



The Association of Independent Schools of NSW

Enrolment Dynamics

2025 Edition

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Executive Summary

The Association of Independent Schools of New South Wales (AISNSW) is the peak body representing and supporting the state's 430 Independent schools. Through research, advocacy and professional services, AISNSW helps member schools respond to the evolving needs of students and communities.

For some time, AISNSW has integrated data from the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) with its own data sources to present historical, current and future enrolment trend analysis across the three school sectors - Independent, Catholic Systemic, and Government - with a particular emphasis on the Independent school sector.

AISNSW has now decided to share much of this data annually in a new publication, *Enrolment Dynamics*.

Enrolment Dynamics illustrates the NSW Independent school sector's diversity and vibrancy.

In 2024, there were 430 Independent schools across 573 campuses in NSW, educating 245,452 students (almost 20% of all students in the state) and employing over 33,000 full-time equivalent teaching and non-teaching staff.

It shows that NSW Independent schools are as diverse as the Australian communities they serve; 15 religions are represented among the sector's 301 faith-based schools, complementing its 129 secular schools.

Independent schools offer a wide range of teaching philosophies, values and approaches. Most charge fees below \$6,000 and educate children from low-to-middle income families.

Enrolment Dynamics also details the sustained enrolment growth in NSW Independent schools across geographic regions, demographic segments and school fee bands.

For example, while religious identification among students is declining, faith-based Independent schools are experiencing record enrolment growth; over the past decade, enrolments in these schools have increased by 30%, reflecting the continued appeal of values-based education, despite an almost doubling of students who identify with no faith (from 16% to 29%).

Similarly, 36% of students in Independent schools come from language backgrounds other than English, closely mirroring the state average and highlighting the sector's cultural inclusivity.

Independent schools now educate 19.5% of all students in NSW, up from 13.1% in 2000. This share is projected to exceed 22% by 2034, as much of the future enrolment growth is expected to be in the non-government school sector.

Background and Methodology

Enrolment Dynamics uses publicly available historical and current enrolment data from ACARA and ABS datasets. AISNSW also maintains internal school data.

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)

- **My School:** ACARA publishes nationally consistent school-level data for every school in Australia on its My School website, including enrolments and school funding information on fees, charges and other private fund-raising

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

- **Schools Australia:** The ABS publishes annual historical enrolment figures by state and territory, including by primary, secondary and staff. This report uses full-time equivalent (FTE) figures for enrolments
- **Census of Population & Housing:** A nationwide survey conducted every five years by the ABS to collect detailed information about the demographic, social and economic characteristics of every person in Australia on Census night. TableBuilder is used to extract various demographic information about students

AISNSW

- AISNSW maintains an internal list of all schools with additional information such as religious affiliation classifications and location information

Independent Schools Australia (ISA)

- ISA annually forecasts enrolment projections for each state and territory, which are included in this report

SECTOR CLASSIFICATION

Enrolment Dynamics covers three schooling sectors: Independent, Catholic Systemic, and Government. The subset of Catholic schools that are not part of Catholic school systems (ie, those not owned and operated by a diocesan schools office) function independently and are typically members of their respective Association of Independent Schools in each state and territory.

ABS datasets categorise all schools with a Catholic affiliation in the 'Catholic' sector, regardless of their ownership or operating characteristics, while ACARA's My School datasets generally classify them as Independent.

AISNSW classifies these schools as 'Catholic Independent' to underscore their religious affiliation and includes them in this report and all other publications. This is because they are independently owned and operated schools in their management, funding and governance arrangements.

ABS Population & Housing Census

The Census is a self-administered questionnaire where respondents answer questions in a manner that they believe best represents their circumstances. When responding to the educational institution question, Catholic Independent students are likely to classify themselves as attending a Catholic school rather than an 'Independent' (other non-government) school. This classification may influence some findings due to the number of Independent Catholic school students in NSW.

SCHOOLS

In 2024, various datasets are reporting slight differences in the numbers of operational schools across each sector. The number of schools in *Enrolment Dynamics* is based on ACARA's My School dataset and counts only schools with enrolments allocated.

Enrolment Dynamics also includes data pertaining to one for-profit NSW Independent school, which is excluded from other datasets.

Key Data

SCHOOLS, STAFF AND ENROLMENTS OVERVIEW

- In 2024, NSW schools had 1.25 million students, representing 30% of Australia's student population. Independent schools enrolled 245,452 full-time equivalent (FTE) students, or 19.5% of all NSW students
- The NSW Independent sector comprises 430 schools, accounting for 14% of all schools in the state
- Half of all NSW Independent schools offer an education program from Years K-12, compared with 2-3% of Catholic Systemic and Government sector schools
- The NSW Independent sector employs over 33,000 teaching and non-teaching FTE staff, which represents 22% of all teaching staff and 38% of all non-teaching staff in NSW

ENROLMENT GROWTH

- Enrolment growth in the NSW Independent sector has been consistently increasing year on year, with 2023 and 2024 marking record years for additional enrolments
- Since the year 2000, enrolments in NSW Independent schools have grown by 101,565, compared with 39,817 for the Catholic Systemic sector and 18,500 for the Government sector
- From 2019-2024, the NSW Independent sector experienced average annual student growth of 3.3%, compared with 1.2% for the Catholic Systemic sector and a 0.6% decline in the Government sector
- NSW's Independent sector gained more students than the Government sector nationally from 2019-2024
- Despite lower population growth due to Australia's declining fertility rate, reliance on net overseas migration primarily boosting the working-age population, and NSW's net interstate migration losses, the Independent sector has consistently increased enrolments in Kindergarten and Year 1, while the Government sector has recorded an ongoing decline in early-year enrolments over the past six years

SPECIAL AND SPECIAL ASSISTANCE SCHOOLS

- 67 Independent schools have been solely established for children with special needs. Enrolments in Special and Special Assistance Schools (SASs) have increased since 2019 by 6% and 15% year on year, respectively

ABORIGINAL AND/OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER STUDENTS

- The NSW Independent sector enrolled 6,468 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island students in 2024, with a growth rate of 9.7% from the previous year and average growth of 8.4% over the past five years

ENROLMENTS BY AFFILIATION

- At least 15 faiths are represented among the owners and operators of NSW Independent schools
- Anglican schools enrol the largest proportion of students in NSW Independent schools (27%), followed by Catholic Independent (18%), Christian (16%), secular (12%), and Islamic (9%) schools
- Enrolments in NSW's 64 Anglican-affiliated schools over the past five years have increased by 10,832 (close to total growth in the state's 547 Catholic Systemic schools of 13,716 over the same period)
- Some 87% of all enrolment growth in the Independent sector in 2024 was in Anglican, Catholic Independent, Christian, secular, and Islamic schools

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL FEES

- The median annual fee collected in NSW Independent schools in 2023 was \$5,989 per student
- More than 70% of Independent schools charged average fees of less than \$10,000 per student
- More Independent schools charge less than \$2,000 per year in fees than charge \$20,000 or more
- NSW Independent schools are experiencing enrolment growth across all fee ranges, with schools charging \$0 - \$5,000 growing at the fastest rate

STUDENT SHARE

- The Independent school sector enrolls 19.5% of all NSW students, compared with 18.4% for the Catholic Systemic school sector and 62.1% for the Government school sector
- Since 2000, the NSW Independent school sector's share of enrolments has increased from 13.1% while the Government sector share has decreased from 69.5%
- The Independent sector's student share is forecast to exceed 22% by 2034

INCOME OF STUDENTS' FAMILIES

- More than half of students attending NSW Independent schools are from low-to-medium income families; outside Sydney, the proportion is almost two-thirds
- As there are no high-fee schools in the Government and Catholic Systemic sectors, the NSW Independent sector, by default, is over-represented in its share of students from middle-to-high income families
- While the Government sector has greater numbers of low-income students, the Independent and Catholic systemic sectors serve similar proportions of students from low-income families (18% and 17%, respectively)

STUDENTS FROM LANGUAGE BACKGROUNDS OTHER THAN ENGLISH

- Within NSW, 39% of all school students have a language background other than English. The NSW Independent sector is in line with the state average (36%)

RELIGION OF STUDENTS

- Across all NSW schools, the percentage of students identifying as non-religious has increased from 20% in 2011 to 37% in 2021
- The percentage of NSW students identifying as Catholic or Christian has fallen from 70% to 49%
- The percentage of NSW students identifying as Islamic has increased from 5% to 7%

In the NSW Independent sector:

- The proportion of students identifying as non-religious has almost doubled to 29%, from 16% in 2011
- Between 2011 and 2021, the proportion of students identifying as Christian has declined from 55% to 38%, while those identifying as Islamic has increased from 8% to 12%
- Despite the increase in students identifying as non-religious, enrolments in faith-based NSW Independent schools have increased over the past 10 years by 30% (compared with 2% in Government schools and 6% in Catholic Systemic schools)

Schools Overview

Australia has over 9,600 schools in the Government, Catholic Systemic and Independent school sectors.

There are 3,152 schools in NSW, of which 430 (14%) are Independent schools. South Australia has the highest proportion of Independent schools (15%) while Victoria has the lowest (10%).

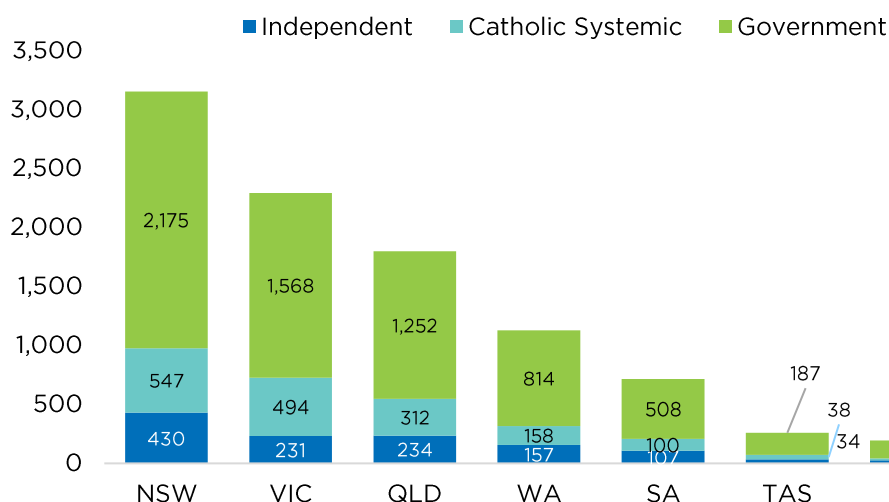
The Northern Territory has the highest proportion of Government schools (78%) while the Australian Capital Territory has the lowest (66%). In NSW, Government schools make up 69% of the state's schools.

Over 80 NSW Independent schools are registered CRICOS schools (Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students), allowing these schools to educate international students on student visas. Nearly 40 NSW Independent schools offer the International Baccalaureate.

The NSW Independent school sector is extremely diverse; some schools have fewer than 50 students, others have well over 2,000 students; there are low, medium and high fee schools, 15 types of faith-based schools, Special schools, Special Assistance Schools, Majority Indigenous and/or Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander schools and cultural schools (Armenian, French, German, Japanese and Turkish).

