The Secretary,
Senate Employment, Workplace Relations
and Education References Committee
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Dear Maam/Sir,

I hereby offer a submission to your Inquiry into Commonwealth funding for schools.

Following, under a series of sub-headings, are several suggestions, points and illustrations which I hope will be of value to your Inquiry here and its critique of the SES-based non-government school funding system employed by the present Commonwealth government. I hope that these points and illustrations will dispel several significant myths and deceptions that have been allowed to distort the policy and funding processes in recent years.

This submission contains a lot of numerical data, and whilst I have made a big effort to "compare like with like" and present coherent data wherever possible, I acknowledge imperfections in the numerical values presented, although I am certain that such imperfections in no way invalidate the substantive numerical claims made herein.

In what follows, the terms "public school", "government school" and "state school" all mean the same thing. The terms "private school" and "non-government school" likewise mean the same thing.

Two quite lengthy Appendices are provided at the end here (on pages 22 to 53), but the bulk of these are fairly easy to read Tables that can be glanced over quickly. My submission here does contain some repetition which I simply won't have time to eliminate altogether given my work, family and general circumstances. I am confident, though, that the committee will find it easy to identify and see merit in the main facts and illustrations presented here.

Australian State, Territory and Commonwealth Governments Should, Individually and Collectively, Aim to Deliver World Best Practice in Education and the World's Best Schools

Whilst massive funding boosts to private schools have significantly increased the attractiveness of private schools in recent years, it is still the case that the vast

majority (around 70%) of Australians continue to be predominantly or wholly educated in the government schools systems.

I urge this Inquiry to recognise that Australian state, territory and federal governments, individually and collectively, have an inherent first duty to provide funding and general support to government schools sufficient to make Australian government schools (1) absolutely as good as possible, and (2) the best public schools in the world. Furthermore, funding and general treatment of non-government schools should never be allowed to interfere with state/territory and federal governments' primary duties to fund and resource public schools to "world's best" standards.

The Socioeconomic Status (SES) of Non-Government School Students is Generally Significantly Higher than that of Government School Students

It is often claimed, especially by people seeking increasing levels of government funding for non-government schools, that children in non-government schools come from families that are no wealthier than children in government schools. Whilst exceptional "against the trend" cases can of course be identified, the papers included in Appendices 1 and 2 here (beginning on page 22) show that children in non-government schools are typically, and on average, from ***much*** wealthier and higher SES backgrounds than their public school counterparts.

Levels of Commonwealth funding awarded to non-government schools are presently determined on the basis of SES scores which, in turn, are based on three demographic dimensions: family income, family occupation and parental education level.

Personally, I support a substantive needs based approach to non-government school funding and believe that a competent system would surely take into account school fee levels at non-government schools. So it seems clear that the present SES funding system can be ***very*** significantly improved upon. But the SES levels of students in the various school sectors remains highly relevant to education and school funding policies, so I will now present the results of analyses I have carried out in the past year or so which clarify the typical and average SES levels of students attending government and non-government schools.

In terms of parental income, occupation and educational backgrounds, students attending non-government schools, typically and on average, are of significantly higher SES than students attending government schools. This pattern is made plain in Appendices 1 and 2 here. Whilst the two papers in Appendices 1 and 2 span 33 pages, these largely comprises Tables in which a clear pattern soon becomes clear even on just a quick reading. **I strongly urge this Inquiry to take note of these Appendices and the figures presented therein, which are directly based upon reliable 2001 Census data.** I can provide the Inquiry with further details of all analyses I've carried out if the Committee requires the same.

Under the federal government's present system, the 100 or so most expensive private schools in Australia (which charged annual tuition fees of $10,000 or more per student per year in 2003) have SES scores which average about 119. But real 2001 Census data presented in Appendix 1 shows that competently developed SES scores

probably ought to be up around the 200 mark for these 100 or so most expensive private schools in Australia – which clearly serve students and families whose wealth and SES levels generally are very significantly greater than those of their public school counterparts.

Table 1 of Appendix 1 (see page 23 here) shows that non-catholic non-government school families have SES levels that are typically and on average some 60% higher than those of government school families. Catholic school families similarly have SES levels that are typically and on average some 30% higher than those of government school families. It hence follows that non-government school families on the whole (that is, catholic and non-catholic non-government school families in combination) have SES levels that are typically and on average some 40% higher than those of government school families.

Non-Government Schools Save the Taxpayer Money but Probably Not More than Approximately $4000 Per Non-Government School Student

It can certainly be validly claimed that non-government schools save the taxpayer ***some*** amount of money, but honest, competent, even-handed analysis and research needs to be done in order to establish precisely how much money private schools actually save the taxpayer, and hence how much government funding non-government schools might aptly be entitled to on this "economic efficiency" basis. Provisional estimates that I have carried out – as described just below here – indicate that present levels of funding for non-government schools exceed amounts that can be defended on account of the taxpayer savings that such non-government schools generate.

It is relatively easy to establish a "ballpark" estimate of the marginal per student costs which government schools would be forced to incur in the event of a net shift from non-government to government schools. If we assume a typical teacher's wage of $60,000 (including superannuation and other administrative costs) and typical class sizes of 20 students, then it would follow that the marginal teacher cost of each additional public school students is around $3000 per student (i.e. $60,000 divided by 20). But additional public school students would incur costs above and beyond teacher costs alone. Some public schools might have spare classroom and resource capacity enabling them to absorb additional students without any additional building costs. But at other schools, extra demountable classrooms or more permanent buildings might need to be added in the event of significantly increased enrolments. It seems plausible that the overall marginal cost of additional public school students might be approximately $3500 per additional student when building and resource costs are taken into account, though almost certainly less than $4000 per additional student. Accordingly, on this "economic efficiency" basis, an even-handed assessment would appear to support funding of non-government schools, but only to the extent of $3500 to $4000 or so per non-government school student.

Further evidence that non-government schools are unlikely to save the taxpayer more than $4000 per student is provided on pages 48 and 49 in Appendix 2 under the sub-heading 'A Competent and Equitable Policy'.

SES Scores are Absurd and Extremely Inaccurate and Unrepresentative of Actual Schools Because of the Absurd Methods of Establishing SES Scores

So why is it that the 100 or so most expensive private schools in Australia (which charged annual tuition fees of $10,000 or more per student in 2003) have SES scores which average about 119, when they should really be closer to 200 or so in order to accurately reflect the true situation?

One would naturally assume that SES scores of schools, if they were competent and equitable, would reflect the actual SES levels of the actual families of the actual students at the actual schools, ***but this is not even close to being the real case. This*** is the crux of the problem with the SES scores that are presently used to determine non-government school funding levels, as will now be explained.

Data for the 2001 Census was taken from some 37,209 Census Collection Districts (CDs) Australia wide, but not all of these CDs would ever factor in to SES scores of non-government schools, because:

- a significant fraction of these 37,209 CDs would be absent of families with children – only 36,091 of these 37,209 CDs, for example, contained families with dependent children;
- not all families with children host children old enough to be in school;
- a significant minority of CDs containing school children would only contain families in which all children attended government schools.

So the CDs which determine the SES scores for non-government schools, under the Commonwealth government's present SES system, are just that subset of all CDs which include at least one family with one or more children at a non-government school. My examination of 2001 Census data (which has been precise in some ways but less so in others, depending on the quality of data I've been able to obtain) indicates that approximately 80% of all CDs would have contained at least one family with at least one child in a non-government school – so this would be approximately 30,000 CDs (approximately 80% of 37,209). ***Officers within DEST could no doubt confirm or improve upon this estimation.***

Now in the 2001 Census it was found that there were approximately 3.04 million students in all schools Australia-wide, who came from approximately 1.75 million families. So the 37,209 CDs from the 2001 Census would contain an average of approximately 47 families per CCD with one or more school children (1.75 million divided by 37,209 being 47). But, taking into account the fact that not all CDs contained families with children in schools, my estimate is that, among CDs with at least one family with at least one child in school, there'd have been an average of approximately 50 families per CD with one or more school children, in 2001.

Now approximately 1.15 million of these 1.75 million families had a child or children in government schools only, and the remaining 594,000 or so families had at least one child in a non-government school. And of these 594,000 or so families, approximately 229,000 had one or more children attending a non-catholic non-government school.

The above facts, figures and estimates suggest that approximately 594,000 non-government school families in non-government schools children were spread among 30,000 or so CDs at the time of the 2001 Census. So CDs hosting non-government school families would host an average of approximately 20 non-government school families per CD (594,000 divided by 30,000 being 19.8) – and probably about 30 government school families per CD (to make up the total of 50 families per CD on average as derived on the previous page).

Furthermore, in 2001 (and still now in 2004) there were approximately 3000 non-government schools and some 70000 government schools in Australia. So if these 3000 or so non-government schools were attended by students (from some 594,000 families) within some 30,000 CDs, it is clear that non-government school catchment zones are much larger areas than CDs; there is an average of about 10 CDs for every non-government school. Furthermore, there is clearly considerable overlap among the catchment areas of different non-government schools. So most CDs with non-government school families would actually host families with children in ***several different*** non-government schools. Especially in wealthier suburbs of larger cities, it is likely that there'd be CDs with families with children attending one or more catholic non-government schools and other families with children attending one or more non-catholic non-government schools. Furthermore, many families would have one or more younger children in a non-government primary school, with one or more elder siblings attending a ***separate*** non-government secondary school. And there are often separate schools for boys and girls. So taking such factors into account, my estimate is that, among CDs with one or more non-government school families, ***actual individual non-government schools*** would host an average of about 4 families per CD, with there being on average about 46 families in these CDs with children attending schools ***other than*** these actual individual non-government schools. ***Officers within DEST should again be able to confirm or improve upon this estimation of 4 families per CD on average.***

So, in a typical average non-government school X, say, my estimation is that CDs containing families with one or more children attending X would, typically and on average, host about 4 families with children actually attending X, a further 16 families attending non-government schools ***other than*** X, and a further 30 families attending government schools only. So the CD level aggregate SES data used in determining non-government school funding levels would typically be contributed to in approximately the following weightings: families with kids attending X would contribute about 8% to CD aggregate SES scores (8% being 4 as a percentage of 50); families with kids attending non-government schools ***other than*** X would contribute about 32% to such CD aggregate SES scores (16 as a percentage of 50); and families attending government schools only would contribute about 60% to such CD aggregate SES scores (30 as a percentage of 50).**

The SES score of school X is an aggregate average of the SES scores assigned to each student at X, but the problem is that the scores assigned to each student are CD averages rather than specific data on the actual families of actual children attending school X – ***this, again, is the crux of the problem, and the reason why SES scores are often so ridiculous – especially for wealthy high fee private schools.*** Most CDs whose SES data contribute to X's overall SES score would only host between one and

10 or so students from X itself, so students from X itself would typically only contribute between 2% (1 out of 50 families, as a percentage) and 20% (10 out of 50) or so towards the SES scores for the individual CDs which, in combination, determine X's overall SES score, and hence its Commonwealth funding levels.

So, typically and on average, SES scores for non-government schools are based on SES data of government school families in a 60% or so weighting. So, given that government school families are typically of much lower SES than non-government school families, this 60% weighting reduces SES scores for non-government schools to numbers that are significantly lower than what is competent and what would arise if SES scores for non-government schools were based only on non-government school families. This systematic under-estimation is most pronounced in schools serving families who are of the highest SES levels – that is, very expensive private schools. In such expensive private schools, the SES levels of the actual families of the actual kids in these actual schools are typically and on average much higher than those of families even at other non-government schools (especially systemic catholic schools). So for such schools, SES scores are brought down to an immense extent – to well below competent and realistic levels – by virtue of the fact that the SES scores for such schools are based predominantly (i.e. with about a 92% numerical weighting – i.e. 32% plus 60%, as per ** two paragraphs above) on the data for generally much lower SES families whose children attend government schools or lower SES non-government schools (such as lower fee systemic catholic schools).

Hopefully the above explanation will make it crystal clear that criticisms against the SES model have in virtually all cases been based on utterly clear foundations. The SES system is a "basket case" and a national embarrassment which has the potential to seriously damage Australia's reputation in education policy, equity and public administration generally, unless the system is replaced by a significantly improved system as a matter of urgency. This explanation here also explains why it is that the model is most deficient in its application to the wealthiest private schools.

A Stunning Specific Illustration of the SES Model's Major Flaw – CD 8014903

To obtain a close look at the problems with the SES system at the level of individual Census Collection districts (CDs), I have obtained specific data on the 45 CDs that fell within the South Canberra Statistical Sub-Division (SSD). Census Collection District (CD) numbered 8014903 is one of these 45 CDs located within the South Canberra SSD. South Canberra is by far the wealthiest part of the ACT, but not nearly as wealthy as the wealthiest parts of Melbourne (around Toorak and South Yarra) and Sydney (around Vaucluse and the wealthiest North Shore suburbs).

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) supplied 2001 Census data shows that, at the time of the 2001 Census, there were 56 families in this CD # 8014903, with 44 of these families having children in government schools only, whilst 3 families had their children in catholic schools only, and a further 9 had their children in non-catholic non-government schools only. So there were 12 families in total with one or more children in non-government schools. It should also be noted that there are several non-government schools physically located within the geographical bounds of the South Canberra SSD.

As can be seen in the Table that follows below (on the page after next), the median weekly income of the 44 families with children in government schools was in the $400 to $500 per week range. For all 56 families with school children in this CD, the median weekly income was in the $500 to $600 range. For families with children in non-government schools, however, this median weekly income figure was approximately $2000 – at least four times greater than the figure for government school families, and over three times greater than the "all families" median weekly income figure. ***I urge the Inquiry to recognise the extreme significance of these results – they suggest that the SES scores for non-government school families in this CD are three or more times lower than they ought to be – i.e. an error of over 200%!! ... if civil engineers were this inaccurate we'd run the serious risk of having bridges collapsing all around us ...*** As stated above, I have only obtained specific CD data here for a single SSD comprising just 45 CDs, and even within this tiny sample I've been able to identify this stunning proof of the outrageous inaccuracy of the SES score determination process. The point here is this: non-government schools with children whose families live in this particular CD are treated, for funding purposes, as though ***their students*** have family income levels in the $500 to $600 per week range, whereas in fact among non-government school families the apt weekly income figure ought to be approximately $2000 per week. Furthermore, 6 of the 12 non-government school families had incomes in the $2000 or more per week range, so the ***mean*** weekly incomes of these families might well have been $3000 per week or more. We can't be sure of this, but this uncertainty exposes yet another flaw with the SES funding model in that SES scores are based on Census data which is manifestly inadequate in describing very high SES families – specifically, families with weekly family incomes well in excess of $2000 per week. And whilst families with weekly incomes of $2000 or more only make up 8.06% of all families with children in government schools only, this 8.06% figure becomes 26.36% for families with children in non-catholic non-government schools. It is almost certain that among expensive private schools (those charging tuition fees of say $8000 per student per year or more), this 26.36% would easily exceed 50%, and might well be above 80% for the 40 or so most expensive private schools in the country which charge fees in excess of $14,000 per student per year. For Census data on family income to be suitable for the determination of non-government school SES scores, such data would need to be significantly further sub-divided within the $2000+ weekly income range here, though problems with small sample numbers would then come into play. Indeed, the numbers provided by the ABS as reproduced in the Table below (the page after next) are accompanied by a qualification that cautions against the over-reliance of small numbers. It can be seen that there is a suspiciously high number of 3 entries here. I have been advised that some of these "3" entries might actually be 1s, 2s, 3s or 4s, and that some zero entires might actually be 1s – they are apparently written as 0 or 3 for privacy reasons, to avoid the possibility of identifying single individual families within small geographical areas. One would need to obtain from the ABS itself the real numbers here, if they differ from what I have been supplied with.
As has been discussed previously in this submission, CDs are likely to only have an average of about 4 families with children attending any one given non-government school, so very few CDs are likely to have more than 10 or so families whose children attend the same non-government school, so small sample size statistical uncertainty is liable to quite significantly distort Census data on families with children at non-government schools – at least at the CD level.

This matter of small sample statistical uncertainty and adjustment raises additional questions about the fitness of Census data for the purpose of determining how billions of dollars in Commonwealth funding is divided up among non-government schools!!

As stated in the box appearing directly below the Table that follows here (on the next page), the household income score for families with dependent children in this CD (#8014903) was just 91.43, whereas it is plainly the case that a score close to 200 would be needed to competently and even-handedly reflect the non-government school families in this CD, based on the data as supplied by the ABS.

Of the 45 CDs within the South Canberra SSD, 3 of these CDs contained no families with children in schools. The 42 CDs which did contain families with children in schools had between 81 and 3 of such families with one or more school children. In 25 of these 42 CDs there were 40 or more families with school children. And the median number of families with school children in these 42 CDs was 47, with the mean being 43. Furthermore, in 2 of these 42 CDs, all families had children in government schools only. So, according to the 2001 Census data as supplied by the ABS, 40 of the 45 CDs in the South Canberra SSD had one or more families with one or more children attending a non-government school. And 34 of the 45 had one or more families with one or more children attending a ***non-catholic*** non-government school.

So even in this brief examination within one of the 207 SSDs employed in the 2001 Census, one CD in particular has been found in which the average weekly income level of ***all families*** with school children is ***vastly*** lower than the corresponding average among just non-government school families. But whilst CD #8014903 overwhelmingly exposes how aggregate "all families with school children" CD data significantly misrepresents the SES levels of particular non-government school families, this same deficiency is evident across most of the CDs within the South Canberra SSD, and indeed throughout the ACT and in all other states and territories as well and across the whole of Australia. Of the 1795 families in South Canberra SSD with school children, 604 (or 33.6%) have weekly incomes of $2000 or more, but among of the 905 of these families with kids in government schools only, just 246 (or 27.2%) have weekly incomes of $2000 or more, whereas among of the 890 of these families with at least one child in a government school, 358 (or 40.2%) have weekly incomes of $2000 or more. [this line of discussion continues lowermost on the next page]

(Table referred to above follows next page)

ABS 2001 Census of Population and Housing
ASGC Main Structure and FINF Family Income
by Summation Options and Type of Educational Institution of children

	Families				
Census Collection District (CD) number8014903	Children in Government Schools only	Children in Catholic Schools only	Children in Other Non Govt. Schools only	**TOTALS for all schools which SES scores are based on**	All Non-Govt Schools
Not applicable	0	0	0	0	0
Partial incomes stated	0	0	3	3	3
$160-$199	4	0	0	4	0
$200-$299	5	0	0	5	0
$300-$399	12	0	0	12	0
$400-$499	3	0	0	3	0
$500-$599	3	0	0	3	0
$600-$699	4	0	0	4	0
$700-$799	3	0	0	3	0
$800-$999	3	0	0	3	0
$1,200-$1,499	0	0	3	3	3
$1,500-$1,999	0	0	0	0	0
$2,000 or more	7	3	3	13	6
TOTALS	**44**	**3**	**9**	**56**	**12**
PERCENTAGES	**78.6**	**5.4**	**16.1**	**100.0**	**21.4**
Number Partial Incomes Stated	**0**	**0**	**3**	**3**	**3**
% Partial Incomes Stated	**0.0**	**0.0**	**33.3**	**5.4**	**25.0**
Number $2,000 or more	**7**	**3**	**3**	**13**	**6**
% $2,000 or more	**15.9**	**100.0**	**33.3**	**23.2**	**50.0**
Number $1,200 or more	**7**	**3**	**6**	**16**	**9**
% $1,200 or more	**15.9**	**100.0**	**66.7**	**28.6**	**75.0**
Number $160-$999	**37**	**0**	**0**	**37**	**0**
% $160-$1000	**84.1**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**66.1**	**0.0**
Median (approx.)	**$433**	**> $2,000**	**$1,350**	**$533**	**$2,000**

Now above Table again but as percentages within each column category (next page)

Points to note: The entry of 3 circled above is curious - the median of $1,350 also circled assumes that these 3 families have an effective income of less than somewhere in the $1,200 to $1,499 class - it is highly likely that these three families are family trust fund families with effective incomes or subject to some other favourable but difficult to detect circumstances such that the median score of $1,350 here probably should be over $2,000 ... something for a Latham government to sort out if Mr Latham stays strong on his TTR (Tax the Rich) Policy which I've kept newspaper clippings on somewhere ...

The **gigantic** significance of the above is that it shows that the 21% or families in this CD with kids at non-govt schools are "miles wealthier" on average than their public school counterpart families, and the SES score for this CD of 91.43 - which would help schools like Boys and Girls Grammar attract higher federal funding - whilst reflective of the CD as a whole, **ABSURDLY misrepresents** the non-govt school families in this CD the schools for which the SES model is applied to.

The Table below shows the consistency of the pattern here ranging from CD #8014903 through the South Canberra SSD, then to the whole of the ACT and Australia as a whole.

Census Unit	Percentage of families with children in govt schools only with weekly incomes of $2000 or more	Percentage of families with at least one child in non-govt schools with weekly incomes of $2000 or more	Percentage of all families with children in schools with weekly incomes of $2000 or more
CD #8014903	15.9	50.0	23.2
South Canberra SSD	27.2	40.2	33.6
Whole of ACT	18.9	32.3	24.2
Whole of Australia	8.0	19.1	11.8

So whilst South Canberra CD includes only 0.12% of all Australian CDs, the Table above and the Tables in the Appendices indicate clearly that there must be hundreds and perhaps thousands of CDs around Australia that, like CD # 8014903 here, expose the stunning incompetence and inaccuracy of SES scores ***for particular individual non-government schools*** – which are based on the SES scores for CDs which are in turn based on data for ***all*** families with school kids in each CD, rather than just those families with kids at the particular school whose SES score is being determined.

Schools Whose SES Scores Fail Even the Common Sense Test

If SES scores were competent, wealthier and higher fee schools would obviously have higher SES scores than relatively poorer and lower fee schools. But the Table below shows that this isn't close to the case with the SES scores which the present system uses. No honest and competent person could possibly accept as valid SES scores of 111 for Geelong Grammar (with Year 12 tuition fees of approximately $16000 per student in 2003) and 112 for Trinity Grammar School (with Year 12 tuition fees of over $14,000 per student in 2003) if every single non-government school in the ACT has SES scores of 112 or more!! Think about it: whilst Canberra's overall SES levels exceed those of any other state or territory at the state/territory aggregate average level, there are clearly much greater concentrations of extreme wealth in exclusive suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne than there are in Canberra – and it is well known that many of the wealthiest people in Melbourne and Sydney send their kids to schools like Geelong Grammar in Victoria and Trinity Grammar in Sydney.

The Table below shows that the federal government's present system considers Canberra Montessori School (SES = 123, fees = $3360) and Good News Lutheran Primary School in QLD (SES = 117, fees = $1960) to be of higher SES than "superheavyweight" rich schools such as Geelong Grammar (SES = 111, fees approx. $16,000) and Haileybury College in Melbourne (SES = 108, Year 12 tuition fees in excess of $14,000 per student in 2003). I trust that the Committee recognises that these examples, and the entire Table below, provide staggering exposures of the stunning absurdity, incompetence and negligence of the present SES funding system.

School	SES	Cat	S/T	Fees	Year	% AGSRC funding	Funding per secondary student (FPSS)	Fees + FPSS	Comments
Canberra Montessori School	123	10	ACT	$3,360	2003	22.5	$1,677	$5,037	ages 3-6 or to y6
Mount St Benedict College (Pennant Hills)	121	10	NSW	$3,100	??	25.0	$1,864	$4,964	
St Pius X College	121	9	NSW	$3,020	2003	25.0	$1,864	$4,884	Chatswood
Orana School	119	10	ACT	$3,880	2003	27.5	$2,051	$5,931	y11-12, Steiner
Marist College Canberra	119	10	ACT	$3,744	2003	27.5	$2,051	$5,795	over phone 28AUG03
Oakhill College	119	9	NSW	$3,528	2003	27.5	$2,051	$5,579	Castle Hill
Brisbane Independent School	118	9	QLD	$3,640	2003	28.7	$2,145	$5,785	pre-7
Good News Lutheran Primary School	117	9	QLD	$1,960	2003	30.0	$2,238	$4,198	y1-7
The King's School	116	1	NSW	$15,771	2003	31.2	$2,331	$18,102	y11-12 **(John Anderson's old school)**
St Catherine's School	116	3	NSW	$13,053	2003	31.2	$2,331	$15,384	y12
The Church of England Collegiate School of St Peter	116	1	SA	$11,500	2003	31.2	$2,331	$13,831	y11-12, quoted range $11,000 to $12,000, aka St. Peter's College
St Edmund's College	116	10	ACT	$3,900	2003	31.2	$2,331	$6,231	over phone 28AUG03
Daramalan College	116	10	ACT	$3,480	2003	31.2	$2,331	$5,811	over phone 28AUG03
Brindabella Christian College	116	11	ACT	$3,330	2003	31.2	$2,331	$5,661	y10, pre-10, Lyneham
Emmaus Christian School	116	11	ACT	$2,380	2003	31.2	$2,331	$4,711	pre-9 then 10 in 2004, Dickson
Caulfield Grammar School	115	1	VIC	$13,545	2003	32.5	$2,425	$15,970	y12
Kingswood College	115	2	VIC	$10,674	2003	32.5	$2,425	$13,099	y12
Trinity Christian School	115	8	ACT	$2,920	2003	32.5	$2,425	$5,345	$2920 is min - max is $4520, y10, will go to y11 in 2004, Wanniassa
Burgmann Anglican School	115	10	ACT	$2,650	2003	32.5	$2,425	$5,075	y6-7
Presbyterian Ladies' College	114	1	VIC	$14,960	2003	33.7	$2,518	$17,478	y12
Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School	114	1	VIC	$10,599	2003	33.7	$2,518	$13,117	y11-12
Prince Alfred College	114	1	SA	$10,000	2003	33.7	$2,518	$12,518	approx $9800 in 2001
St Joseph's College	113	6	NSW	$13,950	2003	35.0	$2,612	$16,562	y7-12 Hunters Hill
Presbyterian Ladies College	113	2	NSW	$13,644	2003	35.0	$2,612	$16,256	y12, cf WA, VIC
Stella Maris College	113	10	NSW	$3,198	??	35.0	$2,612	$5,810	Northern beaches
Sutherland Shire Christian School	113	10	NSW	$2,340	??	35.0	$2,612	$4,952	
Trinity Grammar School	112	1	NSW	$14,325	2003	36.2	$2,705	$17,030	y12
Ivanhoe Grammar School	112	1	VIC	$13,221	2003	36.2	$2,705	$15,926	y12
Tudor House	112	1	NSW	$11,652	2003	36.2	$2,705	$14,357	y6
Newcastle Grammar School	112	3	NSW	$10,429	2003	36.2	$2,705	$13,134	
St Clare's College	112	9	NSW	$3,975	2003	36.2	$2,705	$6,680	y11-12 Waverley
Samford Valley Steiner School	112	10	QLD	$2,523	2003	36.2	$2,705	$5,228	k-7
Prince of Peace Lutheran Primary School	112	9	QLD	$1,300	2003	36.2	$2,705	$4,005	
Geelong Grammar School 'Corio'	111	1	VIC	$16,000	2003	37.5	$2,799	$18,799	approx.
The McDonald College	111	5	NSW	$14,200	2003	37.5	$2,799	$16,999	y12 Strathfield
Toorak College	111	1	VIC	$13,281	2003	37.5	$2,799	$16,080	y12
All Hallows School	111	10	QLD	$3,208	2002	37.5	$2,799	$6,007	y12
Mentone Grammar School	110	1	VIC	$12,844	2003	38.7	$2,892	$15,736	y12
Meriden School	110	2	NSW	$12,558	2003	38.7	$2,892	$15,450	Strathfield-Auburn y12
MLC School	110	3	NSW	$11,200	2001	38.7	$2,892	$14,092	
Frensham School	109	1	NSW	$14,200	???	40.0	$2,986	$17,186	Mittagong
Mentone Girls' Grammar	109	1	VIC	$14,200	2003	40.0	$2,986	$17,186	y12
Geelong College	109	1	VIC	$13,216	2003	40.0	$2,986	$16,202	y9-12
Snowy Mountains Grammar School	109	7	NSW	$11,700	??	40.0	$2,986	$14,686	
Westminster School	109	3	SA	$10,400	2003	40.0	$2,986	$13,386	all sec, quoted range $10,000 to $10,800
The Illawarra Grammar School	109	3	NSW	$10,200	2003	40.0	$2,986	$13,186	
Haileybury College	108	1	VIC	$14,745	2003	41.2	$3,079	$17,824	y9-12
St Paul's International College	107	NS3	NSW	$13,200	??	42.5	$3,172	$16,372	Moss Vale
Woodleigh School	107	3	VIC	$11,756	2003	42.5	$3,172	$14,928	y7-12
St Josephs School	106	1	NSW	$12,950	???	43.7	$3,266	$16,216	
St Margaret's School	105	2	VIC	$11,154	2003	45.0	$3,359	$14,513	seniors
The Southport School	105	2	QLD	$10,502		45.0	$3,359	$13,861	y12
New England Girls School	105	3	NSW	$10,016	2003	45.0	$3,359	$13,375	
Kinross Wolaroi School	104	3	NSW	$10,389	2003	46.2	$3,453	$13,842	y11-12
The Scots School	104	3	NSW	$10,371	2003	46.2	$3,453	$13,824	Bathurst
All Saints College	104	6	NSW	$10,090	??	46.2	$3,453	$13,543	Bathurst
St Stanislaus College	103	10	NSW	$11,700	??	47.5	$3,546	$15,246	Bathurst
Lowther Hall Anglican Grammar School	103	3	VIC	$11,323	2003	47.5	$3,546	$14,869	y12

The Table that now follows contains those schools from the Table above which most starkly expose the gross inaccuracy of SES scores. What we see here are eight schools which have relatively high SES scores (117 or higher) despite the fact that all of these schools charged annual tuition fees of less than $4000 in 2003. We then see 28 schools which have relatively low SES scores (112 or lower) despite the fact that all of these schools charged annual tuition fees of more than $10,000 in 2003. Again, I trust that the Inquiry here recognises how entirely absurd these SES scores are, and, hence, how billions of taxpayer dollars have been misallocated as a result of the incompetence of these SES scores and the SES system generally.

School	SES	Cat	S/T	Fees	Year	% AGSRC funding	Funding per secondary student (FPSS)	Fees + FPSS	Comments
Canberra Montessori School	123	10	ACT	$3,360	2003	22.5	$1,677	$5,037	ages 3-6 or to y6
Mount St Benedict College (Pennant Hills)	121	10	NSW	$3,100	??	25.0	$1,864	$4,964	
St Pius X College	121	9	NSW	$3,020	2003	25.0	$1,864	$4,884	Chatswood
Orana School	119	10	ACT	$3,880	2003	27.5	$2,051	$5,931	y11-12, Steiner
Marist College Canberra	119	10	ACT	$3,744	2003	27.5	$2,051	$5,795	over phone 28AUG03
Oakhill College	119	9	NSW	$3,528	2003	27.5	$2,051	$5,579	Castle Hill
Brisbane Independent School	118	9	QLD	$3,640	2003	28.7	$2,145	$5,785	pre-7
Good News Lutheran Primary School	117	9	QLD	$1,960	2003	30.0	$2,238	$4,198	y1-7
Trinity Grammar School	112	1	NSW	$14,325	2003	36.2	$2,705	$17,030	y12
Ivanhoe Grammar School	112	1	VIC	$13,221	2003	36.2	$2,705	$15,926	y12
Tudor House	112	1	NSW	$11,652	2003	36.2	$2,705	$14,357	y6
Newcastle Grammar School	112	3	NSW	$10,429	2003	36.2	$2,705	$13,134	
Geelong Grammar School 'Corio'	111	1	VIC	$16,000	2003	37.5	$2,799	$18,799	approx. **(Alexander Downer's old school)**
The McDonald College	111	5	NSW	$14,200	2003	37.5	$2,799	$16,999	y12 Strathfield
Toorak College	111	1	VIC	$13,281	2003	37.5	$2,799	$16,080	y12
Mentone Grammar School	110	1	VIC	$12,844	2003	38.7	$2,892	$15,736	y12
Meriden School	110	2	NSW	$12,558	2003	38.7	$2,892	$15,450	Strathfield-Auburn y12
MLC School	110	3	NSW	$11,200	2001	38.7	$2,892	$14,092	
Frensham School	109	1	NSW	$14,200	???	40.0	$2,986	$17,186	Mittagong
Mentone Girls' Grammar	109	1	VIC	$14,200	2003	40.0	$2,986	$17,186	y12
Geelong College	109	1	VIC	$13,216	2003	40.0	$2,986	$16,202	y9-12
Snowy Mountains Grammar School	109	7	NSW	$11,700	??	40.0	$2,986	$14,686	
Westminster School	109	3	SA	$10,400	2003	40.0	$2,986	$13,386	all sec, quoted range $10,000 to $10,800
The Illawarra Grammar School	109	3	NSW	$10,200	2003	40.0	$2,986	$13,186	
Haileybury College	108	1	VIC	$14,745	2003	41.2	$3,079	$17,824	y9-12
St Paul's International College	107	NS3	NSW	$13,200	??	42.5	$3,172	$16,372	Moss Vale
Woodleigh School	107	3	VIC	$11,756	2003	42.5	$3,172	$14,928	y7-12
St Josephs School	106	1	NSW	$12,950	???	43.7	$3,266	$16,216	
St Margaret's School	105	2	VIC	$11,154	2003	45.0	$3,359	$14,513	seniors
The Southport School	105	2	QLD	$10,502		45.0	$3,359	$13,861	y12
New England Girls School	105	3	NSW	$10,016	2003	45.0	$3,359	$13,375	
Kinross Wolaroi School	104	3	NSW	$10,389	2003	46.2	$3,453	$13,842	y11-12
The Scots School	104	3	NSW	$10,371	2003	46.2	$3,453	$13,824	Bathurst
All Saints College	104	6	NSW	$10,090	??	46.2	$3,453	$13,543	Bathurst
St Stanislaus College	103	10	NSW	$11,700	??	47.5	$3,546	$15,246	Bathurst
Lowther Hall Anglican Grammar School	103	3	VIC	$11,323	2003	47.5	$3,546	$14,869	y12

Averages ...	SES	Cat	S/T	Fees	Year	% AGSRC funding	Funding per secondary student (FPSS)	Fees + FPSS	Comments
... among those schools above with SES of 117 or more and annual tuition fees of less than $4,000	**119.63**	**9.5**	**N/A**	**$3,279**	**2003**	**26.68**	**1992.75**	**$5,272**	**N/A**
... among those schools above with SES of 112 or less and annual tuition fees of more than $10,000	**108.07**	**2.7**	**N/A**	**$12,208**	**2003**	**41.14**	**3072.38**	**$15,280**	**N/A**

The Present System "Merely" Helps the Rich Get Richer, Hence Exacerbating the Rich-Poor Gap in Educational Advantage

The most expensive of private schools charge extremely high fees partly in response to supply and demand realities, partly to "exclude the masses", and partly to achieve per student resourcing levels that no other schools can come close to matching – all in the interests of helping their students "push ahead" in later life.

The Table above and another Table below (see page after next) further illustrates the manner in which many extremely wealthy schools receive much more government funding than many obviously much poorer schools. The Table below (on the page after next) uses data provided by the Greens political party in NSW, as published in the Sydney Morning Herald on 16 March 2004.

Six NSW schools with SES scores of 112 or more which charged tuition fees of $4000 or less in 2003 are listed below here (page after next) along with 18 NSW schools with SES scores of 116 or less which charged tuition fees of $10,000 or more in 2003. All six of these lower fee (less than $4000) schools received combined total state-federal government funding of between $5000 and $6000 per year. Such funding levels amounted to between 69% and 80% of average government school

funding levels (in terms of Average Government School Recurrent Costs, or AGSRC levels), and when fees are taken into account to estimate total per student funding levels, these schools all ended up with funding levels of between 100% and 133% of average government school funding (i.e. AGSRC) levels.

The 18 higher fee (i.e. $10,000 or more) schools here received combined state-federal funding levels of between $3,100 per student and $5,800 per student, or between 43% and 78% of average per student government school funding (AGSRC) levels. But these schools charged fees which alone represented funding levels of between 134% and 211% of average per student government school funding (AGSRC) levels. So when fees and government funding are combined, these 18 schools all end up achieving per student funding levels of between 193% and 254% of government school funding levels. So in a very real sense, government funding of these 18 schools does little but extend the immense financial advantage of these already very wealthy private schools. Whereas these 18 schools charge fees that are typically around 150% of government school funding levels, government funding of these schools allows them to end up achieving per student funding levels that are close to and often more than twice the per student funding levels received in government schools. The $3100 per student which the Kings School receives in combined state and federal government funding lifts its overall per student funding levels to about ***two and a half times*** the average per student funding levels received by government schools.

I urge the Committee to recommend most strongly that government funding of non-government schools cease immediately for non-government schools which charge fees in excess of AGSRC (Average Government School Recurrent Costs) levels. To award government funding to these schools is a complete waste of taxpayers' money and outrageously inequitable when it is noted that expensive schools generally make no effort at all to admit children from the lower 80% or so of the SES spectrum. Scholarships at such schools are often token and patronising, and can be seen as an attempt to "poach" intelligent/talented kids away from their environments of origin so that these schools can derive various forms of parasitic benefit from these Scholarship students – which can include a benefit in terms of government funding levels if the Scholarship winner is from a relatively low SES location.

One can say that government funding of these 18 high fee schools does little more than enable these schools to go from a per capita funding level of about (and often more than) one and a half times the government school average to about (and again often more than) twice the government school average.

(Table referred to above follows next page)

NSW Schools with (1) Low Fee and High SES and (2) High Fee and Low SES * = funding maintained

School	Suburb	SES	Cat	Fees in 2003	Year	% AGSRC funding	Funding per Secondary Student based on SES	Federal Funding Per Secondary Student Assumed (FFPSS)	State Funding Per Student Assumed (SFPSS)	Total Govt Funding Per Student (TGFPS)	TGFPS / AGSRC	TOTAL = Fees/Funds Total = Fees + FFPSS + SFPSS	FEE / AGSRC quotient/ ratio	TOTAL / AGSRC quotient/ ratio WITH govt funding
Low Fee High SES (SES 112 or more and annual tuition fees $4000 or less)														
* St Clares College	Waverley	112	9	$3,975	2003	36.2	$2,705	$4,025	$1,965	$5,990	80.2%	$9,965	0.53	1.33
* Oakhill College	Castle Hill	119	9	$3,528	2003	27.5	$2,051	$3,852	$1,753	$5,605	75.0%	$9,133	0.47	1.22
* Mount St Benedict College	Pennant Hills	121	10	$3,100	??	25.0	$1,864	$4,133	$1,853	$5,986	80.1%	$9,086	0.42	1.22
* Stella Maris College	Manly	113	10	$3,198	??	35.0	$2,612	$3,835	$1,745	$5,580	74.7%	$8,778	0.43	1.18
* St Pius X College	Chatswood	121	9	$3,020	2003	25.0	$1,864	$3,614	$1,658	$5,272	70.6%	$8,292	0.40	1.11
* Sutherland Shire Christian	Sutherland	113	10	$2,340	??	35.0	$2,612	$3,635	$1,522	$5,157	69.0%	$7,497	0.31	1.00
High Fee Low SES (SES 116 or less and annual tuition fees $10,000 or more)														
The King's School	Parramatta	116	1	$15,771	2003	31.2	$2,331	$2,331	$862	$3,193	42.8%	$18,964	2.11	2.54
St Joseph's College *	Hunters Hill	113	6	$13,950	2003	35.0	$2,612	$3,075	$1,631	$4,706	63.0%	$18,656	1.87	2.50
The McDonald College	Strathfield	111	5	$14,200	2003	37.5	$2,799	$2,799	$1,517	$4,316	57.8%	$18,516	1.90	2.48
St Paul's International College	Moss Vale	107	NS3	$13,200	??	42.5	$3,172	$3,172	$1,960	$5,133	68.7%	$18,333	1.77	2.45
Frensham School	Mittagong	109	1	$14,200	???	40.0	$2,986	$2,986	$820	$3,806	51.0%	$18,006	1.90	2.41
Trinity Grammar School	Summer Hill	112	1	$14,325	2003	36.2	$2,705	$2,705	$898	$3,603	48.2%	$17,928	1.92	2.40
St Stanislaus College *	Bathurst	103	10	$11,700	??	47.5	$3,546	$4,020	$1,778	$5,798	77.6%	$17,498	1.57	2.34
Presbyterian Ladies College	Croydon	113	2	$13,644	2003	35.0	$2,612	$2,612	$960	$3,571	47.8%	$17,215	1.83	2.30
Meriden School	Strathfield	110	2	$12,558	2003	38.7	$2,892	$2,892	$1,152	$4,044	54.1%	$16,602	1.68	2.22
Snowy Mountains Grammar School	Jindabyne	109	7	$11,700	??	40.0	$2,986	$2,986	$1,392	$4,378	58.6%	$16,078	1.57	2.15
The Scots School	Bathurst	104	3	$10,371	2003	46.2	$3,453	$3,453	$1,554	$5,007	67.0%	$15,378	1.39	2.06
Kinross Wolaroi School	Orange	104	3	$10,389	2003	46.2	$3,453	$3,453	$1,534	$4,987	66.8%	$15,376	1.39	2.06
MLC School	Burwood	110	3	$11,200	2001	38.7	$2,892	$2,892	$1,137	$4,029	53.9%	$15,229	1.50	2.04
Tudor House	Moss Vale	112	1	$11,652	2003	36.2	$2,705	$2,705	$692	$3,397	45.5%	$15,049	1.56	2.01
All Saints College	Bathurst	104	6	$10,090	??	46.2	$3,453	$3,453	$1,404	$4,856	65.0%	$14,946	1.35	2.00
New England Girls School	Armidale	105	3	$10,016	2003	45.0	$3,359	$3,359	$1,371	$4,731	63.3%	$14,747	1.34	1.97
Newcastle Grammar School	Newcastle	112	3	$10,429	2003	36.2	$2,705	$2,705	$1,424	$4,129	55.3%	$14,558	1.40	1.95
The Illawarra Grammar School	Figtree	109	3	$10,200	2003	40.0	$2,986	$2,986	$1,255	$4,241	56.8%	$14,441	1.37	1.93
School	Suburb	SES	Cat	Fees in 2003	Year	% AGSRC funding	Funding per Secondary Student based on SES	Federal Funding Per Secondary Student Assumed (FFPSS)	State Funding Per Student Assumed (SFPSS)	Total Govt Funding Per Student (TGFPS)	TGFPS / AGSRC	TOTAL = Fees/Funds Total = Fees + FFPSS + SFPSS	FEE / AGSRC quotient/ ratio	TOTAL / AGSRC quotient/ ratio WITH govt funding
	MAX	116		$15,771		47.5	$3,546	$4,020	$1,960	$5,798	77.6%	$18,964	2.11	2.54
	MIN	103		$2,340		31.2	$2,331	$2,331	$692	$3,193	42.8%	$7,497	0.31	1.00
	MEAN	109.26		$11,681		39.6	$2,961	$3,064	$1,309	$4,373	58.5%	$16,054	1.56	2.15
	STD DEV	3.80		$2,872		4.8	$355	$413	$345	$694	9.3%	$2,594	0.38	0.35
	MEDIAN	110.00		$11,700		38.7	$2,892	$2,986	$1,392	$4,316	57.8%	$16,078	1.57	2.15

Privacy Argument Myth

Advocates, defenders and apologists of the present SES system claim that one of the system's advantages is its lack of intrusiveness and its respect for the privacy of families. But over 90% of Australian families with children already have their income tax and Centrelink family payment details subject to data cross-matching between Centrelink and the Australian Tax Office (ATO). The only families not already subject to such Centrelink-ATO data cross-matching are the 10% or so of families on the very highest income levels who have no entitlement to such Centrelink family payments on account of the means testing associated with such benefits.

The SES system can only possibly be competent and equitable if SES scores are based on the specific income and other details of the actual families of the actual children who attend actual non-government schools. Forcing all non-government school

families to provide their income and other personal details, as a condition for government funding of their non-government schools, would be no more intrusive than the conditions presently applicable to the vast majority (90% or so) of Australian families who already routinely need to provide income and other personal details in order to receive Centrelink payments. It disgusts me that some wealthy private school lobbyists continually seek to be "above" the laws and reasonable disclosure requirements that the bulk of society are subject to.

Further evidence that most families are already subject to Centrelink and ATO data cross-matching is provided on pages 42 and 43 in Appendix 2 under the sub-heading 'Achieving More Accurate SES Indices'.

The Need for Clear Statistics on How Much Money Schools Receive From All Government and Other Funding Sources

It should be possible for policy makers, researchers and citizens alike to clearly obtain figures on how much each school – public and private alike – receives all up from all levels of government, and from all other sources such as from private fees, bequests, church sponsorship, returns on investments and so on. It is difficult to develop cohesive, competent funding policies in the absence of such "all source" funding summaries for each and every school.

The separate involvement of state/territory governments on the one hand, and the federal government on the other, creates immense opportunity for buck-passing and confusion and gaps in accountability. At best, true overall funding situations are extremely hard to uncover, though it is clear that state-territory and federal governments alike each provide very significant levels of funding to non-government schools, and that the combined total levels of government funding going to non-government schools is now very high indeed.

Perhaps the best way to overcome the overlap, duplication, buck-passing and confusion created by separate state/territory and federal government involvement in education and school funding policy etc. would be to coalesce state, territory and federal education departments into a single national education department, perhaps as an extension on or evolution from MCEETYA.

Billions Per Annum That Could be Saved if State, Territory and Federal Education Departments Coalesced into a Single National Education Department.

I'm presently working on a PhD thesis (which I plan to finish later this year) which seeks to estimate how much better off financially and generally Australia could be if we either added new states or abolished state governments, among other constitutional reform options. It seems clear that adding new states would cost a fortune on the public sector side and further impede the national economy, whereas abolition of state governments shows the potential to improve both the public and private sectors to the tune of tens of billions of dollars per annum, which could obviously massively help in areas like education, health, the environment etc.

Part of my PhD analysis also considers less radical options like adding areas such as education and health to Section 51 of our Commonwealth Constitution – in other words, transferring powers and responsibilities for health and/or education from the states and territories to the federal government. The aim here is to eliminate or at least largely reduce the massive extent of bureaucratic duplication among present state, territory and federal health and/or education departments, which wastes so many millions of dollars each year which are urgently needed in hospitals, classrooms etc. It is quite easy to demonstrate that between $1 billion and $2 billion per annum could probably be saved, and hence transferred from duplicated bureaucracies into actual schools, if we were to move to a national education system with just a single national education bureaucracy. And whilst some might worry that such a national system might seem too highly centralised, it is important to recognise just how extraordinarily centralised some of the present state systems are. The NSW education system is known to be extremely centralised in that curricula and exams are set centrally, whereas in the ACT and some other states, schools develop their own curricula. The point here is that centralisation in education depends on many factors besides the population served by the governing unit. State education departments already host regionalised sub-divisions, and a national education system in which individual schools were empowered to an apt and manageable extent, and supported by well designed regional divisions, could achieve the best of both worlds in terms of a proper balance between stabilising centralisation on the one hand and empowering and supportive decentralisation on the other.

Whilst it seems inevitable that we'll eventually move to a national education system, it is equally certain that such developments are unlikely on the very short term, but perhaps MCEETYA could be expanded in the near future to take better national control of all funding, quality control and reporting of all schools and school sectors, so that buck-passing and confusion between state/territory and federal governments can be eliminated as far as possible.

Further on this national approach idea, I had a letter to the editor published in *The Canberra Times* on this issue some time shortly after I submitted it in December 2001, as follows:

> The ongoing argument over public and private school funding is like herds of animals fighting at a drying up water hole.
>
> Australia has, broadly, at least the following 80 primary and secondary education systems: the 8 public systems (one in each state and territory), some 16 Catholic systems (systemic and independent sectors in each state and territory), 16 Anglican systems, 16 other Christian systems, and another 24 systems which are non-religious or based on religions other than Christianity.
>
> It is all very well to promote or defend public choice in education, but public choice considerations need to be weighed up against considerations of sound economic management relating to scale economies and affordability, and substantive issues of social cohesion, safety, child protection etc. The 80 or more education divisions referred to above impose significant scale diseconomies as well as the obvious social divisions and opportunities to buck-pass even on matters as critical as child protection from sexual abuse.
>
> In the vicinity of $2 billion per annum, presently tied up in wasteful costs of bureaucratic duplication and coordination, could be made available to school "coalfaces" if the state, territory and federal education systems coalesced into nationwide systems. This $2 billion per

annum equates to some $600 for each of our over 3 million school kids, or an average of about $200,000 for each of our 10,000 or so schools.

So are we serious about the education of our children or do we care more for duplicated sacred cow bureaucracies?

I had another letter published in *The Canberra Times* on 18 October 2000, as follows, which relates to values and standards which I believe federal, state and territory governments should aim to achieve:

If Dr Kemp and our federal and state parliaments are serious about education's role in improving society, they should employ funding incentives for non-government schools which encourage unambiguously meritorious public outcomes.

To encourage equal opportunity, tolerance, justice, social cohesion and peace, governments should offer higher funding levels to schools (1) run by (or based upon) religions in which females and males enjoy equal rights (including to all positions of church leadership) and (2) which equally encourage, accept and respect children from families of different ethnicities, religions, sects and philosophical backgrounds.

To further encourage egalitarianism and equal opportunity (and also sound management), governments should provide higher funding levels to schools which charge cheaper fees (a legitimate example of mutual obligation through, in effect, dollar-for-dollar matching).

To encourage democracy and respect for democracy, more funding should go to schools in which school captains, prefects etc. are elected democratically (rather than appointed from above).

To encourage happiness, compassion and plain decency as well as equal opportunity (again), funding rewards should also go to schools which cater well for the needs of children with disabilities, learning difficulties and other special needs.

The world needn't be nearly as harsh as the Kemps, Abbots, Howards and Ruddocks of the world make out it has to be!

The above letter was replied to, and I sent a further letter in to *The Canberra Times* on 23 October 2000, which was not published, as follows:

In their responses to a letter of mine (Letters, 18 October), Michael Cooney and Chris Bitmead (Letters, 23 October) both express fear that the funding incentives I call for would subject non-government schools to increased funding pressures.

I strongly support significant education funding increases across the board - sufficient to ensure that all public and private schools alike receive more funding. OECD comparisons and today's (23 October) editorial ("Disturbing trends in education") certainly support such a move! So my suggestions should be viewed as more carrot than stick. A stick approach – which I would not at this point support – would be to withdraw funding altogether from schools which continue to undermine democracy and equal opportunity laws.

Michael's claim that non-government school funding should be based on parental choice is fine in isolation, but what of the rights of female children placed in schools where they are considered inferior to males in significant respects? It is one thing for religions to be male-biased, quite another for democratic governments. The latter, unconditionally, are equally responsible for the wellbeing of females and males alike, and should not be in the business of supporting any organisation (religious or otherwise) which undermines female equality, democracy, justice, peace, social cohesion etc.

I call on Michael and all religious people of good conscience to write letters to their religious leaders to ask them to end increasingly unacceptable anti-female restrictions. Let's help Australia help make the world a more just and peaceful place for all!

I also had an edited version of the following letter – similar to that above – published in *The Australian* newspaper around late September 2000:

Nothing printed in The Australian in recent times has the potential to inspire more good in the world than the superb letter by Michael E. Walsh (Letters, 23-24/9) advocating an end to the ban on women priests.

Church prohibition of female priests has clearly served to reinforce male-biased political and military cultures so closely connected with human rights abuses, genocides and warlike conditions across the globe. On a global scale, the female priesthood ban has been the thin end of a wedge the thick end of which are the constant threats of holy wars and the appalling human rights conditions which females are subject to in countries such as Afghanistan.

An impartial perusal of research findings across military history, gender studies, biology, criminology and related disciplines reveals unambiguously that males – Stalin, Hitler and Milosevic being just few among many – are far more inclined than females to wage wars and commit crimes ranging from assault through unlawful homicide to genocide. Statistics indeed suggest that male involvement in such barbarity has exceeded that of females by a ratio in the order of 100 to 1, yet despite this track record, our societies have persisted with males and females in the very same 100 to 1 or so ratio in positions of leadership in the dominant institutions. But whereas past ages could be excused for allowing such a state of nature to persist in view of the paucity of empirical knowledge available to guide public policy, ignorance no longer constitutes a valid excuse.

If the major religions fail to elevate their teachings and practices to standards expected across the general community under hard won human rights laws, our societies and the world as a whole must be protected from their destructive influences though appropriate legislation. There is no point in having laws asserting equal human rights for women and other groups if the same are overwhelmingly undermined by the enormous thought controlling influence of the major religious and political institutions of the world.

As the countries where women first gained the vote (it is sobering to note that Switzerland, for example, only gave its women the vote in 1971), Australia and New Zealand can and should lead the way on this matter through the use of utterly principled school funding criteria. It is quite unsatisfactory that governments effectively encourage human rights injustices at local, national and global levels by continuing to fund schools based on religions which advocate and sometimes demand acceptance of views which breach fundamental human rights laws. At present, through significant funding of Christian schools (of both "C" and "P" types), our governments effectively endorse the male-bias of Christianity among other human rights injustices. Governments should simply withhold funding from schools which "teach" messages (religious or otherwise) which undermine the equality of females and other disadvantaged and discriminated against groups.

Substantive education, morality, democracy and human rights laws alike are fundamentally compromised by the absurdity of a male-biased Supreme Being. A God who regards males as more significant than females is surely neither believable to a free-thinker, nor at any rate worthy of respect.

Governments and the public must be clear on this: the admission of women into the priesthood by the major churches will be a time for great global celebration, marking a gigantic step forward in the quest to marginalise and ultimately eliminate societal injustices and warlike influences across the world.

Then in October 2000 I offered the following letter to *The Australian*, which covers similar subject matter to the above letters, but which was not published:

> The debate over public and private school funding has focused on problems and inputs. The following solutions and incentives encourage unambiguously meritorious public good outcomes:
>
> 1. Abolish State and Territory governments and transfer the billions of dollars per annum currently tied up in duplicated bureaucracy into public and private schools alike, to help bring them within the financial reach of as many families as possible;
>
> 2. Use Centrelink parenting payment data to assess the wealth of parents of children attending schools;
>
> 3. Encourage egalitarianism and equal opportunity (and also sound management) by providing higher funding levels to schools which charge cheaper fees;
>
> 4. Encourage improved human rights, equal opportunity and justice by providing higher funding levels to schools run by (or based upon) religions in which females and males enjoy equal rights (including to all positions of church leadership);
>
> 5. Encourage a more peaceful society, and the breaking down of religious and sectarian division, by providing higher funding levels to schools which equally accept and respect children from families of different religions, sects and philosophical backgrounds; and
>
> 6. Encourage democracy and respect for democracy by providing higher funding levels to schools in which school captains, prefects etc. are elected democratically (rather than appointed from above).
>
> As the Centenary of Federation approaches let us become a genuinely just and clever country! Future generations deserve nothing less!
>
> Surely it must be clear to all concerned that we have a rare opportunity to move the world forward in a way which stands to benefit just so many people, and which can create a better and more just world for our children.

These letters above span several issues, and in large part are provided to offer ideas on how human rights and associated values of justice, tolerance etc. should be factored into the school funding process. The Adelaide Declaration (1999) on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century (as at http://www.mceetya.edu.au/nationalgoals/natgoals.htm) provides some excellent statements on the importance of such values which will now be briefly addressed.

Human Rights etc. and School Funding

The Adelaide Declaration (1999) on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century (as at http://www.mceetya.edu.au/nationalgoals/natgoals.htm) includes the following statements which are excellent and of critical importance in my view:

> 3. Schooling should be socially just, so that:
> 3.1 students' outcomes from schooling are free from the effects of negative forms of discrimination based on sex, language, culture and ethnicity, religion or disability; and of differences arising from students' socio-economic background or geographic location

Most people accept that religions have their positive and negative aspects, and it is also generally accepted that governments should never favour any one religion over another. But, unfortunately, many religions prohibit females, homosexuals and others

from positions of power within their church and other institutions, and otherwise act with prejudice and persecution against females, homosexuals and others, and hence comprehensively violate human rights and equal opportunity laws that the community at large are expected to abide by. There is, by now, abundant empirical evidence that such violent discrimination and prohibitions clearly cause conflicts and wars at levels ranging from individual households to school classrooms and playgrounds (through bigotry and bullying behaviours) and even to the globe as a whole (because, statistically at least, females have proven much less inclined towards violence and warfare etc. than men). And it is extremely important that governments reflect deeply on the question of how government funding of religious schools impacts upon conflicts and wars – at levels ranging from households to the global scale – if such funding effectively encourages a continuance of prejudice, persecution and disempowerment on the basis of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion etc.

Governments Should Only Fund Non-Government Schools Which Show Generosity, Tolerance, Charity, Protection etc. to *All* Their Students

Religions and religious schools seem to have developed the attitude that they have an inherent entitlement to government funding, and I strongly urge this Inquiry and all Australian governments to recognise that, in view of the separation between church and state in Australia, religions and religious schools have no ***inherent*** entitlement to any government funding at all. It is especially important to note that religious schools now receive massive levels of government funding in Australia because the Australian democracy at large has shown a considerable level of ***generosity, tolerance and charity*** towards Christians and followers of other religions who've sought to have their children educated outside of public schools. By funding religious schools so generously over so many years, Australian governments have been inclusive of many religions and their schools, so surely, then, it is wholly reasonable to expect religious schools to show, in return – and as a legitimate example of mutual obligation, a commensurate level of generosity, tolerance, inclusiveness and charity towards females, homosexuals and others, in order to qualify for government funding.

I urge the Inquiry to be mindful of the thousands of homosexual adolescents in Australian schools right now, for example, whose parents have strong homophobic views based on their religious views or other reasons. If parental anti-gay prejudice is backed up by anti-gay prejudice or persecution at religious schools (or indeed any schools – including public schools) such adolescents/children are forced (by their parents) to attend, then these children are wholly reliant upon their state, territory and federal governments for protection against such vile, violent treatment. Australian governments will have failed in their inherent duty to protect these children – in accordance with our domestic and international human rights obligations – if they allow any schools to get away with such violent, unlawful, discriminatory behaviour. When such children commit suicide – ***as they tragically do*** – then the blood of these victims is ultimately on the governments' hands as much as those of the bigoted parent, religion or school involved. Governments ***are*** accountable in such cases!

I urge this Inquiry to recognise that it is essential that Australian governments only fund religious schools if such schools:

(1) are based on religions which already show unconditional tolerance and respect for females, homosexuals and others, and/or

(2) unconditionally and vigilantly protect ***all*** their students against ***all*** forms of prejudice and persecution based on gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion etc.

I acknowledge that many religions fail condition (1) above, but many religious schools – to their credit – very well comply with condition (2) above, and Australian governments in any event clearly have the power and duty to keep all schools accountable in respect of condition (2) as above here.

Governments should never allow religions or religious schools to undermine hard won human rights laws, and obviously should never fund schools which carry out such disgraceful undermining, because such funding would clearly amount to aiding and abetting in violent and unlawful discrimination, persecution and disempowerment.

This then is the best I've been able to manage in the time I've had available given my family, work, PhD and other commitments, and I hope the Inquiry finds something useful in the above and what follows.

Finally, I'd be pleased to attend any public hearing the Committee conducts as part of this Inquiry, in order to clarify or expand upon any parts of my submission here, or to address other questions that I might be well placed to respond to in view of the analyses I've recently completed in respect of the current SES system and its flaws.

APPENDICES 1 and 2 follow below.

Regards,

Mark Drummond
BSc(hons,UNSW) DipEd(CSU) BA(Macq) BE(mech,hons,UNSW) MBA(UC) MPPM(Monash)
[Please also note: I am not a member of any union nor political party, and my wife and I have three kids aged 7, 6 and 3, the eldest two of whom attend a very nice and very good (in our view) low fee systemic Catholic primary school here in the ACT]

APPENDICES TO INQUIRY SUBMISSION DATED 14 JUNE 2004
Papers to follow here are:

- **Appendix 1 (pages 22-36 here): Towards Accurate SES Scores – Comparing the Socio-Economic Status of Families with Children at Government, Catholic and "Other" Non-Government Schools**, by me (Mark D) dated January 2004
- **Appendix 2 (pages 37 to 53 here): Comparison of the socio-economic status of families with children in government, catholic and "other" (i.e. non-catholic non-government) schools (in progress working paper),** by me (Mark D) dated 22 November 2003

Appendix 1

Towards Accurate SES Scores – Comparing the Socio-Economic Status of Families with Children at Government, Catholic and "Other" Non-Government Schools

by Mark Drummond
(University of Canberra and Canberra Institute of Technology)
January 2004 [1]

Introduction

To help inform the debate on apt levels of government funding for non-government schools in Australia, this paper presents substantive comparisons of the socio-economic status (SES) of families of students attending government, catholic and "other" (i.e. non-catholic) non-government schools. Data from the 2001 Census, supplied by the Australian Bureau of Statistics between October 2003 and January 2004, have been used to facilitate these comparisons.

The 2001 Census collected data, for families and households, on the types of schools which school students attended, and on numerous substantive indicators of socio-economic status (SES), including:

- family income levels;
- family structures and parental employment status;
- family housing tenure;
- housing loan levels for families with housing loans;
- the highest level of schooling (up until Year 12 or equivalent) completed by individuals; and
- the highest post-school qualifications achieved by people.

The Census data has school types broken down as Government (Govt.), Catholic (Cath.) and "Other", such that:

- Government schools include all government schools, including selective public schools;
- Catholic schools includes both systemic and non-systemic catholic schools; and
- "Other" schools includes all non-catholic non-government schools.

Through cross-matching of these 2001 Census data, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) can provide specialised tables which compare families with children in government, catholic and "other" schools in terms of socio-economic indicators such as those listed above. Tables 1 and 2 below summarise these comparisons. Table 1 provides actual measures and percentages derived from specialised tables supplied by the ABS, whereas Table 2 provides measures normalised relative to "government schools only" (i.e. "Govt. only") average figures which are set at 100.0

for all measures considered. In all tables shown, row numbers are provided for ease of reference.

Comparative Tables

Table 1: SES Levels of Families with Children at Government, Catholic and "Other" Schools – in Terms of Family Income, Structure and Employment Status, Housing Tenure and Home Loan Levels, and Parental Education Levels

Row No.	Measure, as at 2001 Census time, for Families with Children in Schools of Types Shown in the Columns to the Right Here (% = percentage, ave. = average)	Govt. only	Govt. & Cath. only	Govt., Cath. & Other	Cath. only	Cath. & Other only	Other only	Govt. & Other only	Ave. for all schools
1	**FAMILY INCOME MEASURES**								
2	Median family income per week ($)	894	1,124	1,465	1,181	1,567	1,398	1,462	996
3	Median family income per year ($)	46,668	58,627	76,425	61,634	81,758	72,925	76,271	51,956
4	% of families with nil or negative ave. weekly incomes	0.50	0.43	1.16	0.42	0.86	0.91	0.58	0.53
5	% of families with ave. incomes of $119 per week (i.e. $6,209 per year) or less	0.86	0.70	1.74	0.72	1.37	1.33	0.88	0.88
6	% of families with ave. incomes of $499 per week (i.e. $26,036 per year) or less	23.08	12.66	7.34	12.59	8.55	11.78	9.20	19.39
7	% of families with ave. incomes of $999 per week (i.e. $52,125 per year) or less	56.84	42.61	31.08	39.63	25.78	33.17	30.04	50.23
8	% of families with ave. incomes of $500 per week (i.e. $26,089 per year) or more	76.92	87.34	92.66	87.41	91.45	88.22	90.80	80.61
9	% of families with ave. incomes of $1000 per week (i.e. $52,177 per year) or more	43.16	57.39	68.92	60.37	74.22	66.83	69.96	49.77
10	% of families with ave. incomes of $1200 per week (i.e. $62,613 per year) or more	32.70	45.48	61.78	48.96	65.18	57.54	60.82	39.25
11	% of families with ave. incomes of $1500 per week (i.e. $78,266 per year) or more	20.27	30.25	48.46	33.49	52.95	46.12	48.44	26.30
12	% of families with ave. incomes of $2000 per week (i.e. $104,354 per year) or more	8.04	12.61	25.10	14.88	31.07	26.36	27.10	11.76
13	**FAMILY STATUS AND EMPLOYMENT MEASURES**								
14	% of two parent families with children in which both parents are employed full time	15.15	21.76	22.39	21.71	27.19	23.97	22.79	17.65
15	% of two parent families with children in which neither parent is employed	7.73	5.01	5.89	4.36	2.59	3.94	3.89	6.55
16	% of families with just one parent	26.59	16.77	12.63	16.93	12.42	16.83	13.64	23.21
17	% of one parent families in which parent not employed	13.81	6.59	5.56	5.91	4.83	6.03	5.17	11.14
18	**HOUSING TENURE MEASURES**								
19	% of families living in homes they fully own	24.46	31.63	38.67	34.33	40.47	38.02	37.02	28.21
20	% of families living in homes they are purchasing (i.e. which they own but haven't fully paid the loan off yet)	41.49	48.75	48.07	47.18	45.48	42.60	47.46	42.98
21	% of families living in homes they are renting	30.92	16.58	10.48	15.44	11.28	16.45	13.05	25.73
22	**HOUSING LOAN MEASURES**								
23	Median family housing loans per month ($)	843	916	1,071	956	1,131	1,050	1,018	890
24	Median family housing loans per year ($)	10,121	10,990	12,847	11,475	13,571	12,604	12,214	10,678
25	% of families with housing loans of $999 per month (i.e. $11,988 per year) or less	64.27	57.51	45.42	53.81	41.54	46.75	48.78	59.71
26	% of families with housing loans of $1000 per month (i.e. $12,000 per year) or more	35.73	42.49	54.58	46.19	58.46	53.25	51.22	40.29
27	% of families with housing loans of $2000 per month (i.e. $24,000 per year) or more	5.66	7.44	16.95	8.74	18.65	16.49	14.00	7.70
28	% of families with housing loans of $4000 per month (i.e. $48,000 per year) or more	0.86	1.09	3.05	1.28	3.32	3.23	2.36	1.24
29	**PARENTAL SCHOOL EDUCATION MEASURES**								
30	% of families in which no parent had gone to school	1.01	1.01	0.78	0.75	0.44	0.41	0.50	0.88
31	% of families in which no parent had completed beyond Year 8 at school (including families in which no parent had gone to school)	6.09	4.65	3.03	4.40	2.34	2.55	2.42	5.25
32	% of families in which at least one parent has completed Year 12 or equivalent	36.48	42.22	61.27	47.18	63.59	61.79	62.12	42.13
33	**PARENTAL POST SCHOOL QUALIFICATION MEASURES**								
34	% of families in which at least one parent has completed a Trade Certificate or higher	25.27	29.59	45.94	31.90	45.60	45.99	46.97	29.33
35	% of families in which at least one parent has completed a Bachelor Degree or higher	7.63	8.96	19.14	10.22	20.53	21.32	22.10	9.94
36	% of families in which at least one parent has completed a Postgraduate Degree	0.72	0.57	0.92	0.66	1.67	2.29	1.93	0.90

Table 2: SES Levels of Families with Children at Government, Catholic and "Other" Schools – in Terms of Family Income, Structure and Employment Status, Housing Tenure and Home Loan Levels, and Parental Education Levels – Relative to Government School Average = 100.0

Row No.	Measure, as at 2001 Census time, for Families with Children in Schools of Types Shown in the Columns to the Right Here (% = percentage, ave. = average)	Govt. only	Govt. & Cath. only	Govt., Cath. & Other	Cath. only	Cath. & Other only	Other only	Govt. & Other only	Ave. for all schools
1	**FAMILY INCOME MEASURES**								
2	Median family income per week ($)	100.0	125.6	163.8	132.1	175.2	156.3	163.4	111.3
3	Median family income per year ($)	100.0	125.6	163.8	132.1	175.2	156.3	163.4	111.3
4	% of families with nil or negative ave. weekly incomes	100.0	87.1	233.3	85.6	173.5	182.7	116.1	106.1
5	% of families with ave. incomes of $119 per week (i.e. $6,209 per year) or less	100.0	81.6	201.4	83.9	158.3	154.3	101.6	102.4
6	% of families with ave. incomes of $499 per week (i.e. $26,036 per year) or less	100.0	54.9	31.8	54.6	37.1	51.0	39.9	84.0
7	% of families with ave. incomes of $999 per week (i.e. $52,125 per year) or less	100.0	75.0	54.7	69.7	45.4	58.3	52.8	88.4
8	% of families with ave. incomes of $500 per week (i.e. $26,089 per year) or more	100.0	113.5	120.5	113.6	118.9	114.7	118.0	104.8
9	% of families with ave. incomes of $1000 per week (i.e. $52,177 per year) or more	100.0	133.0	159.7	139.9	172.0	154.9	162.1	115.3
10	% of families with ave. incomes of $1200 per week (i.e. $62,613 per year) or more	100.0	139.1	188.9	149.7	199.3	176.0	186.0	120.1
11	% of families with ave. incomes of $1500 per week (i.e. $78,266 per year) or more	100.0	149.2	239.1	165.2	261.3	227.6	239.0	129.8
12	% of families with ave. incomes of $2000 per week (i.e. $104,354 per year) or more	100.0	157.0	312.3	185.2	386.7	328.1	337.3	146.4
13	**FAMILY STATUS AND EMPLOYMENT MEASURES**								
14	% of two parent families with children in which both parents are employed full time	100.0	143.7	147.8	143.3	179.5	158.2	150.5	116.5
15	% of two parent families with children in which neither parent is employed	100.0	64.8	76.2	56.4	33.5	51.0	50.3	84.7
16	% of families with just one parent	100.0	63.1	47.5	63.7	46.7	63.3	51.3	87.3
17	% of one parent families in which parent not employed	100.0	47.7	40.2	42.8	35.0	43.6	37.4	80.7
18	**HOUSING TENURE MEASURES**								
19	% of families living in homes they fully own	100.0	129.3	158.1	140.3	165.4	155.4	151.3	115.3
20	% of families living in homes they are purchasing (i.e. which they own but haven't fully paid the loan off yet)	100.0	117.5	115.9	113.7	109.6	102.7	114.4	103.6
21	% of families living in homes they are renting	100.0	53.6	33.9	49.9	36.5	53.2	42.2	83.2
22	**HOUSING LOAN MEASURES**								
23	Median family housing loans per month ($)	100.0	108.6	126.9	113.4	134.1	124.5	120.7	105.5
24	Median family housing loans per year ($)	100.0	108.6	126.9	113.4	134.1	124.5	120.7	105.5
25	% of families with housing loans of $999 per month (i.e. $11,988 per year) or less	100.0	89.5	70.7	83.7	64.6	72.7	75.9	92.9
26	% of families with housing loans of $1000 per month (i.e. $12,000 per year) or more	100.0	118.9	152.8	129.3	163.6	149.0	143.4	112.8
27	% of families with housing loans of $2000 per month (i.e. $24,000 per year) or more	100.0	131.4	299.5	154.3	329.6	291.3	247.4	136.0
28	% of families with housing loans of $4000 per month (i.e. $48,000 per year) or more	100.0	126.8	354.5	149.2	385.4	375.4	274.3	144.4
29	**PARENTAL SCHOOL EDUCATION MEASURES**								
30	% of families in which no parent had gone to school	100.0	99.4	76.9	73.5	43.3	40.3	49.6	87.1
31	% of families in which no parent had completed beyond Year 8 at school (including families in which no parent had gone to school)	100.0	76.3	49.8	72.3	38.4	41.9	39.8	86.1
32	% of families in which at least one parent has completed Year 12 or equivalent	100.0	115.7	167.9	129.3	174.3	169.4	170.3	115.5
33	**PARENTAL POST SCHOOL QUALIFICATION MEASURES**								
34	% of families in which at least one parent has completed a Trade Certificate or higher	100.0	117.1	181.8	126.2	180.4	182.0	185.9	116.0
35	% of families in which at least one parent has completed a Bachelor Degree or higher	100.0	117.5	251.0	134.0	269.1	279.6	289.8	130.3
36	% of families in which at least one parent has completed a Postgraduate Degree	100.0	78.3	127.2	91.6	231.8	316.6	266.8	124.6

Approximately 95% of all families have their children in just one school type – i.e. government schools only (approximately 66.4% of all families with one or more school children), catholic schools only (approximately 18.2%), and "other" non-government schools only (approximately 10.2%). Of the remaining 5% of families, about 2.6% have one or more children in government and catholic schools, 2.1% have children in government and "other" schools, 0.4% have children in catholic and "other" schools, and just 0.04% have children in government, catholic and "other" schools.

Whilst most rows of Tables 1 and 2 provide measures reflecting higher levels of SES, rows 4 to 7 (inclusive), 15 to 17, 21, 25, 30 and 31 contain measures generally reflecting lower levels of SES. For example, row 16 provides the percentages of families which are one parent families.

The general pattern here is that "government school only" families are seen to have ***by far*** the lowest values of measures reflecting high SES (see row 1, for example, where the "Govt. only" figure" is easily the lowest in the row), and ***by far*** the highest values of measures reflecting "low SES" (see row 16, for example, where the "Govt. only" figure" is easily the highest in the row). At the other extreme, all four columns containing "Other" schools generally show by far the highest values of measures reflecting high SES (see row 1, for example), and the lowest values reflecting "low SES" (row 31, for example). There are two conspicuous – and perhaps highly significant – exceptions to this general pattern, however, in rows 4 and 5. These two rows show that the proportion of "other" school families with extremely low incomes ($119 per week or less) is significantly higher than for government and catholic school families, which in turn suggests that "other school families" most frequently benefit from family trusts, other tax minimisation schemes, or some other favourable circumstances which government and catholic school families less frequently benefit from.

In order to simplify and clarify the comparison here, Tables 3 and 4 repeat Tables 1 and 2, but only contain the columns for "Govt. only", "Cath. only", "Other only" and "Ave. for all schools". Tables 3 and 4 do, however, contain an additional column titled "Estimate for Top 50% of Other schools", which offers tentative estimates of each measure here for the "top half" of "other" category schools – that is, the 50% of "other" category non-government schools which are of ***highest*** SES. It is assumed here that the "bottom half" of "other" schools – that is, the 50% of "other" category schools of ***lowest*** SES – have average measures here in all cases equating to the corresponding "Cath. only" measures. So, in order to preserve the "Other only" figures, entries in the "Estimate for Top 50% ..." column in all cases need to be such that the "Other only" figure is the exact midpoint between the corresponding "Cath. Only" (= "bottom half of other") and "Estimate for Top 50% ..." (= "top half of other") figures. For example, in row 2 of Table 3, the "Other only" figure of $1,398 is exactly mid-way between the Cath. Only figure of $1,181 and the "Estimate for Top 50% ..." figure of $1,614 (noting rounding off to the nearest whole number).

Tables 3 and 4 now follow.

Table 3: SES Levels of Families with Children at Just Government, Just Catholic and Just "Other" Schools – in Terms of Family Income, Structure and Employment Status, Housing Tenure and Home Loan Levels, and Parental Education Levels

Row No.	Measure, as at 2001 Census time, for Families with Children in Schools of Types Shown in the Columns to the Right Here (% = percentage, ave. = average)	Govt. only	Cath. only	Other only	Ave. for all schools	Estimate for Top 50% of Other schools
1	**FAMILY INCOME MEASURES**					
2	Median family income per week ($)	894	1,181	1,398	996	1,614
3	Median family income per year ($)	46,668	61,634	72,925	51,956	84,216
4	% of families with nil or negative ave. weekly incomes	0.50	0.42	0.91	0.53	1.39
5	% of families with ave. incomes of $119 per week (i.e. $6,209 per year) or less	0.86	0.72	1.33	0.88	1.94
6	% of families with ave. incomes of $499 per week (i.e. $26,036 per year) or less	23.08	12.59	11.78	19.39	10.96
7	% of families with ave. incomes of $999 per week (i.e. $52,125 per year) or less	56.84	39.63	33.17	50.23	26.71
8	% of families with ave. incomes of $500 per week (i.e. $26,089 per year) or more	76.92	87.41	88.22	80.61	89.04
9	% of families with ave. incomes of $1000 per week (i.e. $52,177 per year) or more	43.16	60.37	66.83	49.77	73.29
10	% of families with ave. incomes of $1200 per week (i.e. $62,613 per year) or more	32.70	48.96	57.54	39.25	66.13
11	% of families with ave. incomes of $1500 per week (i.e. $78,266 per year) or more	20.27	33.49	46.12	26.30	58.76
12	% of families with ave. incomes of $2000 per week (i.e. $104,354 per year) or more	8.04	14.88	26.36	11.76	37.84
13	**FAMILY STATUS AND EMPLOYMENT MEASURES**					
14	% of two parent families with children in which both parents are employed full time	15.15	21.71	23.97	17.65	26.22
15	% of two parent families with children in which neither parent is employed	7.73	4.36	3.94	6.55	3.53
16	% of families with just one parent	26.59	16.93	16.83	23.21	16.74
17	% of one parent families in which parent not employed	13.81	5.91	6.03	11.14	6.14
18	**HOUSING TENURE MEASURES**					
19	% of families living in homes they fully own	24.46	34.33	38.02	28.21	41.70
20	% of families living in homes they are purchasing (i.e. which they own but haven't fully paid the loan off yet)	41.49	47.18	42.60	42.98	38.03
21	% of families living in homes they are renting	30.92	15.44	16.45	25.73	17.45
22	**HOUSING LOAN MEASURES**					
23	Median family housing loans per month ($)	843	956	1,050	890	1,144
24	Median family housing loans per year ($)	10,121	11,475	12,604	10,678	13,734
25	% of families with housing loans of $999 per month (i.e. $11,988 per year) or less	64.27	53.81	46.75	59.71	39.69
26	% of families with housing loans of $1000 per month (i.e. $12,000 per year) or more	35.73	46.19	53.25	40.29	60.31
27	% of families with housing loans of $2000 per month (i.e. $24,000 per year) or more	5.66	8.74	16.49	7.70	24.24
28	% of families with housing loans of $4000 per month (i.e. $48,000 per year) or more	0.86	1.28	3.23	1.24	5.18
29	**PARENTAL SCHOOL EDUCATION MEASURES**					
30	% of families in which no parent had gone to school	1.01	0.75	0.41	0.88	0.07
31	% of families in which no parent had completed beyond Year 8 at school (including families in which no parent had gone to school)	6.09	4.40	2.55	5.25	0.70
32	% of families in which at least one parent has completed Year 12 or equivalent	36.48	47.18	61.79	42.13	76.40
33	**PARENTAL POST SCHOOL QUALIFICATION MEASURES**					
34	% of families in which at least one parent has completed a Trade Certificate or higher	25.27	31.90	45.99	29.33	60.08
35	% of families in which at least one parent has completed a Bachelor Degree or higher	7.63	10.22	21.32	9.94	32.43
36	% of families in which at least one parent has completed a Postgraduate Degree	0.72	0.66	2.29	0.90	3.91

Table 4: SES Levels of Families with Children at Just Government, Just Catholic and Just "Other" Schools – in Terms of Family Income, Structure and Employment Status, Housing Tenure and Home Loan Levels, and Parental Education Levels – Relative to Government School Average = 100.0

Row No.	Measure, as at 2001 Census time, for Families with Children in Schools of Types Shown in the Columns to the Right Here (% = percentage, ave. = average)	Govt. only	Cath. only	Other only	Ave. for all schools	Estimate for Top 50% of Other schools
1	**FAMILY INCOME MEASURES**					
2	Median family income per week ($)	100.0	132.1	156.3	111.3	180.5
3	Median family income per year ($)	100.0	132.1	156.3	111.3	180.5
4	% of families with nil or negative ave. weekly incomes	100.0	85.6	182.7	106.1	279.8
5	% of families with ave. incomes of $119 per week (i.e. $6,209 per year) or less	100.0	83.9	154.3	102.4	224.7
6	% of families with ave. incomes of $499 per week (i.e. $26,036 per year) or less	100.0	54.6	51.0	84.0	47.5
7	% of families with ave. incomes of $999 per week (i.e. $52,125 per year) or less	100.0	69.7	58.3	88.4	47.0
8	% of families with ave. incomes of $500 per week (i.e. $26,089 per year) or more	100.0	113.6	114.7	104.8	115.8
9	% of families with ave. incomes of $1000 per week (i.e. $52,177 per year) or more	100.0	139.9	154.9	115.3	169.8
10	% of families with ave. incomes of $1200 per week (i.e. $62,613 per year) or more	100.0	149.7	176.0	120.1	202.3
11	% of families with ave. incomes of $1500 per week (i.e. $78,266 per year) or more	100.0	165.2	227.6	129.8	289.9
12	% of families with ave. incomes of $2000 per week (i.e. $104,354 per year) or more	100.0	185.2	328.1	146.4	470.9
13	**FAMILY STATUS AND EMPLOYMENT MEASURES**					
14	% of two parent families with children in which both parents are employed full time	100.0	143.3	158.2	116.5	173.1
15	% of two parent families with children in which neither parent is employed	100.0	56.4	51.0	84.7	45.6
16	% of families with just one parent	100.0	63.7	63.3	87.3	63.0
17	% of one parent families in which parent not employed	100.0	42.8	43.6	80.7	44.5
18	**HOUSING TENURE MEASURES**					
19	% of families living in homes they fully own	100.0	140.3	155.4	115.3	170.5
20	% of families living in homes they are purchasing (i.e. which they own but haven't fully paid the loan off yet)	100.0	113.7	102.7	103.6	91.7
21	% of families living in homes they are renting	100.0	49.9	53.2	83.2	56.4
22	**HOUSING LOAN MEASURES**					
23	Median family housing loans per month ($)	100.0	113.4	124.5	105.5	135.7
24	Median family housing loans per year ($)	100.0	113.4	124.5	105.5	135.7
25	% of families with housing loans of $999 per month (i.e. $11,988 per year) or less	100.0	83.7	72.7	92.9	61.8
26	% of families with housing loans of $1000 per month (i.e. $12,000 per year) or more	100.0	129.3	149.0	112.8	168.8
27	% of families with housing loans of $2000 per month (i.e. $24,000 per year) or more	100.0	154.3	291.3	136.0	428.3
28	% of families with housing loans of $4000 per month (i.e. $48,000 per year) or more	100.0	149.2	375.4	144.4	601.5
29	**PARENTAL SCHOOL EDUCATION MEASURES**					
30	% of families in which no parent had gone to school	100.0	73.5	40.3	87.1	7.1
31	% of families in which no parent had completed beyond Year 8 at school (including families in which no parent had gone to school)	100.0	72.3	41.9	86.1	11.5
32	% of families in which at least one parent has completed Year 12 or equivalent	100.0	129.3	169.4	115.5	209.4
33	**PARENTAL POST SCHOOL QUALIFICATION MEASURES**					
34	% of families in which at least one parent has completed a Trade Certificate or higher	100.0	126.2	182.0	116.0	237.7
35	% of families in which at least one parent has completed a Bachelor Degree or higher	100.0	134.0	279.6	130.3	425.2
36	% of families in which at least one parent has completed a Postgraduate Degree	100.0	91.6	316.6	124.6	541.6

Discussion

As was discussed previously, the general pattern here is that "government school only" families have ***by far*** the lowest values of measures reflecting high SES (see rows 1-2 and 9-12 of the tables for example), and ***by far*** the highest values of measures reflecting "low SES" (see rows 4-7, 15-17, 21, 25, 30 and 31).

Table 4 is probably the easiest table to clearly interpret, of the four tables presented above, and its contents will now be discussed for each category of measure presented. In respect of all measures here, the main comparison is that between the figures derived directly from 2001 Census data in the "Govt. only", "Cath. Only" and "Other only" columns, keeping in mind that the figures in the rightmost "Estimate for Top 50% of Other schools" columns (in Tables 3 and 4) are unsubstantiated estimates (though bound to be sound estimates for ***some*** percentage of "other" schools, if not necessarily the "top 50%" exactly, for each of the measures in each row of the tables).

Table 4 shows that "other" school families typically, and on average, have far higher incomes than catholic school families, who in turn have significantly higher incomes than government school families – with rows 4 and 5 providing the single curious exceptions, as discussed previously.

The clear overall pattern for family incomes is repeated for the family status and employment measures. Row 14 of all four tables presented thus far show that "other" school families have the highest proportion of two parent families in which both parents work full time, closely followed by catholic school families, with government school families again by far the lowest on this measure. Rows 15-17 also show that the proportions of government school families which are single parent families, or are families without an employed parent, are approximately twice that of catholic and other school families.

The housing tenure pattern is remarkably similar to that for family status and employment. The row 19 figures for home ownership are almost identical to those in row 14, whilst row 21 very closely aligns with rows 15-17. Housing loan figures are similar again – see especially rows 23, 24 and 26-28.

Measures relating to parental educational qualifications again follow the general trend here. Row 30 shows that the percentage of families in which no parent had gone to school is by far the highest among government school families, and by far the lowest among "other" school families, with catholic school families again occupying an intermediate position. An almost identical pattern is observed in row 31 for the percentage of families in which no parent had completed beyond Year 8 at school (including families in which no parent had gone to school). But for measures reflecting higher SES levels, as presented in rows 32 and 34-36, the "other" school figures are by far the highest, and the government school figures by far the lowest, except for row 36 – which shows that the percentage of families in which at least one parent has a postgraduate degree is slightly higher among government school families than for catholic school families.

To better clarify the distinction between the higher SES measures and lower SES measures presented in the preceding tables, Table 4 is re-produced in two separate

tables as follows – Table 4L for the lower SES measures presented in rows 4-7, 15-17, 21, 25, 30 and 31, and Table 4H for the higher SES measures presented in other rows:

Table 4L: SES Levels of Families with Children at Just Government, Just Catholic and Just "Other" Schools – in Terms of Family Income, Structure and Employment Status, Housing Tenure and Home Loan Levels, and Parental Education Levels – Measures Indicating Lower SES Levels – Relative to Government School Average = 100.0

Row No.	Measure, as at 2001 Census time, for Families with Children in Schools of Types Shown in the Columns to the Right Here (% = percentage, ave. = average)	Govt. only	Cath. only	Other only	Ave. for all schools	Estimate for Top 50% of Other schools
1	**FAMILY INCOME MEASURES**					
4	% of families with nil or negative ave. weekly incomes	100.0	85.6	182.7	106.1	279.8
5	% of families with ave. incomes of $119 per week (i.e. $6,209 per year) or less	100.0	83.9	154.3	102.4	224.7
6	% of families with ave. incomes of $499 per week (i.e. $26,036 per year) or less	100.0	54.6	51.0	84.0	47.5
7	% of families with ave. incomes of $999 per week (i.e. $52,125 per year) or less	100.0	69.7	58.3	88.4	47.0
13	**FAMILY STATUS AND EMPLOYMENT MEASURES**					
15	% of two parent families with children in which neither parent is employed	100.0	56.4	51.0	84.7	45.6
16	% of families with just one parent	100.0	63.7	63.3	87.3	63.0
17	% of one parent families in which parent not employed	100.0	42.8	43.6	80.7	44.5
18	**HOUSING TENURE MEASURES**					
21	% of families living in homes they are renting	100.0	49.9	53.2	83.2	56.4
22	**HOUSING LOAN MEASURES**					
25	% of families with housing loans of $999 per month (i.e. $11,988 per year) or less	100.0	83.7	72.7	92.9	61.8
29	**PARENTAL SCHOOL EDUCATION MEASURES**					
30	% of families in which no parent had gone to school	100.0	73.5	40.3	87.1	7.1
31	% of families in which no parent had completed beyond Year 8 at school (including families in which no parent had gone to school)	100.0	72.3	41.9	86.1	11.5

With all 11 measures presented in Table 4L above, government school figures comfortably exceed the corresponding catholic school figure. Government school figures also generally very comfortably exceed "other" school figures, with the measures in rows 4 and 5 being the only exceptions here, as has already been noted.

The difference between the catholic and "other" school measures is often quite minimal here, though it is noteworthy that among the nine measures presented in rows 6-7, 15-17, 21, 25 and 30-31, the "other" schools figure is lower than the catholic school figure in seven of these nine measures – including the two family income measures (rows 6 and 7), the home loan measure (row 25) and the parental school education measures (rows 30 and 31).

Table 4H now presents the rows from Table 4 which are indicative of higher SES levels.

Table 4H: SES Levels of Families with Children at Just Government, Just Catholic and Just "Other" Schools – in Terms of Family Income, Structure and Employment Status, Housing Tenure and Home Loan Levels, and Parental Education Levels – Measures Indicating Higher SES Levels – Relative to Government School Average = 100.0

Row No.	Measure, as at 2001 Census time, for Families with Children in Schools of Types Shown in the Columns to the Right Here (% = percentage, ave. = average)	Govt. only	Cath. only	Other only	Ave. for all schools	Estimate for Top 50% of Other schools
1	**FAMILY INCOME MEASURES**					
2	Median family income per week ($)	100.0	132.1	156.3	111.3	180.5
3	Median family income per year ($)	100.0	132.1	156.3	111.3	180.5
8	% of families with ave. incomes of $500 per week (i.e. $26,089 per year) or more	100.0	113.6	114.7	104.8	115.8
9	% of families with ave. incomes of $1000 per week (i.e. $52,177 per year) or more	100.0	139.9	154.9	115.3	169.8
10	% of families with ave. incomes of $1200 per week (i.e. $62,613 per year) or more	100.0	149.7	176.0	120.1	202.3
11	% of families with ave. incomes of $1500 per week (i.e. $78,266 per year) or more	100.0	165.2	227.6	129.8	289.9
12	% of families with ave. incomes of $2000 per week (i.e. $104,354 per year) or more	100.0	185.2	328.1	146.4	470.9
13	**FAMILY STATUS AND EMPLOYMENT MEASURES**					
14	% of two parent families with children in which both parents are employed full time	100.0	143.3	158.2	116.5	173.1
18	**HOUSING TENURE MEASURES**					
19	% of families living in homes they fully own	100.0	140.3	155.4	115.3	170.5
20	% of families living in homes they are purchasing (i.e. which they own but haven't fully paid the loan off yet)	100.0	113.7	102.7	103.6	91.7
22	**HOUSING LOAN MEASURES**					
23	Median family housing loans per month ($)	100.0	113.4	124.5	105.5	135.7
24	Median family housing loans per year ($)	100.0	113.4	124.5	105.5	135.7
26	% of families with housing loans of $1000 per month (i.e. $12,000 per year) or more	100.0	129.3	149.0	112.8	168.8
27	% of families with housing loans of $2000 per month (i.e. $24,000 per year) or more	100.0	154.3	291.3	136.0	428.3
28	% of families with housing loans of $4000 per month (i.e. $48,000 per year) or more	100.0	149.2	375.4	144.4	601.5
29	**PARENTAL SCHOOL EDUCATION MEASURES**					
32	% of families in which at least one parent has completed Year 12 or equivalent	100.0	129.3	169.4	115.5	209.4
33	**PARENTAL POST SCHOOL QUALIFICATION MEASURES**					
34	% of families in which at least one parent has completed a Trade Certificate or higher	100.0	126.2	182.0	116.0	237.7
35	% of families in which at least one parent has completed a Bachelor Degree or higher	100.0	134.0	279.6	130.3	425.2
36	% of families in which at least one parent has completed a Postgraduate Degree	100.0	91.6	316.6	124.6	541.6

In all 19 measures presented in Table 4H, government school figures are less than the corresponding "other" school figures. And in all measures here besides that of row 36, government school figures are also less than the corresponding catholic school figures.

When one works down Table 4H from row 8 to row 12, one row at a time, it is clear that "other" and catholic school measures exceed government school measures by increasing extents as the measures refer to increasingly high SES levels – in this case on the basis of family income. A similar trend is observed moving down from row 26 to row 28 for housing loans, and from row 34 to 36 for parental post school qualifications, though the catholic school figures in rows 28 and 36 buck the trend here – especially those in row 36. Significantly, these trends demonstrate that families are increasingly likely to have children in "other" category schools as their SES levels increase towards extremely high SES levels.

The figures in row 20 display a different pattern to that evident in the other rows in Table 4H, though this row does not of itself provide a very specific indication of SES. The main purpose of row 20 here is to provide an indication as to the proportions of families for which the housing loan figures in rows 23-28 are applicable.

Improved SES Scores

The comparative measures presented in the tables herein provide accurate indications as to what competent, honest, even-handed SES scores should look like – at least in terms of averages across catholic and "other" schools relative to government school average benchmarks. The tables which are normalised relative to government school averages, set to 100.0, most directly indicate the magnitudes of competent SES scores for schools here – that is, Tables 2, 4, 4L and 4H, though Tables 4, 4L and 4H only will be discussed henceforth in order to clearly distinguish between the three separate school sector categories under comparison here.

The family income measures in rows 2 and 3 of Tables 4 and 4H are arguably the clearest and most comprehensive indicators of SES of all those provided here, in that they reflect averages of ***all*** families in each respective school category. Measures in many rows here are not fully comprehensive measures, because they only represent a fraction of all families in each school sector category. In row 32, for example, the measure overlooks those families in which no parent has completed Year 12 or equivalent. Less than fully comprehensive measures can still, however, be highly significant indicators of SES levels. Furthermore, it can be seen that such figures in rows 9, 14, 19, 23-24, 26, 32 and 34, for example, show a remarkably similar pattern to that evident in rows 2 and 3. To emphasise this regularity of pattern, and high correlation among measures, Table 4P (P for "pattern") provides just those measures in rows 2-3, 9, 14, 19, 23-24, 26, 32 and 34 of Table 4H, as follows:

Table 4P: Selected SES Levels of Families with Children at Just Government, Just Catholic and Just "Other" Schools – in Terms of Family Income, Structure and Employment Status, Housing Tenure and Home Loan Levels, and Parental Education Levels – Measures Indicating Higher SES Levels – Relative to Government School Average = 100.0

Row No.	Measure, as at 2001 Census time, for Families with Children in Schools of Types Shown in the Columns to the Right Here (% = percentage, ave. = average)	Govt. only	Cath. only	Other only	Ave. for all schools	Estimate for Top 50% of Other schools
1	**FAMILY INCOME MEASURES**					
2	Median family income per week ($)	100.0	132.1	156.3	111.3	180.5
3	Median family income per year ($)	100.0	132.1	156.3	111.3	180.5
9	% of families with ave. incomes of $1000 per week (i.e. $52,177 per year) or more	100.0	139.9	154.9	115.3	169.8
13	**FAMILY STATUS AND EMPLOYMENT MEASURES**					
14	% of two parent families with children in which both parents are employed full time	100.0	143.3	158.2	116.5	173.1
18	**HOUSING TENURE MEASURES**					
19	% of families living in homes they fully own	100.0	140.3	155.4	115.3	170.5
22	**HOUSING LOAN MEASURES**					
23	Median family housing loans per month ($)	100.0	113.4	124.5	105.5	135.7
24	Median family housing loans per year ($)	100.0	113.4	124.5	105.5	135.7
26	% of families with housing loans of $1000 per month (i.e. $12,000 per year) or more	100.0	129.3	149.0	112.8	168.8
29	**PARENTAL SCHOOL EDUCATION MEASURES**					
32	% of families in which at least one parent has completed Year 12 or equivalent	100.0	129.3	169.4	115.5	209.4
33	**PARENTAL POST SCHOOL QUALIFICATION MEASURES**					
34	% of families in which at least one parent has completed a Trade Certificate or higher	100.0	126.2	182.0	116.0	237.7

Table 4P and other earlier tables indicate that if government school averages are used as a benchmark – competent, even-handed SES scores should average out to about 130 or so for catholic schools and about 150 or so for "other" non-government schools. These estimates are vastly higher than the SES scores that have actually been assigned to non-government schools for the purpose of determining the levels of funding they receive from the federal government. Systemic catholic schools have been assigned SES scores of 96 throughout Australia, except for the Australian Capital Territory where scores of 100 have been assigned. Independent schools have been assigned SES scores ranging from 57 to 133, averaging out to approximately 102.9. [2] These SES scores assigned to systemic catholic schools and independent schools alike are clearly much too low to provide meaningful indicators of SES levels relative to government school average SES levels.

The absurdly low scores presently in place for Australian non-government schools arise due to several methodological deficiencies, perhaps the most prominent of which is the simple fact that SES scores for independent schools are based largely on families ***other than*** the actual families of the actual children at actual schools. Trinity Grammar in Sydney, which charged annual tuition fees of over $14,000 in 2003, is one very high fee school which has received considerable media attention in recent times, on account of being due to receive $5 million in federal government funding in 2004 on the basis of its assessed SES score of 112. [3]

To be competent, SES scores for particular schools should obviously reflect SES levels of these actual schools themselves, and the actual families of the actual students at these actual schools. But the actual families of the actual students at Trinity Grammar, for example, only contribute a very small fraction towards Trinity's SES

score of 112. This 112 arises largely on account of the SES levels of the many other people who, yes, live in the same Census collection districts as families with kids at Trinity, but who are typically, and on average, of vastly lower SES than Trinity families, and whose school children – if they have any – attend public or systemic catholic schools. The system of determining SES scores for independent schools is squarely within the "too absurd to be true" category, and is invariably likely to generate scores which systematically underestimate the true SES levels of schools – with the extent of underestimation likely to be the greatest for the schools whose children come from the families with the highest substantive SES levels – and in particular, very high fee schools. This is apparently why the public outcry – even from within non-government school circles – has been the greatest with respect to the many millions of dollars in federal government funding that has gone to the highest fee private schools whose students are typically, and on average, from families of extremely high SES. [4]

When comparing the government, catholic and "other" sector figures in the tables here, it is also important to recognise the presence of significant intra-sector variations, especially in respect of schools at the higher SES ends of the three school sector categories here.

Public schools operate in geographical locations ranging from Australia's highest SES suburbs in Sydney and Melbourne to the lowest SES areas in Australia – which are generally found on urban outskirts and rural areas. Students at public schools that are selective or situated in wealthy or otherwise advantaged locations are likely to be in families whose SES levels approach or even surpass those of many families with children at catholic and "other" schools.

Whilst the bulk of catholic schools in Australia are systemic or parish schools with fees typically in the order of $1000 to $2000 per child per year, a significant minority of catholic schools charge fees around the $10,000 per child per year mark – approaching the fee levels of the most expensive schools in the country. [5] Most expensive catholic schools are non-systemic ones, but several Melbourne catholic schools charging annual tuition fees of around $10,000, or more, are actually systemic catholic schools. [6] It is clear, then, that a significant minority of catholic schools – systemic and non-systemic alike – are more or less as advantaged, in terms of SES levels, as the wealthiest and most advantaged among "other" non-government schools.

Whilst non-systemic catholic schools are generally classified as "independent schools", such schools are likely to fall within the catholic school category here, given how the 2001 Census questions dealt with these school sector distinctions. So schools classified as "other" here will in general be non-catholic schools generally classified as independent schools. Such non-catholic independent schools range from very low fee Aboriginal community schools – which serve students from very low SES backgrounds, through many other mainly (thought not always) religious schools charging varying fee levels, up to 100 or so independent schools which charge annual tuition fees in excess of $10,000 per child (based on 2003 figures). These 100 or so very high fee schools make up approximately 11% of Australia's 885 "other" (non-catholic) independent schools. [7] And the SES levels of families with children in these very high fee schools ($10,000 or higher) are obviously generally significantly higher than the average SES levels of families across ***all*** "other" category schools – many of

which charge fees below $5000 per child per year (see note 5 again, which provides that independent school fees averaged $5267 per student in 2001). For example, row 32 of Table 3 shows that 61.79% of families with children in "other" schools have at least one parent who has completed Year 12 or equivalent, but among schools charging fees of $10,000 or more, this 61.79% figure might well be 95% or even higher. As has been stated previously, the estimates in the rightmost columns in Tables 3 through to 4P above, whilst not precise, are certainly meaningful for ***some*** fractions of "other" category schools (though not necessarily exactly 50%, and probably a different fraction for the different measures in the different rows), but even these figures would almost certainly still significantly underestimate the SES levels of most or all "other" category schools – and indeed some catholic schools as well – which charge annual fees of $10,000 or more.

The empirical evidence presented herein suggests that SES scores for all non-government schools charging fees of $10,000 or more (whether systemic catholic, non-systemic catholic, or non-catholic) would need to be approximately 200, or even more than 200, in order to competently and even-handedly refect the true SES levels of families with children at these very high fee schools. As things presently stand, the 100 or so independent schools which charged annual tuition fees of $10,000 or more in 2003 had SES scores ranging from 103 to 133, with an average of approximately 118. [8] As the data presented herein demonstrates, SES scores of just 103 to 133, averaging out to 118, are clearly far too low to be competent and even-handed indictors even for catholic schools, let alone "other" category schools on average, and these figures are not possibly anywhere near as high as they'd need to be in order to accurately and honestly reflect real SES levels of the most expensive 11% of independent schools in Australia which charged annual tuition fees of $10,000 or more in 2003.

Conclusions

Whereas systemic catholic schools presently receive federal funding on the basis of assessed, or agreed, SES scores of 96 throughout Australia except for the ACT, and 100 in the ACT, the substantive comparisons presented herein indicate that competent, even-handed and honest SES scores for systemic catholic schools ought to be in the vicinity of 120 to 130 or so on average, and probably about 200 or more for those systemic catholic schools which charge annual tuition fees of $10,000 or so or more (such as those listed in note 6 following). SES scores of 200 or so or more would also appear to accurately describe non-systemic catholic schools charging annual fees of $10,000 or more.

And, whereas Australia's 885 or so non-catholic independent schools presently receive federal funding on the basis of assessed SES scores ranging between 57 and 133, averaging approximately 103, the substantive comparisons here indicate that competent, even-handed and honest SES scores for these non-catholic independent schools ought to be in the vicinity of 150 or so on average, and probably about 200 or more for the 100 or so non-catholic independent schools which charge annual tuition fees of $10,000 or so or more.

If competent SES scores were applied to Australia's non-government schools under otherwise unchanged federal government funding arrangements, most or all non-government schools would receive significantly less than their present levels of federal government funding. Current funding arrangements are at best an exhibition of incompetent public administration and wasteful economic mismanagement, and, at worst, nothing short of fraudulent on the part of those schools and others who have lobbied hard and succeeded in gaining significant financial advantage – especially for the wealthiest highest fee schools – on the basis of SES scores which are low to the point of being manifestly false, misleading and deceptive.

Notes and Sources

1. All details of derivations of the comparative measures provided herein are available via email at markld@ozemail.com.au, normal postal mail at 5 Loddon Street Kaleen ACT 2617, or phone at 02 6255 0772.

2. These figures of 57, 133 and 102.9 are shown on pages 5 (the 57 and 133) and 1 (the 102.9) of a graphs compilation found at the (Commonwealth) Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) website at http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/ses/graphs.PDF.

