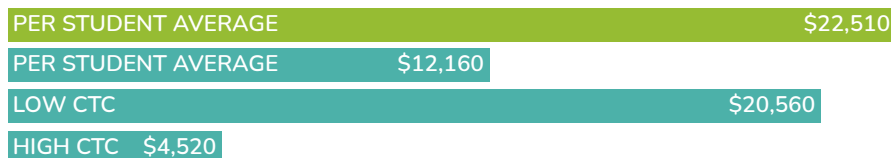
INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS



AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT STATE GOVERNMENT PRIVATE INCOME (PARENTS, ETC)

TOTAL GOVERNMENT RECURRENT FUNDING PER STUDENT COMPARISON

FY 2021–22



GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

ALL GOVERNMENT SOURCES. THE AMOUNT OF FUNDING RECEIVED FROM ALL GOVERNMENT SOURCES VARIES SIGNIFICANTLY DEPENDING ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE SCHOOL.

AVERAGE GOVERNMENT RECURRENT FUNDING PER STUDENT

FY 2021–22



FUNDING MODEL

The current Australian Government funding model for schools, the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) comprises base funding plus loadings to address educational disadvantage. Base funding for Independent schools is adjusted according to the school community's estimated capacity to contribute (CTC) to the costs of education, assessed on parental income tax data. This methodology is known as the Direct Measure of Income (DMI). Schools with a higher CTC score receive less per capita base funding.

LOADINGS:

- SCHOOL LOCATION
- SCHOOL SIZE
- SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL DISADVANTAGE
- INDIGENEITY
- LOW ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY
- STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY