

High-income families favour government schools

Analysis of 2021 Census data by the Victorian Catholic Education Authority shows how poorly the Allan Government's \$400 School Saving Bonus is targeted to families in need.

Contrary to the premise of the policy – which provides the Bonus to all families in government schools, but only Health Care Card families in Catholic schools and independent schools – the most popular school sector in Victoria for high-income families is the government school sector.

In 2021 there were more than 86,000 children in government schools from families with incomes above \$208,000 per annum.

'With all high-income families in government schools set to receive the School Saving Bonus, it is estimated the Allan Government will shower \$34 million on these families solely because they attend a government school,' said VCEA acting CEO Bruce Phillips.

'This reality flies in the face of claims that the State Budget is sensible.

'Meanwhile, most low- and middle-income earners in Catholic schools will get nothing.

'This is clearly wrong and discriminates against families in Catholic schools. The School Saving Bonus should be available to all families, or it should be means tested for all families,' he said.

Altogether 48% of students from families with incomes of \$208,000 and above attend government schools, compared to 28% in independent schools and 25% in Catholic schools.

Claims that low-income families only attend government schools are also untrue. While around 18% of students in government schools are estimated to come from low-income families that qualify for various concessions, the corresponding figure for Catholic schools is 13%.

There are more than 158,000 families who choose to send 215,000 students to the 496 Catholic schools in Victoria. This represents 1 in 5 Victorian students.

The Victorian Catholic Education Authority is the peak body for Catholic school education in Victoria.

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Table 1: Annual family income and choice of school sector*

	Annual family income ¹	
	\$208,000 and above	\$234,000 and above
Students in government schools	86,293 (48%)	71,743 (47%)
Students in Catholic schools	45,144 (25%)	37,310 (24%)
Students in independent schools	49,934 (28%)	45,032 (29%)
Bonus for families in government schools	\$34.5m	\$28.7m

*Note that percentage values may not add to 100% due to rounding.

¹ Data sourced from the 2021 Census of Population and Housing