3. This $5 million grant to Trinity Grammar has been reported in several newspaper articles including:

'Taxes help elite school to rebuild', by Linda Silmalis, on page 7 of the Sunday Telegraph, dated 4 January 2004; and
'School fees up but drift gathers pace', by Linda Doherty, on page 1 of the Sydney Morning Herald, dated 5 January 2004.

4. See for example, the article 'Why the new funding system for schools is a scandal', by Tony Keenan, the secretary of the Victorian Independent Education Union, which appeared in the Melbourne Age on 16 June 2003 (see at http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2003/06/15/1055615673363.html), which includes the following extract:

> Under the old formula, the wealthiest schools received the least amount of money, the poorest, the most. Under the new formula, each school receives funding on a per student basis, depending on their SES score. Unlike other forms of means testing, the SES model does not assess the socioeconomic status of individual families, rather the socio-economic status of various geographic census areas.
>
> Catholic schools stayed outside the SES system and essentially have not received any new funding increases under this new model, other than cost of living increases.

The result is that the new funding model has delivered significant funding increases to well-resourced non-government schools but little or no increase to the poorer schools.

5. Table 26 of Appendix 1 (the Statistical Annex) to the 'National Report on Schooling in Australia 2001 (found online at http://online.curriculum.edu.au/anr2001/pdfs/2001_Statswithlinks_15_9_03.pdf) shows that systemic catholic schools received an average of $1421 in fees per student, compared with $5267 for independent schools.

6. For example, the following fees for 2003 have been obtained at the Melbourne's Child Schools Directory at http://www.melbourneschild.com.au/melbourneschild/alpha_schools_directory.asp:
Genazzano FCJ College, Kew, Girls only, Yr 12 fees $10,392;
Loreto Mandeville Hall, Toorak, Girls only, Yr 12 fees $11,010;
Sacre Coeur, Glen Iris, Catholic Independent Girls School, Yr 12 fees $10,056; and
St Kevin's College, Toorak, Catholic Independent Boys School, Yr 12 fees $9550.
All four of these schools have been assigned SES levels of 96 – as is the case for all systemic catholic schools Australia-wide, except those in the ACT where the systemic catholic schools are assigned SES scores of 100.

7. According to Table 1 on page 7 of ABS Cat. 4221.0, titled 'Schools Australia: 2002', there were 966 independent schools in Australia in 2002. An Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA) publication titled 'Independent Schooling in Australia 2003' (edited by Caroline Taylor-Steele, published 2003), refers to this 966 figure, on pages 1 and 17, and also states that this 966 includes 81 catholic independent schools. It hence follows that there were some 885 non-catholic independent schools in Australia in 2002 (i.e. 966 minus 81). Finally, the author has confirmed that approximately 100 independent schools charged annual tuition fees of $10,000 per student or more in 2003, and 100 is 11.3% of 885.

8. These figures of 103, 133 and 118 are obtained from the SES scores as published in the document titled 'Funding for Non-Government Schools 2001-2004' (at http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/ses/table.pdf), and school fee details compiled by the author.

Appendix 2

Comparison of the socio-economic status of families with children in government, catholic and "other" (i.e. non-catholic non-government) schools

(in progress working paper)

by Mark Drummond

as at 22 November 2003

Introduction

The SES (socio-economic status) model of funding for independent schools relies upon accurate SES indices for schools which receive funding under this model. Unfortunately, the SES indices used to describe schools have been less than competent and equitable because the data used to establish SES indices for independent schools has been largely unrelated to the actual families of the actual students at these individual schools. This paper, like many others before it, will explain how the SES indices developed for independent schools are generally much lower than they should be, and how this results in hundreds of millions of dollars each year going to schools which have no legitimate, substantive entitlement to the funds they are receiving.

The 2001 Census was the first which has collected data which distinguishes between government, catholic and "other" (non-catholic non-government) schools. This 2001 Census data is briefly described and then applied herein to develop some SES indices – at the national and state and territory levels, by school sector – which reflect the real level of SES advantage enjoyed, typically and on average, by independent schools and their students.

The SES Model – Funding Formulas and Flaws

The federal government's SES model for funding government schools awards independent private schools (i.e. non-government schools other than systemic/parish catholic schools) on the basis of their assessed socio-economic status (SES) index. The SES index of a school determines the amount of finding the school receives as a percentage of Average Government School Recurrent Costs (AGSRC) benchmarks, such that schools with an SES index of 130 or more receive the minimum level of 13.7% of AGSRC, whilst schools with an SES index of 85 or less receive the maximum level of 70.0% of AGSRC. In 2003, AGSRC levels were set at $7469 per secondary student. So, under the SES model, independent secondary schools have all received between $1023 (i.e. 13.7 % of $7469) and $5228 (70.0%) per student in 2003. For schools with SES scores between 85 and 130, the % of AGSRC assigned to non-government schools is:

$$\%\text{AGSRC} = \frac{13.7-70}{130-85} \times (SES - 85) + 70 \qquad \ldots[1]$$

which reduces to

$$\%\text{AGSRC} = 176.3444 - 1.25111 \times (SES) \quad \ldots[2]$$

So, for 2003, with AGSRC levels were set at $7469 per secondary student, funding per secondary student (FPSS) can be expressed as:

$$\text{FPSS} = \%\text{AGSRC} \times \$7469$$

so

$$\text{FPSS} = \$7469 \times [(176.3444 - 1.25111 \times (SES)] \quad \ldots[3]$$

Equations [1] –[3] above describe the sliding scale used to determine funding levels.

So all independent schools received at least the minimum allocation of $1023 (i.e. 13.7 % of $7469) per student in 2003. Many people would no doubt consider that such funding levels are grossly excessive when full and proper account is taken of the fee levels and exclusionary policies of many independent schools. Why, for example, should high SES schools, which charge fees in excess of AGSRC ($7469 per secondary student in 2003), be given very significant levels of funding ($1023 per student per year or more) which enable such schools to extend on the immense financial advantage that they attract to themselves on the basis of high fees and other sources of income?

The 13.7% and 70.0% figures appearing in [1] above reflect political value judgements, and many would think that the 13.7% ought to be reduced to zero, but, notwithstanding such concerns, the SES model is clearly based on a substantially sound needs-based rationale, with schools of higher SES should receive less funding, and vice-versa. But, in order to be competent and equitable, the SES funding model relies upon competent and equitable SES indexes for independent schools. It is here that the implementation of the whole system has been incompetent to the point of being utterly farcical. The SES indices that have been calculated that have only to the most superficial level reflected the true SES level of the children at particular schools and their families, and, as a result, ridiculous SES indices have been determined for most independent schools.

One would think, for example, that a great many independent schools – especially the very expensive ones – would have SES indices well exceeding 130. But the 98 independent schools which (it has been confirmed by the author) charged $10,000 or more in fees in 2003 have an average SES index of just 117.5; 33 (just over one-third) of these 98 have SES indices of less than 115 (and hence receive over $1400 per student per year); 18 have an index of less than 110 (so receive over $1900 per student per year), and five are below 105 (so receive over $2400 per student per year). Kings School in Parramatta, for example, has been assigned an SES score of just 116, and has attracted a massive funding boost because of this. If it's SES score was 130 or more – as it obviously should be (it's fees are $16,000 per year) – then Kings would receive about $1300 less per student per year than it does on the basis of its SES index of 116.

These figures should ring alarm bells – an SES index of 105 or so should reflect a school of just slightly above average SES – which is obviously never even close to being the case among schools which charges fees of over $10,000 a year.

So why are the SES scores of independent schools so counter-intuitive? Why, in particular, is it that many of the most expensive independent schools have SES indices which are so much lower than their fees and common sense would indicate beyond any real doubt?

The main problem with the SES index determination process is not the mathematical process itself – that is quite fine. The problem, rather, is that the data used to calculate a given school's SES index are the SES levels not just of the families sending their kids to that particular independent school, but of *all families* resident in the same Census collection districts as the families with children at that particular school. So Kings and other high fee schools have ended up with ridiculously low and unrepresentative SES indices – and hence massive funding boosts – in very large part because of the SES levels of families who, yes, are resident within the same Census collection districts as Kings boys' families *but who do not attend Kings nor have anything at all to do with Kings!* Perhaps 1 to 10 percent of the data used to obtain Kings' SES index is based on the actual families of the actual boys at Kings themselves, but the remaining 90 to 99 percent or so of the data used to determine Kings' SES index is data for families who have nothing to do with Kings at all. rather on *all families* in census collection districts where families of . So the SES index for schools like Kings might reflect the actual families with boys at Kings in a weighting of 1 to 10 percent or so,

So Kings and other high fee schools are receiving millions of dollars each year largely because of the generally modest level of wealth of families sending their kids to *government schools* – who just happen to live in the same census collection district as families with boys in Kings. This is a classic case of "garbage in, garbage out", and, as a result, hundreds of millions of dollars in taxpayers' money is going to schools on most blatantly false pretences. Massive levels of misappropriations have occurred on a grand scale here. And, indeed, if an intent to mislead or deceive can be established in respect of the funding flows which have eventuated here, it might be necessary and apt to call in the police to investigate this situation as a case of fraud, which is of course a very serious crime. Section 82 of the Victorian Crimes Act (1958), for example, states as follows:

> **82. *Obtaining financial advantage by deception***
> ***S. 82(1) amended by Nos 9576 s. 11(1), 49/1991 s. 119(1)(Sch. 2 item 40), 48/1997 s. 60(1)(Sch. 1 item 59).***
> (1) A person who by any deception dishonestly obtains for himself or another any financial advantage is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to level 5 imprisonment (10 years maximum).
> (2) For purposes of this section **"deception"** has the same meaning as in section 81.
> ***S. 83 amended by Nos 7184 s. 2, 7705 s. 10, 7876 s. 2(3), 7994 s. 5, 8280 s. 11(1)-(3), substituted by No. 8425 s. 2(1)(b).***

Sections 178BA, BB and 527A of the NSW Crimes Act (1900) similarly provide as follows:

Obtaining money etc by deception

178BA Obtaining money etc by deception

(1) Whosoever by any deception dishonestly obtains for himself or herself or another person any money or valuable thing or any financial advantage of any kind whatsoever shall be liable to imprisonment for 5 years.

(2) In subsection (1):

"deception" means deception (whether deliberate or reckless) by words or conduct as to fact or as to law, including:

(a) a deception as to the present intentions of the person using the deception or of any other person, and

(b) an act or thing done or omitted to be done with the intention of causing:

(i) a computer system, or

(ii) a machine that is designed to operate by means of payment or identification,

to make a response that the person doing or omitting to do the act or thing is not authorised to cause the computer system or machine to make.

(3) For the purposes of and without limiting Part 1A, the necessary geographical nexus exists between the State and an offence against this section if the offence is committed by a public official (within the meaning of the *Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988*) and involves public money of the State or other property held by the public official for or on behalf of the State.

Obtaining money etc by false or misleading statements

178BB Obtaining money etc by false or misleading statements

(1) Whosoever, with intent to obtain for himself or herself or another person any money or valuable thing or any financial advantage of any kind whatsoever, makes or publishes, or concurs in making or publishing, any statement (whether or not in writing) which he or she knows to be false or misleading in a material particular or which is false or misleading in a material particular and is made with reckless disregard as to whether it is true or is false or misleading in a material particular shall be liable to imprisonment for 5 years.

(2) For the purposes of and without limiting Part 1A, the necessary geographical nexus exists between the State and an offence against this section if the offence is committed by a public official (within the meaning of the *Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988*) and involves public money of the State or other property held by the public official for or on behalf of the State.

Obtaining money etc by wilfully false representation

527A Obtaining money etc by wilfully false representation

Any person who by any wilfully false representation obtains or attempts to obtain any money or valuable thing, or any benefit, from another person, shall be liable on conviction before a Local Court to imprisonment for 6 months or to a fine of 4 penalty units.

The crime laws in all states and territories define fraud more or less as Victoria and NSW do as above.

Comparisons Possible Using 2001 Census Data and Other Data Sources

The 2001 Census has been the first in which families and households with children at school(s) were asked to state whether their children attended "government", "catholic" or "other non-government" schools. Before 2001, people were only asked to distinguish between government and non-government schools, without any further distinction between catholic and non-catholic schools.

The 2001 Census also, as previously, sought data on incomes and education levels of people in families and households. So the Census has, in effect, generated a giant database which can be thought of as a giant spreadsheet or Table, with each individual, household or family occupying one record, or row, in the Table, and each field/category of data occupying the columns. So for each family, there'd be a column providing, among many other things, family income, highest educational qualification of a family member etc., as well as the type(s) of school(s) attended by kids.

So the 2001 Census has provided data that, when cross-matched within the Census database, enables the determination of average income levels of families with kids in government schools, catholic schools and other (non-government) schools. At the time of 2001 Census, 66.0% of families had children in government schools only, 18.2% had children in catholic schools only, and 10.5% had children in "other" schools only, making up a total of 94.7% of all families with children in schools. The remaining 5.3% or so of families have children in more than one type of school (for example the 2.7% with children in government and catholic schools), but the vast majority (94.7%) of families have children in just one type of school only, and the data for these families enables excellent comparisons of the average socioeconomic status levels of families with children in the various school sectors.

Achieving More Accurate SES Indices

Anyhow, returning now to the SES scores themselves. If the SES model is essentially sound and the major problem lies in gross inaccuracy of the actual SES indices for schools, how, then, can better SES indices be established?

The majority of Australian families with children at school already receive at least some form of Centrelink benefit such as Family Tax Benefits and Child Care Benefits, so the onerous task of submitting forms with precise details of wealth, income and other information is a regular part of life for the majority of Australian families with children in schools.

The following Table appears at http://www.familyassist.gov.au/Internet/FAO/FAO1.nsf/Payments/FTBA.html#COP, showing the "income limit[s] at which Family Tax Benefit stops being paid ($pa)":

Table 1 - Family Tax Benefit Part A Entitlement Limits

No. children	No. children 18-24 years			
0-17 yrs	Nil	One	Two	Three
Nil		$86,956	$95,144	$103,332
One	$85,702	$93,891	$102,079	$111,046
Two	$92,637	$100,826	$109,792	$118,759
Three	$99,572	$108,539	$117,506	$126,473

As Table 1 above shows, even quite high income families are entitled to the Family Tax Benefit Part A, among other Centrelink benefits, but, in order to obtain such benefits, families need to submit their Centrelink forms with accurate income and wealth levels. So Centrelink already holds vast amounts of data - which can provide accurate measures of the SES levels of actual families of actual kids at actual schools. Such data could easily be cross-matched to help formulate accurate SES indices. Indeed such cross-matching already takes place every year between Centrelink and

the Australian Tax Office for all recipients of Centrelink benefits such as Family Tax Benefit A as described in the Table above.

Whilst many very wealthy families presently don't qualify for Centrelink payments like the Family Tax Benefits, and so would not need to submit their income details to Centrelink, asking such high income earners to submit forms to assist in the determination of accurate SES indices would merely amount to asking such high income earners to undertake an activity which the vast bulk of Australian families already routinely do. It was always intended that government grants to independent schools would generate fee reductions, and, in any event, such funding can in a very real sense be considered a form of social security payment, subsidy or benefit that goes to independent schools and their often very wealthy families.

But such forms would not need to be filled out in order to obtain very good SES indices for schools based on the actual families of the actual kids in the actual schools. The government could simply cross-match Australian Tax Office data with the names of the parents of the kids at independent schools, in order to obtain accurate SES details, at least in respect of before and after tax income.

Surveys could be done to accurately measure the educational and occupational status of the actual families of actual kids in particular independent schools.

So if accurate SES indices were obtained, what would they look like? The numbers, that is?

Because funding of independent schools is based upon AGSRC benchmarks, it would be competent and equitable to calibrate SES scores relative to a score of 100 for the average SES level of government schools Australia-wide.

Two significant indicators of a school student's socio-economic background, or socio-economic status (SES), are the level of income of that student's family, and the highest educational qualification of the student's parents.

Table 2 here shows the average income levels of children in the various school sectors – for Australia as a whole and also broken down by state and territory.

Table 2: Comparison of Average Income Levels of Families with Children in Different School Types

Weighted Average Family Incomes ($)	Government	Catholic	Other	All	Non-Govt
AUS	53,731	66,782	76,134	58,643	70,130
NSW	56,355	69,308	79,451	61,185	72,493
VIC	55,039	64,630	80,574	59,971	70,111
QLD	49,296	66,311	70,172	54,435	67,939
WA	53,433	65,857	72,603	57,690	68,399
SA	49,372	61,924	69,847	54,264	65,444
TAS	45,902	59,402	70,801	50,388	63,776
ACT	68,948	80,703	92,441	74,141	83,700
NT	55,711	65,899	73,538	58,609	68,817
AUS	53,731	66,782	76,134	58,643	70,130

MAX	68,948	80,703	92,441	74,141	83,700
MIN	45,902	59,402	69,847	50,388	63,776

In Western Australia, the average in the above Table for "Other" school families ($72,603) exceeds that of government school families ($53,433) by $19,170. In all other states and territories, the "other" school average exceeds the government school average by more than $20,000. Australia-wide, the "other" school average exceeds the government school by over $22,000. This of course conforms well with common sense. Table 26 of the National Report on Schooling in Australia 2001 (found at Appendix 1: Statistical Annex at http://online.curriculum.edu.au/anr2001/pdfs/2001_Statswithlinks_15_9_03.pdf - this document provides a wealth of data relevant to the present paper), for example, shows that independent schools in 2001 received an average of $5267 in fees, compared with $1421 for catholic schools (i.e. systemic/parish catholic schools it would appear – certainly the figures here are in line with what one understands systemic catholic school fees to be, nothing, though that several very high fee catholic schools – especially in Melbourne – are part of the systemic/parish system).