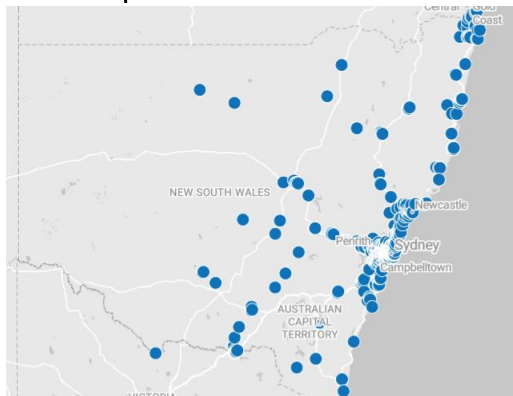
A significant reason why parents enrol their children in Independent schools is that many offer both a co-ed environment and combined primary and secondary schooling. Half of all NSW Independent schools are Kindergarten – Year 12 (compared with 2% of Catholic Systemic and 3% of Government schools).

Number of schools by state/territory, 2024

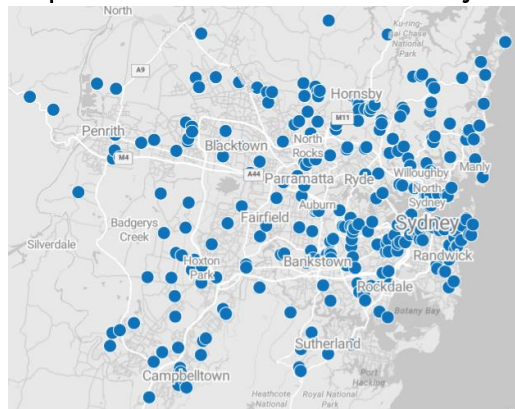


NSW has 35% of Australia's Independent schools, followed by Queensland (18.9%) and Victoria (18.7%). Below is a map indicating the locations of all current Independent school campuses throughout NSW.

Independent school locations across NSW



Independent school locations across Sydney



Staff Overview

Australia employs nearly 324,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff and nearly 160,000 non-teaching staff in schools. The NSW Independent sector employs over 21,000 FTE teaching staff, accounting for 22% of all teaching staff in NSW, and 33% of all teaching staff across all Independent schools nationally.

The NSW Independent sector employs over 12,000 FTE non-teaching staff, accounting for 38% of all non-teaching staff in NSW, and 30% across all Independent schools nationally.

Number of teaching staff and proportions (FTE) by state/territory, 2024

	Independent	Catholic Systemic	Government	All Sectors	Independent	Catholic Systemic	Government	All Sectors
NSW	21,227	16,426	59,877	97,530	21.8%	16.8%	61.4%	100.0%
VIC	16,108	17,493	53,614	87,215	18.5%	20.1%	61.5%	100.0%
QLD	11,868	11,623	44,106	67,597	17.6%	17.2%	65.2%	100.0%
WA	7,053	5,031	21,915	33,999	20.7%	14.8%	64.5%	100.0%
SA	4,578	3,878	12,881	21,337	21.5%	18.2%	60.4%	100.0%
TAS	1,069	1,235	4,589	6,892	15.5%	17.9%	66.6%	100.0%
ACT	1,247	961	3,538	5,746	21.7%	16.7%	61.6%	100.0%
NT	529	430	2,551	3,510	15.1%	12.2%	72.7%	100.0%
Australia	63,679	57,077	203,070	323,826	19.7%	17.6%	62.7%	100.0%

Number of non-teaching staff and proportions (FTE) by state/territory, 2024

	Independent	Catholic Systemic	Government	All Sectors	Independent	Catholic Systemic	Government	All Sectors
NSW	12,137	5,197	14,786	32,120	37.8%	16.2%	46.0%	100.0%
VIC	9,958	8,987	25,820	44,766	22.2%	20.1%	57.7%	100.0%
QLD	8,972	6,566	22,220	37,758	23.8%	17.4%	58.8%	100.0%
WA	4,740	3,162	15,288	23,190	20.4%	13.6%	65.9%	100.0%
SA	2,761	2,253	7,160	12,174	22.7%	18.5%	58.8%	100.0%
TAS	784	817	2,985	4,585	17.1%	17.8%	65.1%	100.0%
ACT	726	340	1,555	2,621	27.7%	13.0%	59.3%	100.0%
NT	495	438	1,589	2,521	19.6%	17.4%	63.0%	100.0%
Australia	40,573	27,759	91,402	159,734	25.4%	17.4%	57.2%	100.0%

Enrolments Overview

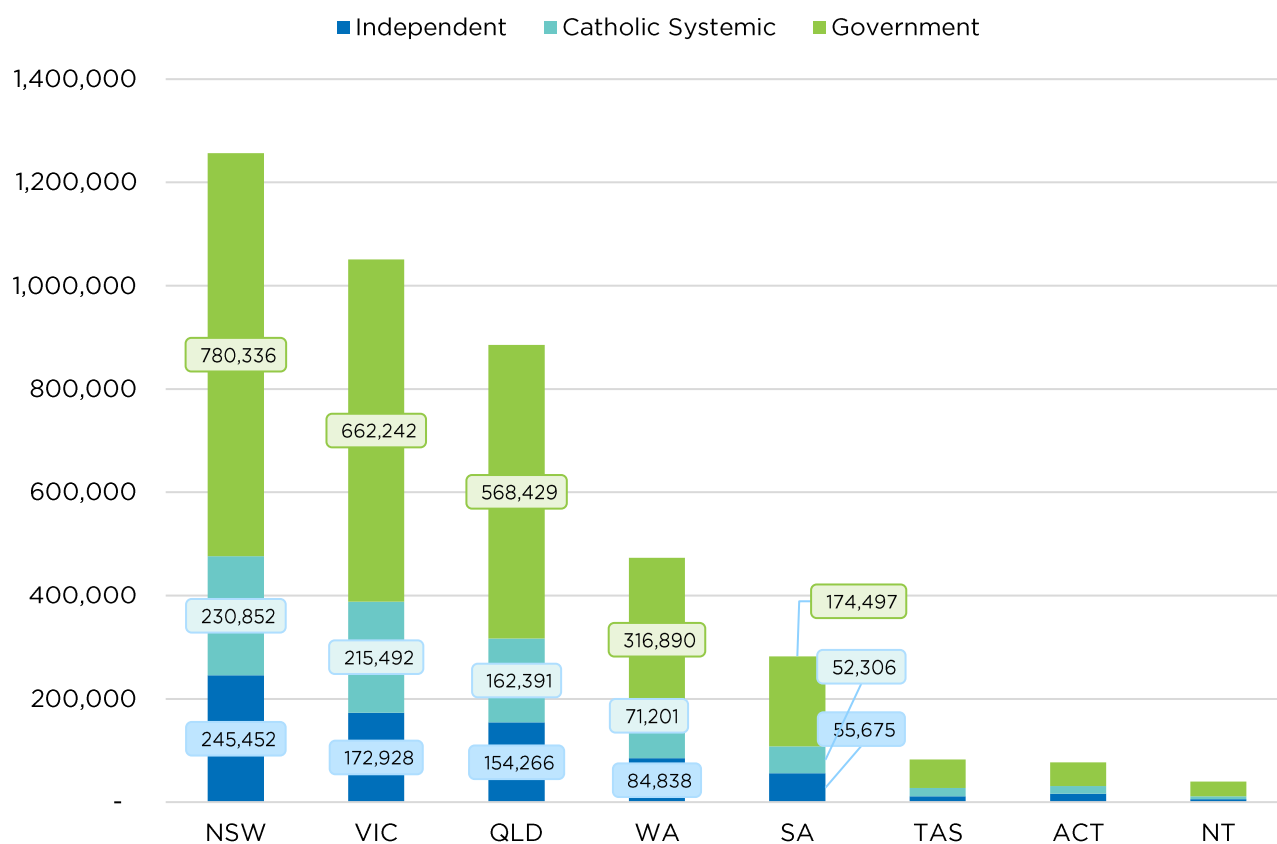
Australia has over 4.1 million school students, with 1,256,640 students (30%) in NSW.

In 2024, the NSW Independent sector enrolled 245,452 full-time equivalent students, representing almost 20% of the state's students.

The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) has the highest proportion of Independent students (21%) while Tasmania has the lowest (14%).

For the Government sector, the Northern Territory has the highest proportion at 72%, whereas the ACT has the lowest at 60%.

Number of enrolments (FTE) by state/territory, 2024



Number of enrolments and proportions (FTE) by state/territory, 2024

	Independent	Catholic Systemic	Government	All Sectors	Independent	Catholic Systemic	Government	All Sectors
NSW	245,452	230,852	780,336	1,256,640	19.5%	18.4%	62.1%	100.0%
VIC	172,928	215,492	662,242	1,050,661	16.5%	20.5%	63.0%	100.0%
QLD	154,266	162,391	568,429	885,086	17.4%	18.3%	64.2%	100.0%
WA	84,838	71,201	316,890	472,929	17.9%	15.1%	67.0%	100.0%
SA	55,675	52,306	174,497	282,477	19.7%	18.5%	61.8%	100.0%
TAS	11,317	15,903	55,271	82,490	13.7%	19.3%	67.0%	100.0%
ACT	16,003	15,016	45,896	76,914	20.8%	19.5%	59.7%	100.0%
NT	5,978	5,148	28,724	39,850	15.0%	12.9%	72.1%	100.0%
Australia	744,993	768,352	2,632,284	4,145,629	18.0%	18.5%	63.5%	100.0%

Enrolment Growth

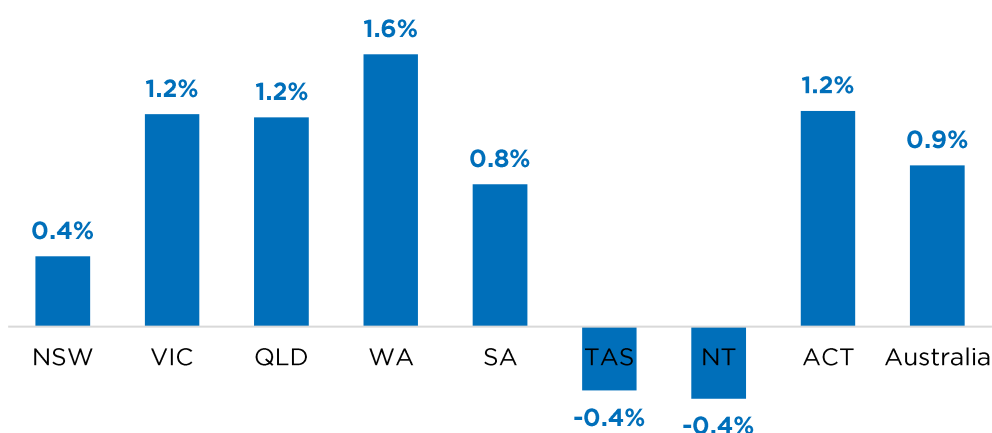
Over the past five years, the number of students in Australian schools grew by 0.9% per year on average. However, the rates of change in individual states and territories varied considerably.

