

Richest schools get cream of government funding

August 13, 2019

The gaping divide between Australia's four biggest-spending schools and the poorest 1800 schools has graphically exposed the Morrison Government's handouts to rich non-government schools at the expense of the public system, Federation President Maurie Mulheron said.

Australia's four richest schools – Melbourne's Wesley College, Haileybury College and Caulfield Grammar together with Knox Grammar in Sydney – spent more on new facilities and renovations than the poorest 1800 schools combined.

The big four spent \$402 million on new buildings and renovations for their 13,000 students while the poorest 1800 schools spent less than \$370 million to educate 107,000 students.

"While the Morrison Government will provide \$1.9 billion in capital works funding for private schools over 10 years, public schools will not receive a single dollar of Commonwealth capital funding," Mr Mulheron said.

"Ignoring public schools while handing billions in capital funding to private schools will entrench and increase the funding inequality gaps between the sectors, which means public school students suffer while money is funnelled to these already-rich, elite schools.

"On top of this, public schools are experiencing significant enrolment growth and it is the public sector that has the greatest need for classrooms, libraries, science labs or sporting facilities."

Facilities built at the big four private schools include auditoriums with adjustable orchestra pits, an on-site barista, a boathouse refurbishment, indoor sports centres and yoga, pilates and meditation spaces.

At one public school in western Sydney that was identified in the [ABC News report](#), more than 600 students have the use of just 10 toilets, and the problem has reached the point where children are soiling themselves waiting to use the bathrooms.

Its school population has grown 50 per cent since 2013, which has led to the erection of 23 demountables – four times as many as its permanent classrooms – to cater for the overflow.

In 2017, only 38 per cent of total spending on school infrastructure was in public schools – far below the sector's 66 per cent share of enrolments.

Mr Mulheron also said the figures, revealed by an [ABC investigation](#) of the school spending issue, raised serious questions about how private schools are using recurrent funding provided by the Commonwealth.



“In non-government schools around the country the amount of funding they allocate to capital projects is a similar figure to the amount provided by the Commonwealth for recurrent funding,” he said.

“However the rules are clear, recurrent funding cannot be used for capital works projects. This raises serious questions about how some private schools are actually using their recurrent funding.”