Significantly, even taking into account that Table 2 figures are for 2001, and Table 1 figures are for 2003, it is clear from Tables 1 and 2 – viewed together – that the vast majority of families with children even at independent schools will already be receiving Centrelink Family Tax Benefit Part A – so such families are already subject to Centrelink and ATO data matching. So extending this data matching to DEST should be readily possible and can hardly be considered onerous in any way, or an infringement of privacy beyond what already results from Centrelink-ATO data matching.

What is perhaps surprising is the very considerable extent to which the incomes of catholic school families exceed those of government school families – by over $13,000 on average Australia-wide. It is clear, furthermore, that this additional level of income is not in any significant way due to the often claimed reason that catholic families are larger than families with children in other school types – indeed, many Catholics send their kids to government schools. For example, as was stated earlier, the 2001 Census revealed that 18.2% of families with children at school had children in catholic schools only, and a further 2.7% of families had one or more children in both government and catholic schools. So over 20.9% of families have children in catholic schools, whereas students at catholic schools make up almost exactly 20% of all school children. Furthermore, Table 17 of the Australian Bureau of Statistics Catalogue 4221.0, titled 'Schools Australia 2002', (the 2001 and earlier versions of which previous years did not sub-divide between catholic and independent schools) shows that catholic school students made up 657,210 of the 3,314,923 school students across all systems. So Catholic school students made up 19.8% of all school students in 2002. It is clear, then, that catholic families and catholic school students each make up around 20% of their respective categories, which indicates that the size of catholic families (in terms of numbers of kids in schools) is about equal to the Australia-wide average for all schools).

The 2001 Census revealed that about 1,748,649 families had one or more kids in schools, and ABS Cat. 4221.0 for 2001 showed there were 3,268,141 kids in all schools in Australia. So, Australia-wide across all school sectors, families with kids

in schools had an average of about 1.87 kids at some form a school somewhere. As above, all evidence available indicates that this 1.87 figure is relatively constant across the government, catholic and "other" sectors, though the following Table (which is imperfect on account of unavoidably using 2001 and 2002 data, and omitting the 5.3% or so of families mentioned earlier with children at more than one type of school) suggests that families with kids in non-government schools have a very slightly greater number of children in schools than do their government school counterparts.

Table 3: Estimation of average numbers children in schools per family

Sector	No. students in schools (ABS Cat. 4221.0 2002)	No. of Families with Students in This Sector Only (2001 Census)	Children per family (raw)	Children per family (adjusted)	Relative to Govt = 100
Govt	2268769	1154278	1.97	1.83	100.0
Cath	657210	317994	2.07	1.93	105.1
Other	388944	183447	2.12	1.98	107.9
All Non-Govt	1046154	501441	2.09	1.95	106.1
TOTAL	3314923	1655719	2.00	1.87	101.9

The adjusted figures in the rightmost column above are the most accurate here. These are adjusted to correct for the fact that 2002 student numbers are combined with families as in 2001, and the 5.3% of families with kids in more than one type of school.

Table 3 has been derived here to be considered in conjunction with Table 2. Whilst it can be claimed that non-government school families had slightly more kids in schools on average than did government school families (about 6% more – 1.95 being 6% more than 1.83), this doesn't go close to accounting for the immense extent to which, on average, non-government school families have higher levels of income than government school families, as is made clear in Table 4 below.

Table 4 below is a repeat of Table 2 but with its entries now converted to an index calibrated relative to 100 for the Australia-wide average of families sending their kids to government schools only.

Table 4: Comparison of Average Income Levels of Families with Children in Different School Types – Index Relative to Government School Australia-wide Average = 100

Indices Based on Weighted Average Family Incomes ($)	Government	Catholic	Other	All	Non-Govt
AUS	100.0	124.3	141.7	109.1	130.5
NSW	104.9	129.0	147.9	113.9	134.9
VIC	102.4	120.3	150.0	111.6	130.5
QLD	91.7	123.4	130.6	101.3	126.4
WA	99.4	122.6	135.1	107.4	127.3
SA	91.9	115.2	130.0	101.0	121.8
TAS	85.4	110.6	131.8	93.8	118.7

ACT	128.3	150.2	172.0	138.0	155.8
NT	103.7	122.6	136.9	109.1	128.1
AUS	100.0	124.3	141.7	109.1	130.5
MAX	128.3	150.2	172.0	138.0	155.8
MIN	85.4	110.6	130.0	93.8	118.7

As is shown in Table 4 above, the average incomes of catholic school familles exceed those of government school families by 24.3%. The average incomes of "other" school familles exceed those of government school families by 41.7%. And the average incomes of all non-government school familles exceed those of government school families by 30.5%.

Table 5 now compares families, with children in the different school sectors, based on the percentage of families in which parent(s) hold a university bachelor degree or higher educational qualification.

Table 5: Percentage of Families with Parent(s) Holding a University Bachelor Degree or Higher Educational Qualification

% of Families with Bachelor Degree and Higher	Government	Catholic	Other	All	Non-Govt
AUS	7.6	10.2	21.3	9.64	14.2
NSW	8.7	10.5	22.6	10.39	14.3
VIC	8.2	9.6	25.1	10.49	15.0
QLD	5.3	10.6	16.5	7.46	13.1
WA	6.7	10.2	18.8	8.67	13.5
SA	6.2	8.4	17.2	8.06	12.3
TAS	6.3	8.0	22.8	8.23	13.8
ACT	21.5	17.7	42.4	22.43	24.2
NT	6.5	9.1	15.7	7.63	11.7
AUS	7.6	10.2	21.3	9.64	14.2
MAX	21.5	17.7	42.4	22.4	24.2
MIN	5.3	8.0	15.7	7.5	11.7

Australia-wide, and in all states and territories, the percentage of families in "other" schools with a parent with a bachelor degree or higher is more than 2.5 times higher than the corresponding percentage for government school families.

Table 6 is a repeat of Table 5 but with its entries converted again to an index calibrated relative to 100 for the Australia-wide average of families sending their kids to government schools only:

Table 6: Percentage of Families with Parent(s) Holding a University Bachelor Degree or Higher Educational Qualification – Index Relative to Government School Australia-wide Average = 100

Indices Based on % of Families with Bachelor Degree and Higher	Government	Catholic	Other	All	Non-Govt
AUS	100.0	134.0	279.6	126.3	186.7
NSW	113.8	137.4	295.8	136.3	187.7
VIC	107.8	126.2	329.6	137.5	197.3
QLD	68.9	139.5	215.8	97.8	172.0
WA	88.0	134.2	246.5	113.7	177.1
SA	80.9	110.2	225.7	105.7	161.8
TAS	83.0	105.0	299.4	107.9	180.7
ACT	281.6	232.7	556.4	294.1	316.7
NT	85.2	119.3	205.8	100.1	152.9
AUS	100.0	134.0	279.6	126.3	186.7
MAX	281.6	232.7	556.4	294.1	316.7
MIN	68.9	105.0	205.8	97.8	152.9

Table 7 now provides indices which reflect an equal (i.e. 50:50) weighting of the Indices shown in Tables 3 and 5. These Indices are simply the geometric mean of the two corresponding numbers in Tables 3 and 5.

Table 7: SES Indices (Geometric Mean of Income and Percentage of Families with Bachelor Degree or Higher)

Socio-Economic Status Index = Geometric Mean of % degree or higher and average income indices	Government	Catholic	Other	All	Non-Govt
AUS	100.0	129.0	199.0	117.4	156.1
NSW	109.2	133.1	209.2	124.6	159.1
VIC	105.1	123.2	222.3	123.9	160.5
QLD	79.5	131.2	167.9	99.5	147.5
WA	93.6	128.2	182.5	110.5	150.1
SA	86.2	112.7	171.3	103.3	140.4
TAS	84.2	107.7	198.6	100.6	146.4
ACT	190.1	187.0	309.4	201.4	222.1
NT	94.0	120.9	167.8	104.5	139.9
AUS	100.0	129.0	199.0	117.4	156.1
MAX	190.1	187.0	309.4	201.4	222.1
MIN	79.5	107.7	167.8	99.5	139.9

Tables 2 and 4 through 7 all reveal quite clearly that, based on family income and educational levels, families of children at schools in the "other" category are of very considerably higher SES than families in government and catholic schools.

Expensive Independent Schools Under the Spotlight – Extremely High SES and Exclusivism Forfeits Entitlement to Government Funding

It should be pointed out, furthermore, that, of the 1000 or so independent schools which are presently subject to the SES funding arrangements, many are quite poor Aboriginal Community type schools, many charge fees less than say $3000 per year, and only the most expensive 10% or so of independent schools charge fees in excess of $10,000. So, for example, whereas 41.7% of families with kids just in "other" schools have a parent with a bachelor degree or higher, one might well expect that this figure would be closer to 80% among schools charging fees of $10,000 or more per year. Similarly, whilst average "other" school families receive incomes that are 1.42 times greater than the average of government school families, this 1.42 figure might well comfortably exceed 2 in the case of private schools which charge over $10,000 in annual fees. When one takes into account the fact that the children of most extremely wealthy Australians are overwhelmingly concentrated within very expensive private schools, it becomes clear that SES indices for expensive independent schools (those charging more than say the AGSRC secondary school figure of $7479 a year) almost certainly should be in excess of 200 in order to competently reflect the ratio of advantage enjoyed by rich independent schools and their students and their families, relative to the average situation within government schools and their students and families.

To be competent, funding policies in relation to independent schools need to distinguish between those very exclusivist and expensive private schools – whose fees alone ensure better resourcing than government schools can muster – and those lower fee independent schools which seem to at least make some reasonable effort to apply an ethos of inclusivism and social cohesion. Highly exclusive independent schools, which, through their extremely high fees and their exclusivist policies and ethos generally, appear to have no legitimate entitlement to public funding. Such schools enjoy funding levels which the public system could never match, have no need for public funding, have no interest in making themselves more accessible to "the masses". There is no legitimate basis upon which expensive independent schools are entitled to government funding.

A Competent and Equitable Policy

According to a recently published document titled 'The Facts on Non-Government School Funding in the ACT' (A Joint Paper by the Australian Education Union - ACT Branch and the ACT Council of P&C Associations, October 2003, available online at http://www.aeuact.asn.au/resources/Funding.pdf):

> For example, the ACT Treasury estimated the marginal cost per student in government high schools in 1988-89 at $2352. [source: ACT Treasury, Financial Analysis of Schools Consolidation, July, 1990] This compared to government funding in Category 10 schools (Catholic schools) at the time of $2525 per student. Thus, government funding of Catholic systemic school enrolments at this time did not constitute a saving to the taxpayer. Instead, it was an additional cost.

The marginal cost per student at government high schools can be considered an amount of money which non-government schools might be aptly entitled in order to save the taxpayer money. This cost represents a sort of "break even" point – government funding to non-government schools which exceeds this can be considered wasteful. At present, catholic systemic schools are funded at 51.2% of AGSRC in the ACT (based on an SES index of 100) and at 56.2% of AGSRC (based on an SES index of 96) elsewhere in Australia. Tables above indicate clearly enough that catholic systemic schools are typically of much higher SES than government schools, such that SES indices of 100 and 96 are much lower than apt to reflect typical SES levels of systemic catholic schools. It should be kept in mind that, as mentioned earlier, several systemic catholic schools in wealthy Melbourne suburbs charge fees in excess of $10,000 per year. So, again, the figure of 96 here very significantly under-estimates the real SES levels of typical and average families of children attending systemic catholic schools.

Recommended improvements to the SES model

What follows requires further development and consideration, but there might be merit in a system as follows:

Recommendation 1:

SES indices for all schools should be based on actual data for the actual families of the actual children attending schools – short of that, if the present index determination method is used, indices should only be based on data for families who send their kids to independent/other (non-catholic non-government) schools.

Recommendation 2:

SES indices should be established for all schools and should be adjusted/calibrated such that the Australia-wide government school average is 100.

Recommendation 3:

SES indices should be kept as meaningful ratios rather than transformed into normally distributed (i.e. bell-curved) values with a pre-determined standard deviation.

Recommendation 4:

Independent schools, if they are to receive government funding, might be entitled to the following percentages of AGSRC:

For SES 100 and less – 50% (noting the present level of funding to systemic catholic schools and the reflections on marginal costs as above)

For SES 150 or more – 0%

For SES between 100 and 150, a percentage on a straight-line sliding scale, as follows:

$$\%\text{AGSRC} = 150 - SES \qquad \ldots[4]$$

Result [4] above can be compared with [2] earlier.

The following Table 8 shows the percentages of AGSRC that independent schools would be entitled to under the recommended formula as above, and also compares these new percentages with those payable under the present SES system:

Table 8: Proposed versus Present %AGSRC Entitlements for Given SES indices

SES index	Present %AGSRC	Proposed %AGSRC	Proposed - Present (%)	Proposed - Present ($ per student, based on secondary AGSRC figure of $7469)
150 and above	13.7	0.0	-13.7	-1023.25
149	13.7	1.0	-12.7	-948.56
148	13.7	2.0	-11.7	-873.87
147	13.7	3.0	-10.7	-799.18
146	13.7	4.0	-9.7	-724.49
145	13.7	5.0	-8.7	-649.80
144	13.7	6.0	-7.7	-575.11
143	13.7	7.0	-6.7	-500.42
142	13.7	8.0	-5.7	-425.73
141	13.7	9.0	-4.7	-351.04
140	13.7	10.0	-3.7	-276.35
139	13.7	11.0	-2.7	-201.66
138	13.7	12.0	-1.7	-126.97
137	13.7	13.0	-0.7	-52.28
136	13.7	14.0	0.3	22.41
135	13.7	15.0	1.3	97.10
134	13.7	16.0	2.3	171.79
133	13.7	17.0	3.3	246.48
132	13.7	18.0	4.3	321.17
131	13.7	19.0	5.3	395.86
130	13.7	20.0	6.3	470.55
129	15.0	21.0	6.0	451.79
128	16.2	22.0	5.8	433.04
127	17.5	23.0	5.5	414.28
126	18.7	24.0	5.3	395.53
125	20.0	25.0	5.0	376.77
124	21.2	26.0	4.8	358.01
123	22.5	27.0	4.5	339.26
122	23.7	28.0	4.3	320.50
121	25.0	29.0	4.0	301.75
120	26.2	30.0	3.8	282.99
119	27.5	31.0	3.5	264.24
118	28.7	32.0	3.3	245.48
117	30.0	33.0	3.0	226.73
116	31.2	34.0	2.8	207.97
115	32.5	35.0	2.5	189.21
114	33.7	36.0	2.3	170.46
113	35.0	37.0	2.0	151.70
112	36.2	38.0	1.8	132.95
111	37.5	39.0	1.5	114.19

(Table 8 continues next page)

Table 8 (continued)

SES index	Present %AGSRC	Proposed %AGSRC	Proposed - Present (%)	Proposed - Present ($ per student, based on secondary AGSRC figure of $7469)
110	38.7	40.0	1.3	95.44
109	40.0	41.0	1.0	76.68
108	41.2	42.0	0.8	57.93
107	42.5	43.0	0.5	39.17
106	43.7	44.0	0.3	20.42
105	45.0	45.0	0.0	1.66
104	46.2	46.0	-0.2	-17.10
103	47.5	47.0	-0.5	-35.85
102	48.7	48.0	-0.7	-54.61
101	50.0	49.0	-1.0	-73.36
100	51.2	50.0	-1.2	-92.12
99	52.5	50.0	-2.5	-185.56
98	53.7	50.0	-3.7	-279.01
97	55.0	50.0	-5.0	-372.45
96	56.2	50.0	-6.2	-465.90
95	57.5	50.0	-7.5	-559.35
94	58.7	50.0	-8.7	-652.79
93	60.0	50.0	-10.0	-746.24
92	61.2	50.0	-11.2	-839.68
91	62.5	50.0	-12.5	-933.13
90	63.7	50.0	-13.7	-1026.57
89	65.0	50.0	-15.0	-1120.02
88	66.2	50.0	-16.2	-1213.46
87	67.5	50.0	-17.5	-1306.91
86	68.7	50.0	-18.7	-1400.35
85 and below	70.0	50.0	-20.0	-1493.80

It is acknowledged that the above might not be fair for some genuinely disadvantaged schools – with competent SES indices below 100 – such as the Aboriginal Community schools presently classified as independent schools. It is worth asserting that it seems curious that such Aboriginal community schools are brought under the independent school umbrella – alongside heavyweight high fee schools. It certainly seems as though the independent school lobby likes being able to cite examples of independent schools serving genuinely less advantaged communities … in order to help argue the case for more funding for independent schools across the board – money that somehow has ended up to a grotesquely disproportionate extent in the hands of the wealthiest, most expensive independent schools.

Comments/Refinements

Any comments, suggestions regarding the above will be welcomed. This working paper is free to be passed around to anyone interested in this matter.

Regards,

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