Western Australia experienced average annual growth of 1.6%, whereas Tasmania and the Northern Territory recorded average annual declines of 0.4%.

New South Wales recorded student growth below the national average, at 0.4% year-on-year.

It is anticipated that future enrolment growth in all school sectors will slow due to relatively low overall population growth, driven largely by Australia's historically low fertility rate of 1.5 births per female (see *page 28 for more detail*).

Average annual student population growth (all sectors), 2019-2024



Analysis by sector reveals that student growth is significantly higher in the non-government sector, predominantly within the Independent sector.

In NSW over the past five years, the Independent sector has experienced annual average student growth of 3.3%, whereas the Catholic Systemic sector has grown at an average rate of 1.2% per year. The Government sector has been declining by 0.6% per year.

Among the 24 different state/territory and school sectors, four are experiencing decline:

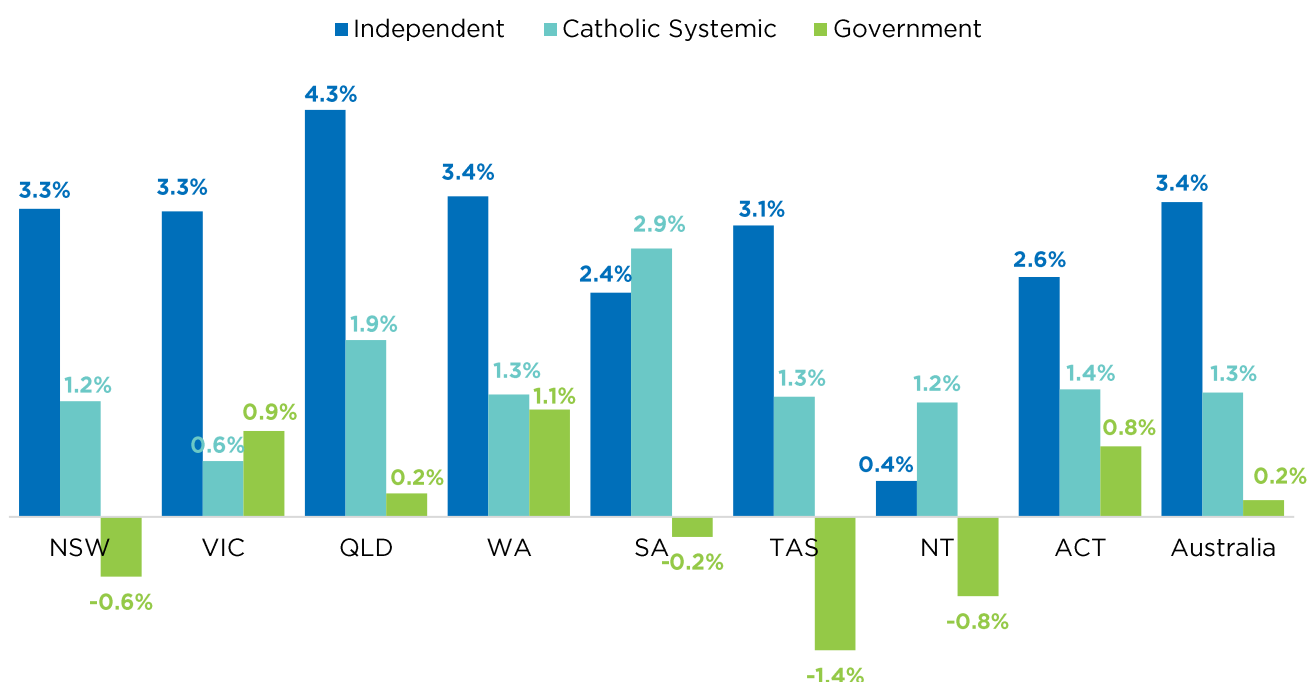
- NSW Government sector (-0.6%)
- Tasmanian Government sector (-1.4%)
- Northern Territory Government sector (-0.8%)
- South Australian Government sector (-0.2%)

The Independent sector has the highest student growth in six of the eight states and territories.

The Catholic Systemic sector is the fastest growing in South Australia and the Northern Territory.

ENROLMENT DYNAMICS, 2025 EDITION

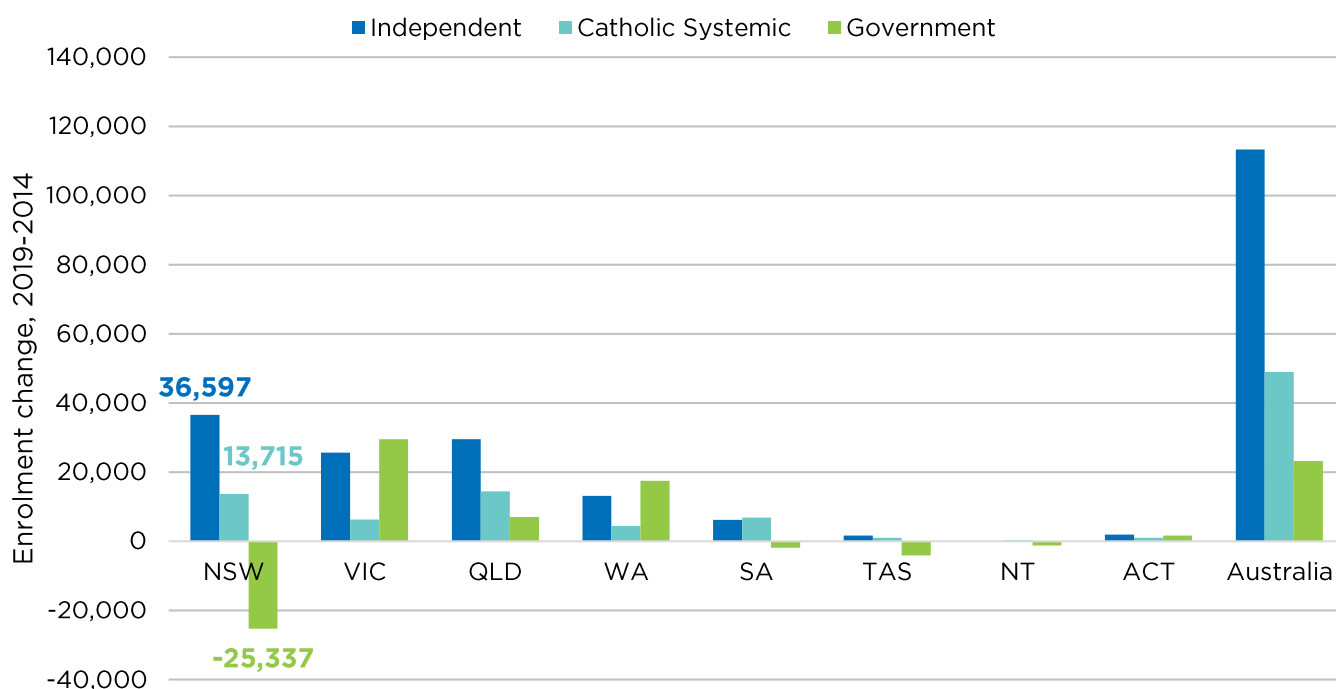
Average annual enrolment growth by sector and state/territory, 2019-2024



In terms of additional students over the past five years, the NSW Independent school sector has gained more students than any other state and sector (+36,597) while the NSW Government sector has lost more students than any other state and sector (-25,337).

Approximately 87% of the NSW Government sector's enrolment fall (21,999) has been in schools outside the Sydney metropolitan area.

Enrolment growth by sector and state/territory, 2019-2024



The NSW Independent sector (+36,597) gained more students in the last five years than the entire Government sector in all Australian states and territories (+23,189).

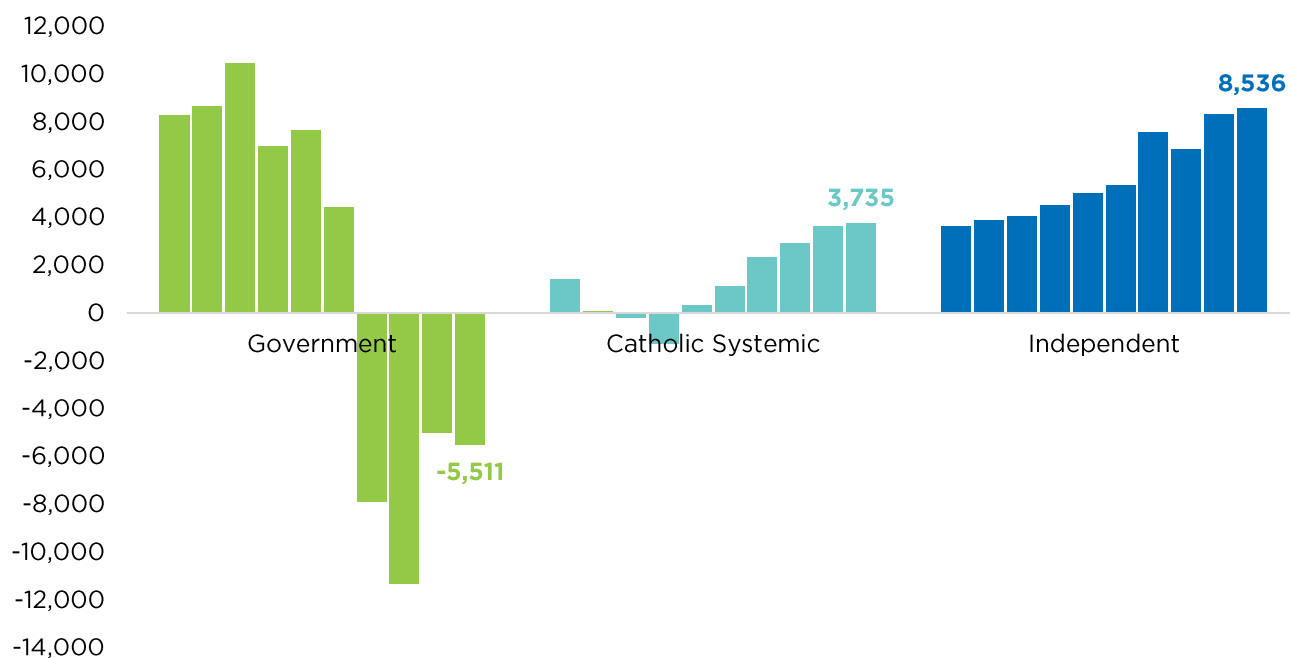
In student numbers, growth in the NSW Independent sector has been consistently increasing year on year for all but one of the past 10 years. The 2023 and 2024 school years experienced record additional enrolments.

ENROLMENT DYNAMICS, 2025 EDITION

In contrast, the NSW Government sector experienced a sharp decline in enrolments in 2021 and has continued to lose enrolments since. The factors driving this change remain unclear; it was initially believed to be a consequence of the pandemic; however, Government school enrolments continue to decline despite the pandemic's receding impact.

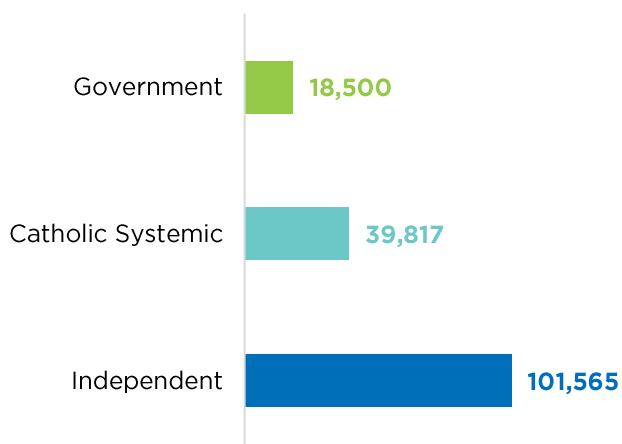
Independent sector enrolments continue to grow while the Catholic Systemic sector has rebounded in recent years, although its growth rate remains significantly lower than that of the Independent sector.

Annual enrolment growth by sector and year, 2015-2024

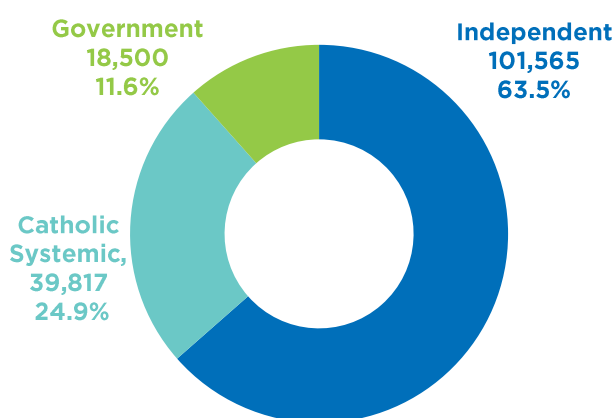


Since the year 2000, NSW Independent schools have added 101,565 enrolments, compared with 39,817 for the Catholic Systemic sector and 18,500 for the Government sector. The Independent sector therefore accounts for almost two-thirds of all student growth in NSW over the past 25 years, despite comprising only 14% of the state's schools.

Additional enrolments since 2000



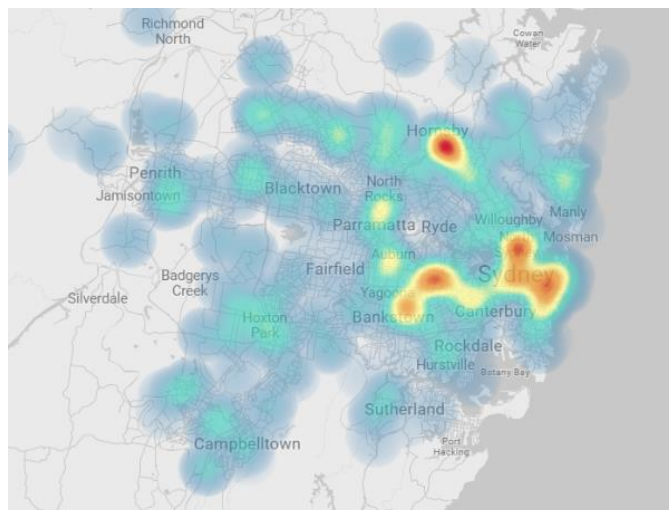
Additional enrolments since 2000



In NSW, the Independent sector enrolls approximately 174,000 students within Greater Sydney and nearly 72,000 students in other regions of the state.

The following heat map illustrates the distribution of enrolments in the Independent sector throughout the Greater Sydney area. It is important to note that this distribution is based on the location of schools and may not accurately reflect the residential locations of students, as many may travel significant distances for their education (including to boarding schools).

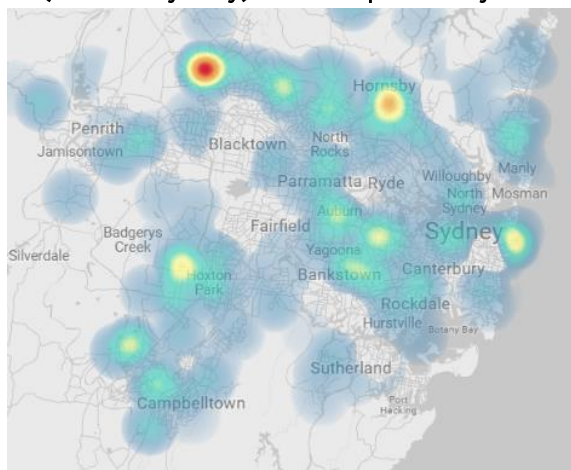
Heat Map of Independent sector enrolments within Greater Sydney



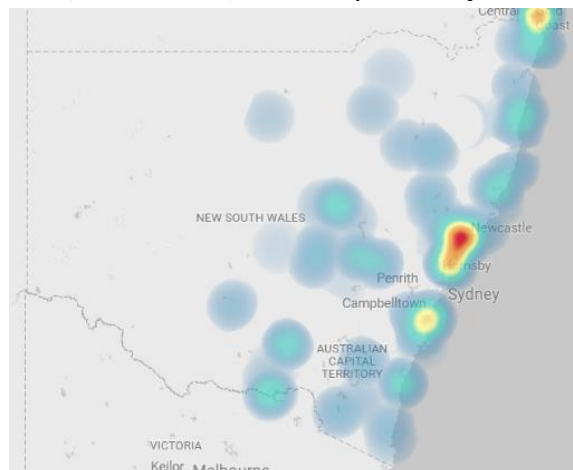
In terms of enrolment growth within Sydney, growth within the Independent sector is dispersed widely and across most areas. Schofields/Marsden Park is a high population growth area, as is south and south-west Sydney. Northern Sydney includes many larger, mid-high fee schools.

Outside Sydney, growth is occurring in most locations where an Independent school exists, most evidently in the Central Coast, Newcastle, Tweed Heads, Wollongong and in new-development areas south of Sydney.

Heat map of Independent sector enrolment growth (Greater Sydney) over the past five years

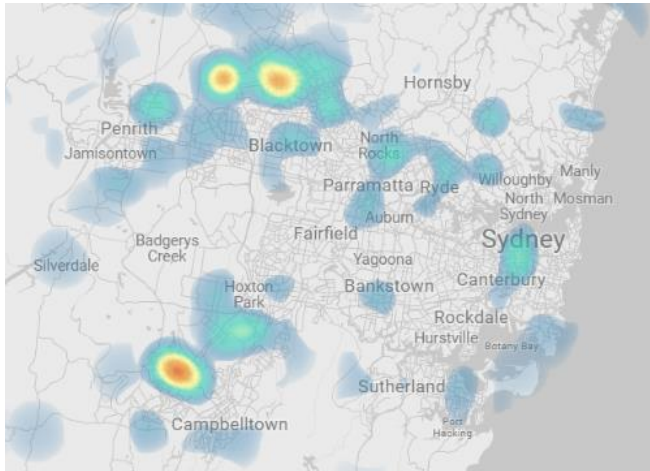


Heat map of Independent sector enrolment growth (Rest of NSW) over the past five years

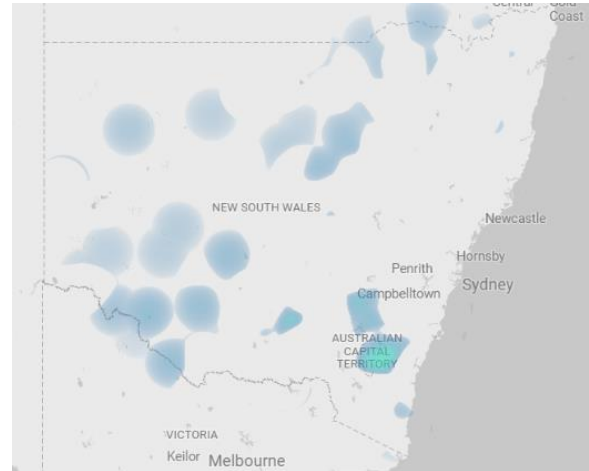


Net Government school growth is stagnant in Sydney, with significant increases in Marsden Park and parts of south Sydney offset by declining enrolments in the Inner West, Inner South West and the Northern Beaches. Outside Sydney, enrolments are largely in decline, except for some development in Googong near the ACT.

Heat map of Government sector enrolment growth (Greater Sydney) over the past five years

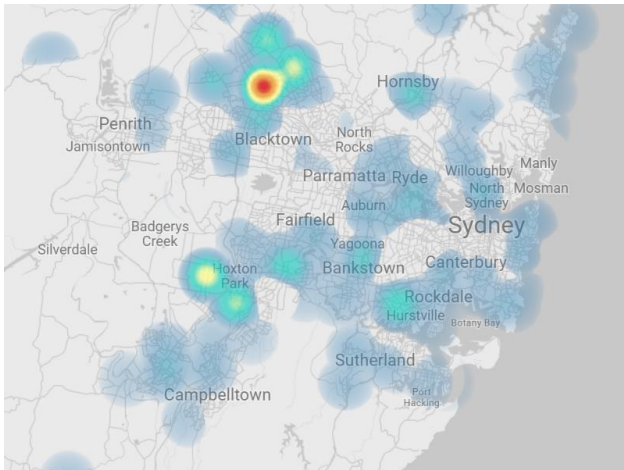


Heat map of Government sector enrolment growth (Rest of NSW) over the past five years

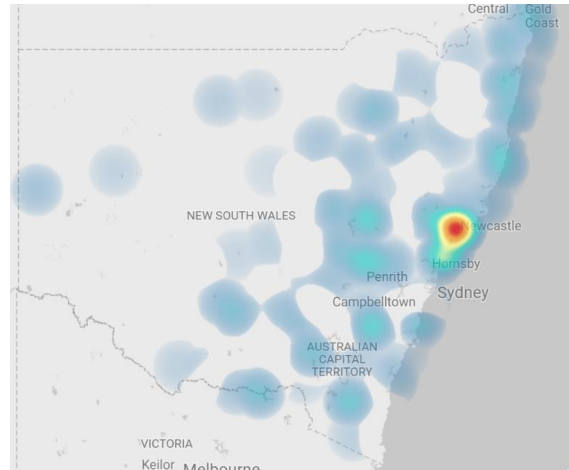


Within the Catholic Systemic sector, growth is primarily within northwest and southwest Sydney, while growth outside of Sydney is predominantly in the Newcastle/Central Coast area.

Heat map of Catholic Systemic sector enrolment growth (Greater Sydney) over the past five years



Heat map of Catholic Systemic sector enrolment growth (Rest of NSW) over the past five years



Enrolment growth by remoteness

Enrolments in Greater Sydney and the rest of NSW show consistent growth in the Independent sector, especially in regional areas around Sydney. The Catholic Systemic sector has grown enrolments inside and outside Sydney, while the Government sector has lost enrolments in both areas, particularly in regional areas.

Independent sector

	Schools (2024)	Enrols (2024)	Enrol growth vs 2023 (#)	Enrol Growth vs 2023 (%)	Enrol growth vs 2019 (#)	Enrol growth avg annual vs 2019 (%)
Sydney	247	173,621	+5,367	+3.2%	+22,939	+2.9%
Rest of NSW	183	71,832	+3,169	+4.6%	+13,659	+4.3%
Total/Avg	430	245,452	+8,536	+3.6%	+36,598	+3.3%

Catholic Systemic sector

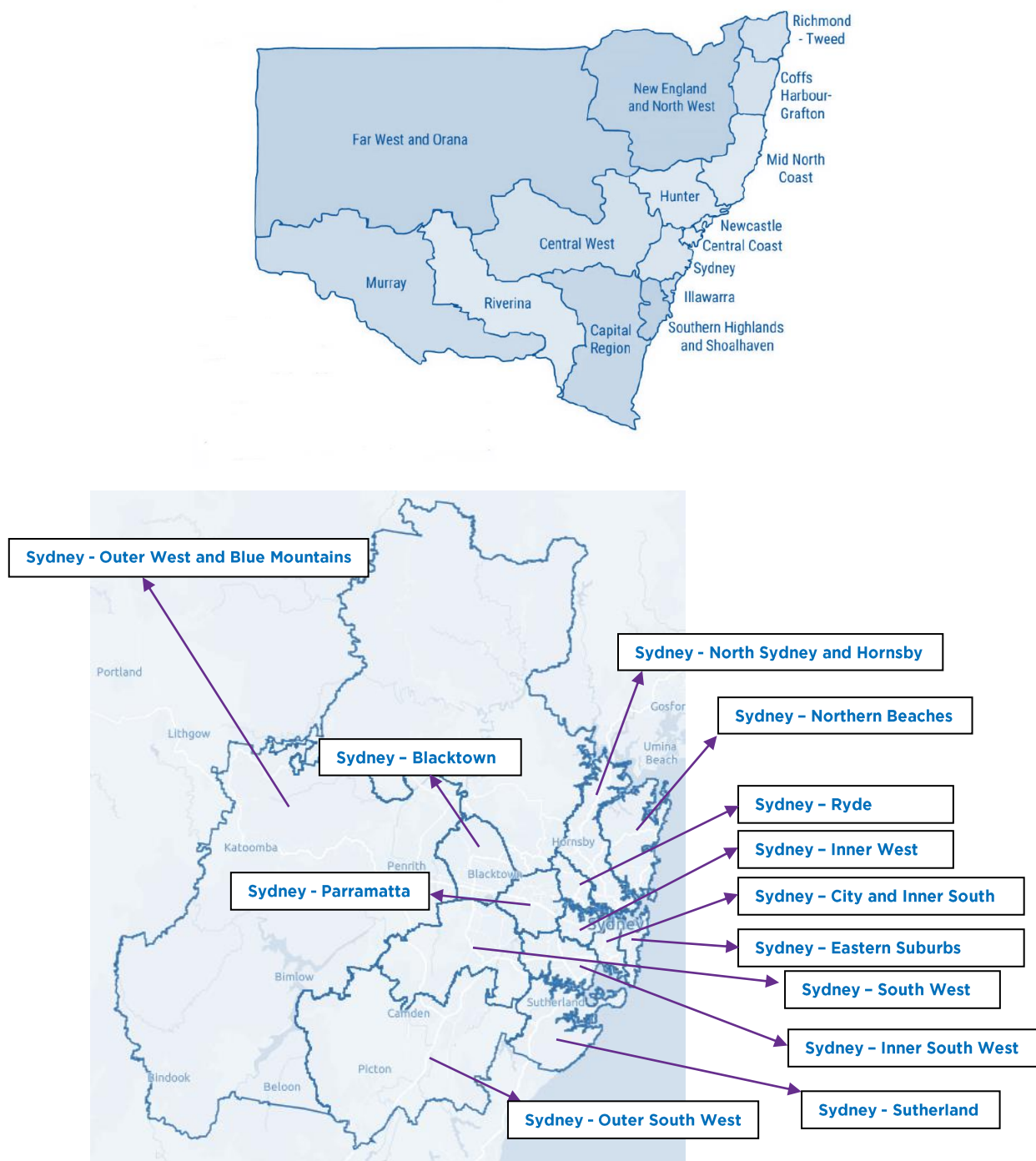
	Schools (2024)	Enrols (2024)	Enrol growth vs 2023 (#)	Enrol Growth vs 2023 (%)	Enrol growth vs 2019 (#)	Enrol growth avg annual vs 2019 (%)
Sydney	280	141,731	+2,339	+1.7%	+8,861	+1.3%
Rest of NSW	267	89,121	+1,396	+1.6%	+4,854	+1.1%
Total/Avg	547	230,852	+3,735	+1.6%	+13,715	+1.2%

Government sector

	Schools (2024)	Enrols (2024)	Enrol growth vs 2023 (#)	Enrol Growth vs 2023 (%)	Enrol growth vs 2019 (#)	Enrol growth avg annual vs 2019 (%)
Sydney	948	486,372	-1,153	-0.2%	-3,338	-0.1%
Rest of NSW	1,227	293,964	-4,359	-1.5%	-21,999	-1.4%
Total/Avg	2,175	780,336	-5,511	-0.7%	-25,337	-0.6%

Enrolment growth by region

A [statistical area level 4 \(SA4\)](#) is a region used by the ABS to group together nearby communities into areas of comparable population sizes. There are 14 statistical areas within Greater Sydney and 14 outside Sydney.



The NSW Independent sector has experienced enrolment growth over the last five years in all 28 SA4s.

In comparison, the Government sector recorded enrolment declines in all SA4s outside Sydney and increases in just five of 14 SA4s within Sydney.

The NSW Independent sector, despite having far fewer schools across NSW than the Government sector, gained more enrolments than any other sector in 25 of 28 SA4s. This underscores the sector's consistent enrolment growth across NSW.

ENROLMENT DYNAMICS, 2025 EDITION

Enrolment growth 2019 - 2024 (students)

Area	Government	Catholic Systemic	Independent
Capital Region	-1,022	+190	+1,078
Central Coast	-3,080	+898	+1,453
Central West	-2,057	+730	+906
Coffs Harbour - Grafton	-825	+325	+596
Far West and Orana	-1,028	+70	+584
Hunter Valley exc Newcastle	-1,377	+1608	+1,335
Illawarra	-812	+36	+1,097
Mid North Coast	-2,407	+335	+991
Murray	-543	+64	+580
New England and North West	-1,292	+32	+319
Newcastle and Lake Macquarie	-471	-118	+1,673
Richmond - Tweed	-3,936	+245	+2,096
Riverina	-1,342	+305	+603
Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven	-943	-114	+629
Sydney - Baulkham Hills and Hawkesbury	+1,475	+1,735	+2,545
Sydney - Blacktown	+5,994	+2,808	+2,940
Sydney - City and Inner South	+1,078	+309	+528
Sydney - Eastern Suburbs	-1,607	+136	+918
Sydney - Inner South West	-3,574	+1,137	+2,069
Sydney - Inner West	-2,148	-203	+1,185
Sydney - North Sydney and Hornsby	-2,224	+665	+2,071
Sydney - Northern Beaches	-3,442	-218	+908
Sydney - Outer South West	+848	+420	+1,666
Sydney - Outer West and Blue Mountains	-322	-215	+918
Sydney - Parramatta	-111	-14	+1,990
Sydney - Ryde	-701	+12	+456
Sydney - South West	+1,324	+2,319	+4,179
Sydney - Sutherland	-791	+218	+286
NSW	-25,336	+13,715	+36,597

ENROLMENT DYNAMICS, 2025 EDITION

Enrolment growth 2019 - 2024 (%)

Area	Government	Catholic Systemic	Independent
Capital Region	-0.9%	+0.7%	+10.4%
Central Coast	-1.7%	+2.3%	+3.5%
Central West	-1.8%	+2.0%	+3.9%
Coffs Harbour - Grafton	-1.1%	+1.7%	+3.6%
Far West and Orana	-1.5%	+0.4%	+7.4%
Hunter Valley exc Newcastle	-0.9%	+3.5%	+4.5%
Illawarra	-0.5%	+0.1%	+3.5%
Mid North Coast	-2.3%	+1.0%	+4.8%
Murray	-1.0%	+0.5%	+3.2%
New England and North West	-1.2%	+0.1%	+1.9%
Newcastle and Lake Macquarie	-0.2%	-0.2%	+4.3%
Richmond - Tweed	-3.5%	+0.6%	+5.8%
Riverina	-1.6%	+0.8%	+5.5%
Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven	-1.2%	-1.0%	+2.7%
Sydney - Baulkham Hills and Hawkesbury	+1.0%	+5.1%	+4.6%
Sydney - Blacktown	+2.7%	+3.9%	+6.0%
Sydney - City and Inner South	+1.3%	+1.6%	+1.1%
Sydney - Eastern Suburbs	-2.0%	+0.4%	+1.2%
Sydney - Inner South West	-1.5%	+1.3%	+3.0%
Sydney - Inner West	-1.8%	-0.6%	+1.9%
Sydney - North Sydney and Hornsby	-1.1%	+2.0%	+1.5%
Sydney - Northern Beaches	-2.5%	-1.0%	+1.9%
Sydney - Outer South West	+0.5%	+1.2%	+4.8%
Sydney - Outer West and Blue Mountains	-0.2%	-0.4%	+2.6%
Sydney - Parramatta	+0.0%	+0.0%	+3.4%
Sydney - Ryde	-0.6%	+0.0%	+2.4%
Sydney - South West	+0.5%	+2.4%	+5.4%
Sydney - Sutherland	-0.6%	+0.5%	+2.5%
NSW	-0.6%	+1.2%	+3.3%

Special / Special Assistance Schools

The NSW Independent sector has experienced a rapid increase in the number of Special and Special Assistance Schools (SAS) in recent times. Enrolments in Special schools are increasing by 6% year on year, while SASs (schools educating marginalised students) are growing enrolments by 15% year on year. This is well above the NSW Independent sector all-schools average growth of 3%.

NSW Independent sector, Special and Special Assistance Schools

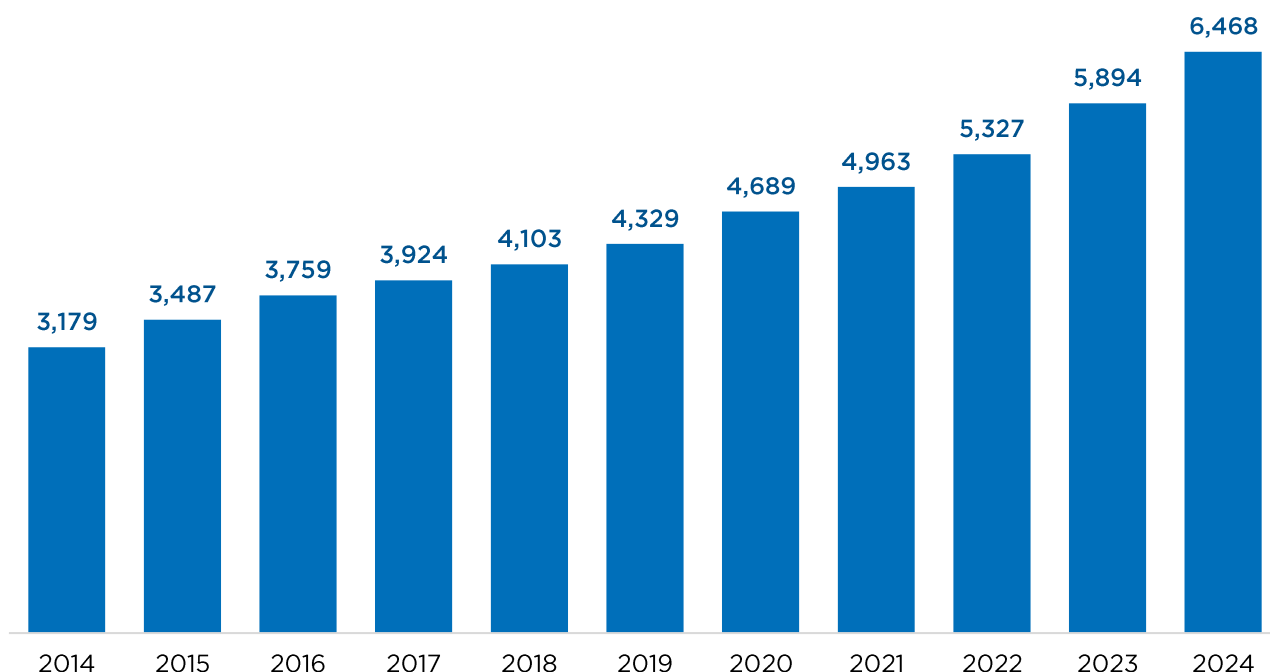
	Schools (2024)	Enrols (2024)	Enrol growth vs 2023 (#)	Enrol Growth vs 2023 (%)	Enrol growth vs 2019 (#)	Enrol growth avg annual vs 2019 (%)
Special	34 (94 locations)	2,860	+229	+8.7%	+757	+6.3%
Special Assistance Schools	33 (56 locations)	3,650	+600	+19.7%	+1,840	+15.1%

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students

The NSW Independent sector enrolled 6,468 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island students in 2024. In 2023 there were 5,894 students, a growth rate of 9.7%. The average annual growth rate over the past five years is 8.4% and over the past 10 years is 7.4%, indicating that enrolment growth has been consistently strong and is gaining momentum, albeit from a low base.

In 77 NSW Independent schools, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander make up at least 10% of the student population. Nine NSW Independent schools are classified as Majority Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (MATSI).

NSW Independent sector enrolment of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students by year

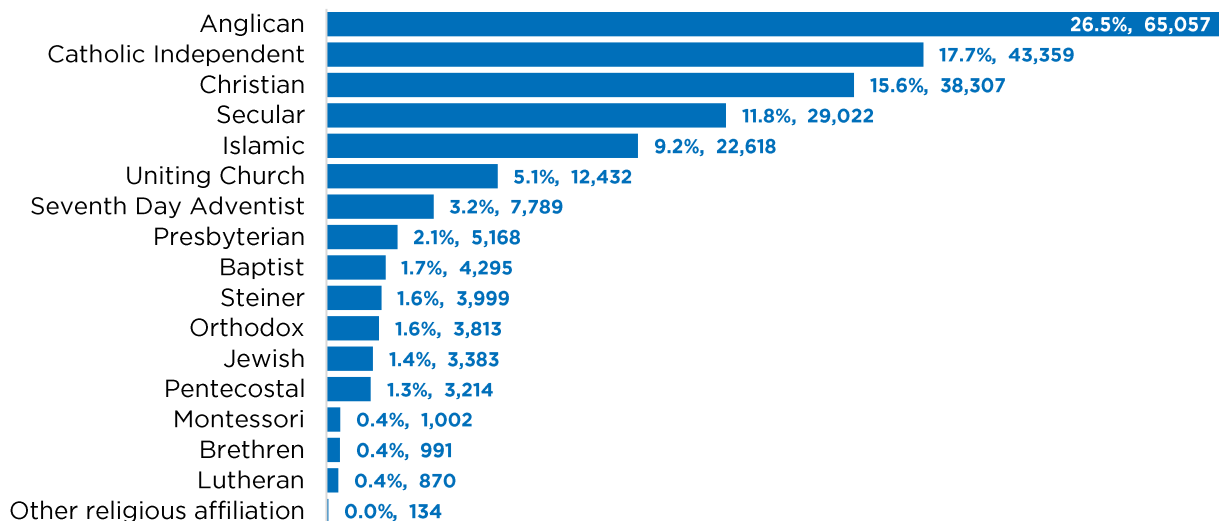


Enrolments and Growth by Affiliation

Enrolments

Nearly 27% of all students in NSW Independent schools are attending an Anglican school, followed by Catholic Independent (18%), Christian (16%), secular (12%) and Islamic (9%) schools. More than 15 different faiths are represented in the Independent school sector.

NSW Independent Enrolment (% and FTE) by Affiliation



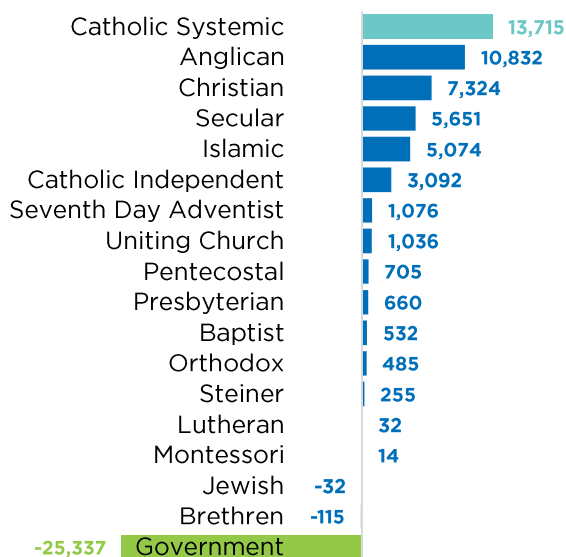
Growth over the past five years

NSW's 64 Anglican-affiliated schools added 10,832 students from 2019 to 2024; for perspective, the Catholic Systemic sector's 547 schools added 13,715 over the same period.

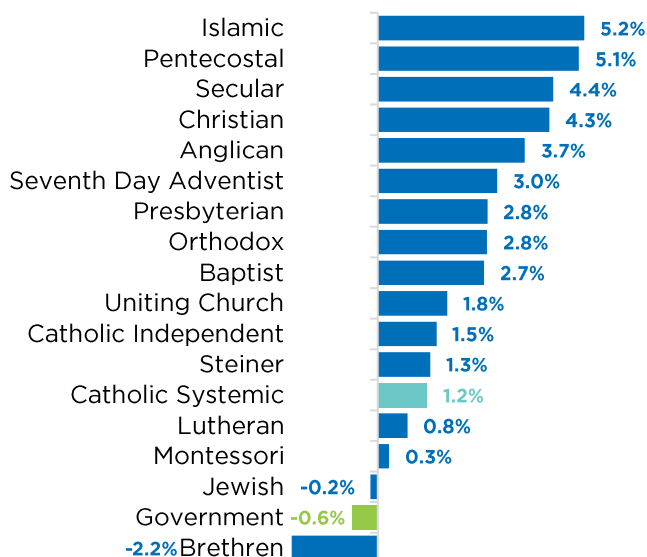
Anglican, Catholic Independent, Christian, secular, and Islamic schools accounted for 87% of all enrolment growth within the Independent sector in 2024.

Almost all types of NSW Independent schools are growing at a faster rate than the Government sector in percentage terms, and most are also outpacing growth in Catholic Systemic schools.

Enrolment growth over the past five years (#)



Average annual enrolment growth over the past five years (%)

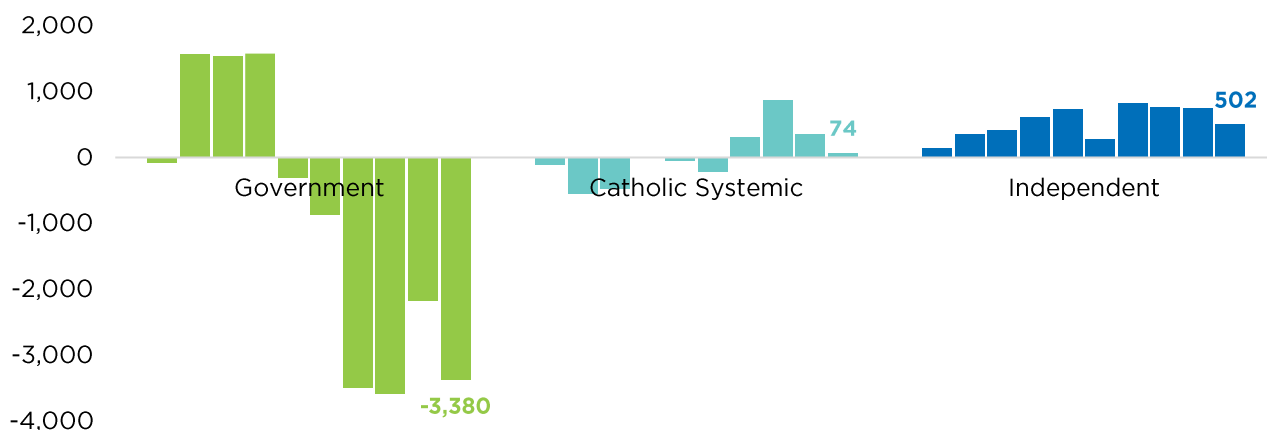


Enrolments by grade level

Similar trends are observed when examining growth by year level. For example, despite low population growth due to Australia's declining fertility rate and recent net interstate migration losses, the Independent sector has increased its Kindergarten and Year 1 enrolments over the past 10 years.

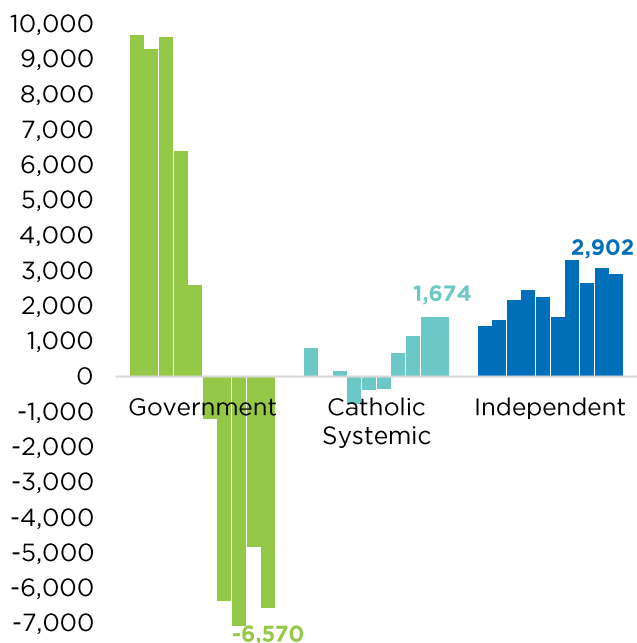
The Government sector has experienced a significant decline in this cohort for seven of the past 10 years, a decline, particularly in the past four years. Parents are increasingly opting for Independent schools at the start of their children's education and are likely to remain there for the duration of their schooling.

Enrolment growth by sector, 2015-2024, Grades K-1

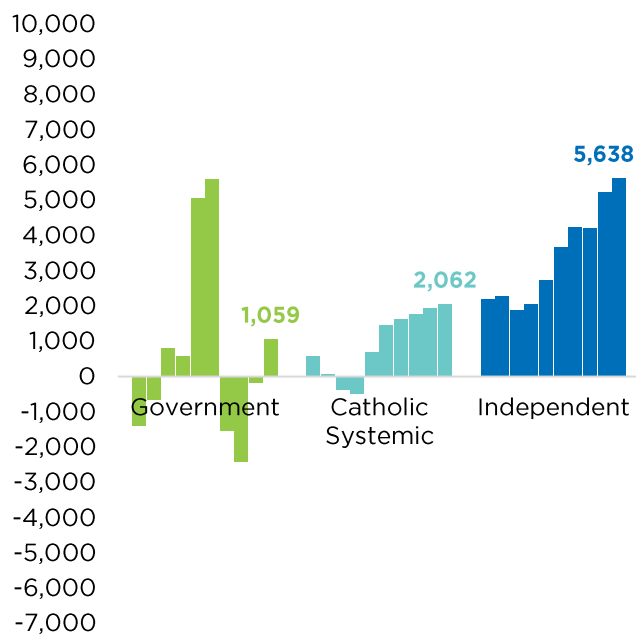


The Independent sector is experiencing strong growth in both primary and secondary enrolments, mirroring the Government sector's declining enrolment growth patterns across almost all geographic areas and student cohorts in recent years.

Enrolment growth over the past 10 years
Primary (K-6)



Enrolment growth over the past 10 years
Secondary (7-12)



Enrolment growth over the past year

	Independent	Catholic Systemic	Government	All Sectors
All years	+3.6%	+1.6%	-0.7%	+0.5%
Years 7-12	+4.0%	+2.1%	+0.3%	+1.6%
Years K-6	+3.0%	+1.3%	-1.4%	-0.3%
Years K-1 only	+2.0%	+0.3%	-2.6%	-1.4%

Average annual enrolment growth over the past five years

	Independent	Catholic Systemic	Government	All Sectors
All years	+3.3%	+1.2%	-0.6%	+0.4%
Years 7-12	+3.4%	+2.0%	+0.9%	+1.7%
Years K-6	+2.9%	+0.8%	-0.8%	-0.1%
Years K-1 only	+2.5%	+0.8%	-2.0%	-0.9%

Independent school fees

The median fee collected in NSW Independent schools in 2023 was \$5,989 per student.

Context is important when examining fees; 59% of students in the Independent sector are secondary students, who cost more to teach than primary students. Secondary students comprise just 44% of Catholic Systemic sector enrolments and 40% of Government sector enrolments.

More than 70% of NSW Independent schools charge average fees of less than \$10,000 per annum, which is approximately half the average cost of educating a child in an Australian school (\$20,444) in 2023.

Proportion of Independent schools by parent fee brackets (2023 financials) and state/territory

Average School Fees	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	NT	ACT	NATIONAL
\$30,000 +	6%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%
\$20,000 - \$29,999	7%	12%	4%	11%	9%	0%	0%	12%	7%
\$15,000 - \$19,999	6%	8%	6%	2%	1%	12%	0%	6%	5%
\$10,000 - \$14,999	9%	13%	12%	4%	12%	6%	8%	29%	11%
\$5,000 - \$9,999	33%	23%	33%	27%	35%	15%	16%	29%	30%
\$0,000 - \$4,999	39%	36%	45%	57%	42%	67%	76%	24%	43%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

While most high-fee schools are located within Sydney, both Sydney and its surrounding areas predominantly feature low-fee schools.

Proportion of NSW Independent schools by parent fee brackets (2023 financials) and remoteness

Average School Fees	NSW	Greater Sydney	Rest of NSW
\$30,000 +	6%	11%	1%
\$20,000 - \$29,999	7%	10%	2%
\$15,000 - \$19,999	6%	9%	2%
\$10,000 - \$14,999	9%	12%	5%
\$5,000 - \$9,999	33%	27%	40%
\$0,000 - \$4,999	39%	31%	50%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Even at SA4 levels, most regions are dominated by low fee Independent schools. Longer established, high fee schools are mainly confined to older, more affluent parts of Sydney such as the Eastern Suburbs, City and Inner South, Inner West and North Sydney/Hornsby.

The reason for this is historic; these schools were established well before governments provided recurrent student funding to non-government schools, requiring them to charge parents the full cost of tuition. Less than 5% NSW students attended an Independent school before governments began extending student funding to non-government schools.

Today, family incomes determine government funding for non-government school students. Funding is calculated by linking students' addresses at each non-government school with the Tax Office data of the adults at that address. This data is used to calculate each non-government school's median family income range. Each income range is assigned a Capacity to Contribute (or CTC) score. The higher the CTC score, the less government funding per student a school attracts. This reduction is applied only to non-government schools.

The funding model is relative and recalibrated annually. The average CTC score for the NSW Catholic Systemic sector is 98, while the average in the Independent sector is 103.

ENROLMENT DYNAMICS, 2025 EDITION

Proportion of NSW Independent schools by parent fee brackets (2023 financials) and SA4

Area	\$0 - \$4,999	\$5,000 - \$9,999	\$10,000 - \$14,999	\$15,000 - \$19,999	\$20,000 - \$29,999	\$30,000 +	Average CTC Score
Capital Region	58%	25%	17%				95
Central Coast	33%	61%		6%			101
Central West	36%	45%	9%		9%		99
Coffs Harbour - Grafton	60%	40%					91
Far West and Orana	63%	38%					93
Hunter Valley ex Newcastle	29%	64%		7%			99
Illawarra	31%	54%	8%	8%			105
Mid North Coast	85%	15%					89
Murray	45%	45%	9%				95
New England and North West	42%	25%	25%	8%			94
Newcastle and Lake Macquarie	53%	35%	6%		6%		101
Richmond - Tweed	75%	25%					89
Riverina	67%	33%					97
Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven	9%	55%		9%	18%	9%	104
Sydney - Baulkham Hills and Hawkesbury	11%	39%	39%	6%	6%		108
Sydney - Blacktown	57%	43%					93
Sydney - City and Inner South	22%	11%	22%		17%	28%	122
Sydney - Eastern Suburbs	11%	6%	6%	33%	11%	33%	129
Sydney - Inner South West	62%	24%	10%		5%		90
Sydney - Inner West	8%	23%	15%	15%	15%	23%	113
Sydney - North Sydney and Hornsby	3%	27%	7%		30%	33%	130
Sydney - Northern Beaches	15%	15%	20%	40%	10%		114
Sydney - Outer South West	50%	50%					97
Sydney - Outer West and Blue Mountains	35%	53%		12%			100
Sydney - Parramatta	58%	16%	16%		5%	5%	93
Sydney - Ryde	22%	11%	11%	11%	33%	11%	115
Sydney - South West	57%	38%	5%				91
Sydney - Sutherland	40%	20%	20%	20%			105
NSW	39%	33%	9%	6%	7%	6%	103

ENROLMENT DYNAMICS, 2025 EDITION

The Catholic Systemic sector maintains relatively low fees across all its schools, even those in high-income areas with significantly above average CTC scores, e.g. the Eastern Suburbs (112), North Sydney and Hornsby (119), Northern Beaches (113), Ryde (108), Inner West (107), Baulkham Hills and Hawkesbury (106).

Catholic System schools are able to charge lower fees than Independent schools in areas where both educate children from higher income families because Catholic diocesan school authorities are permitted to pool and redistribute all revenue (including the additional government funding attracted by their lower CTC score schools) based on local knowledge of each school and its community's needs.

Proportion of NSW Catholic Systemic schools by parent fee brackets (2023 financials) and SA4

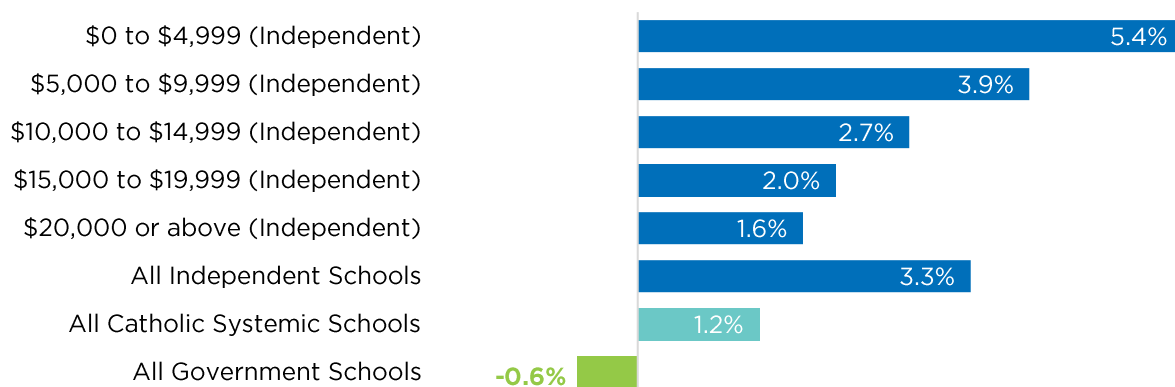
Area	\$0 - \$4,999	\$5,000 - \$9,999	Average CTC Score
Capital Region	94%	6%	94
Central Coast	93%	7%	98
Central West	100%		94
Coffs Harbour - Grafton	100%		92
Far West and Orana	100%		91
Hunter Valley ex Newcastle	100%		98
Illawarra	100%		101
Mid North Coast	94%	6%	90
Murray	100%		92
New England and North West	96%	4%	91
Newcastle and Lake Macquarie	100%		100
Richmond - Tweed	100%		94
Riverina	96%	4%	94
Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven	100%		97
Sydney - Baulkham Hills and Hawkesbury	100%		106
Sydney - Blacktown	96%	4%	95
Sydney - City and Inner South	100%		104
Sydney - Eastern Suburbs	84%	16%	112
Sydney - Inner South West	95%	5%	97
Sydney - Inner West	95%	5%	107
Sydney - North Sydney and Hornsby	76%	24%	119
Sydney - Northern Beaches	86%	14%	113
Sydney - Outer South West	100%		96
Sydney - Outer West and Blue Mountains	100%		98
Sydney - Parramatta	100%		94
Sydney - Ryde	77%	23%	108
Sydney - South West	100%		92
Sydney - Sutherland	73%	27%	109
NSW	95%	5%	98

ENROLMENT DYNAMICS, 2025 EDITION

Independent schools across all fee ranges are experiencing enrolment growth, with low to mid fee schools growing the fastest. Notably, schools of all fee ranges are experiencing faster growth compared to both Catholic Systemic and Government schools.

Although most Catholic Systemic schools charge fees under \$5,000 per student, their enrolment growth rate (1.2%) remains lower than that of Independent schools within the same fee ranges (\$0 - \$5,000: 5.4%, \$5,000 - \$9,999: 3.9%).

Average annual growth over the past five years, by Independent average fees of schools



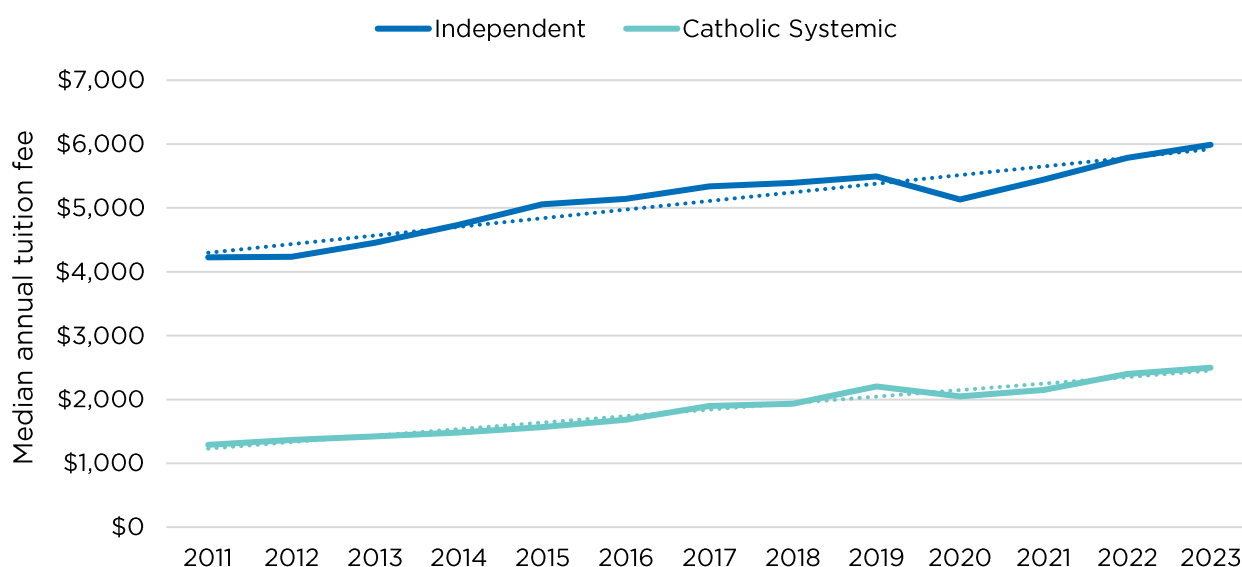
Fee growth over time

The median annual fee collected by Independent schools in 2023 was \$5,989, compared with \$2,497 in the Catholic Systemic sector.

Independent school fees have grown by an annualised average of 3.0% over the past 10 years and by 2.1% over the past five years, compared with 5.8% and 5.3% respectively for the Catholic Systemic sector.

Since 2013, median tuition fees have increased by \$1,535 in the Independent sector and by \$1,074 in the Catholic Systemic sector. During the pandemic, Independent schools reduced fees on average by \$358 while the Catholic Systemic sector reduced average fees by \$157.

Median annual tuition fee by sector, year



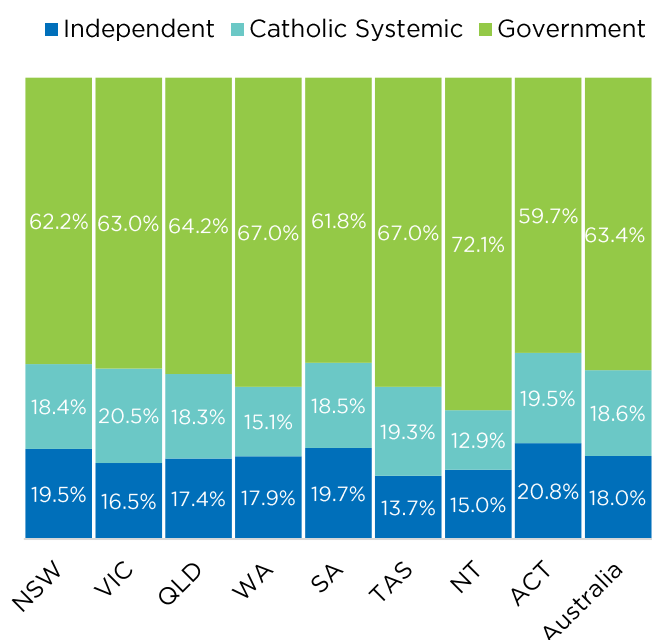
Student Share

The Independent sector enrolls 19.5% of all students in NSW, above the Catholic Systemic sector's share of 18.4%. NSW is one of five states and territories where Independent schools enrol more students than the Catholic Systemic sector. Nationally, however, the Catholic Systemic sector enrolls 18.6% of students, compared with 18% for the Independent sector.

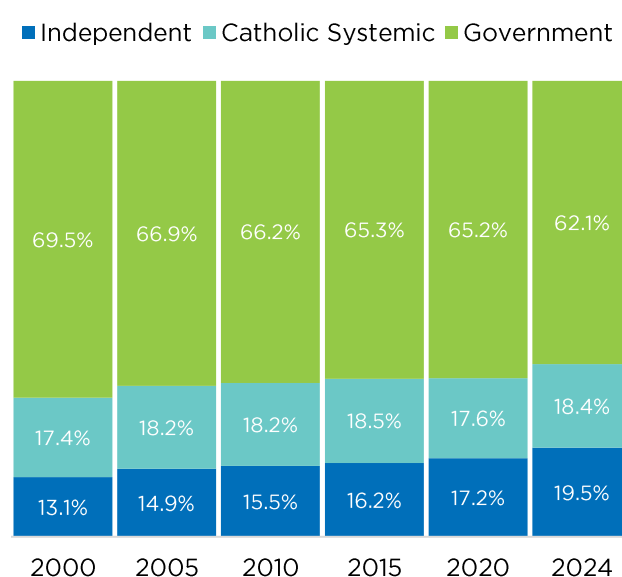
Based on recent and historical enrolment patterns, Independent Schools Australia estimates that Independent sector enrolments nationally will surpass those of the Catholic Systemic sector within the next five years.

Within NSW, enrolment shares have changed noticeably since 2000; the Independent sector's enrolments have increased from 13.1% to 19.5% in 2024, while the Government sector's share has decreased from 69.5% to 62.1%.

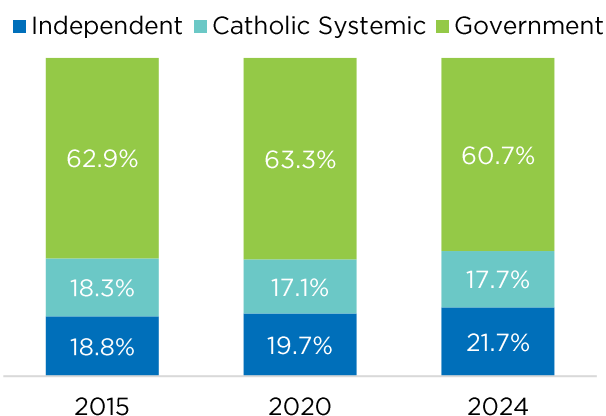
Enrolment share of students by sector, state/territory, 2024



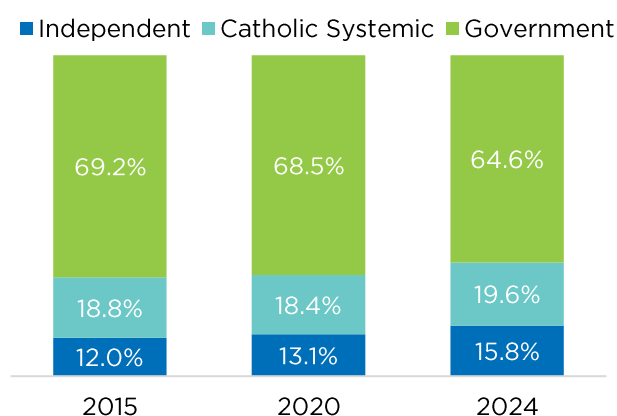
NSW enrolment share of students by sector, since Year 2000



NSW Enrolment share of students by sector, Greater Sydney



NSW Enrolment share of students by sector, Rest of NSW

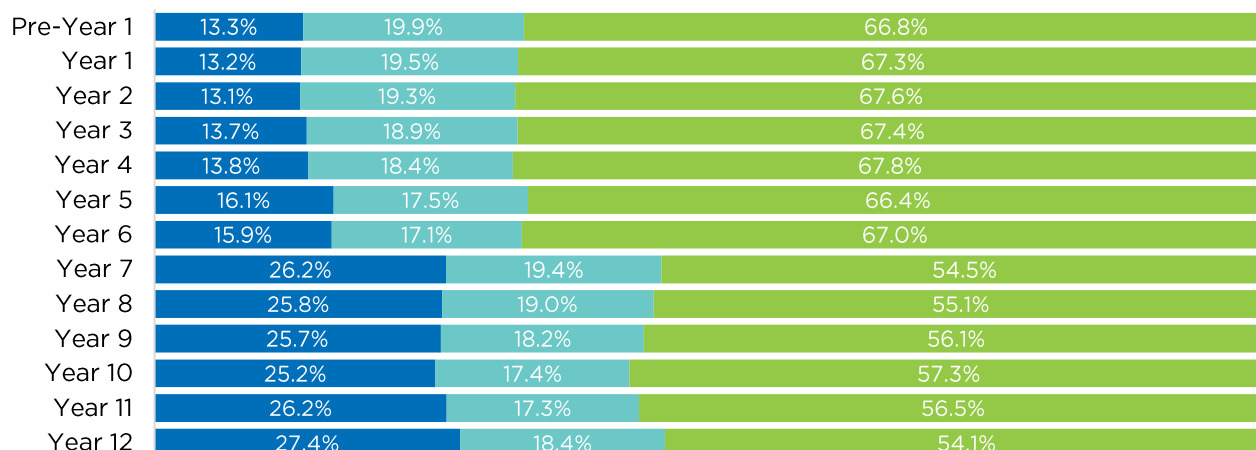


At the grade level, parents tend to transition their children from the government sector to either the independent or Catholic Systemic sectors from Year 7. By Year 12, almost half of NSW students are enrolled in non-government schools. The growth figures by year level, as shown earlier in this report, demonstrate that the Independent sector is increasing its student share across all year levels.

ENROLMENT DYNAMICS, 2025 EDITION

NSW Enrolment share by sector, grade level, 2024

■ Independent ■ Catholic Systemic ■ Government

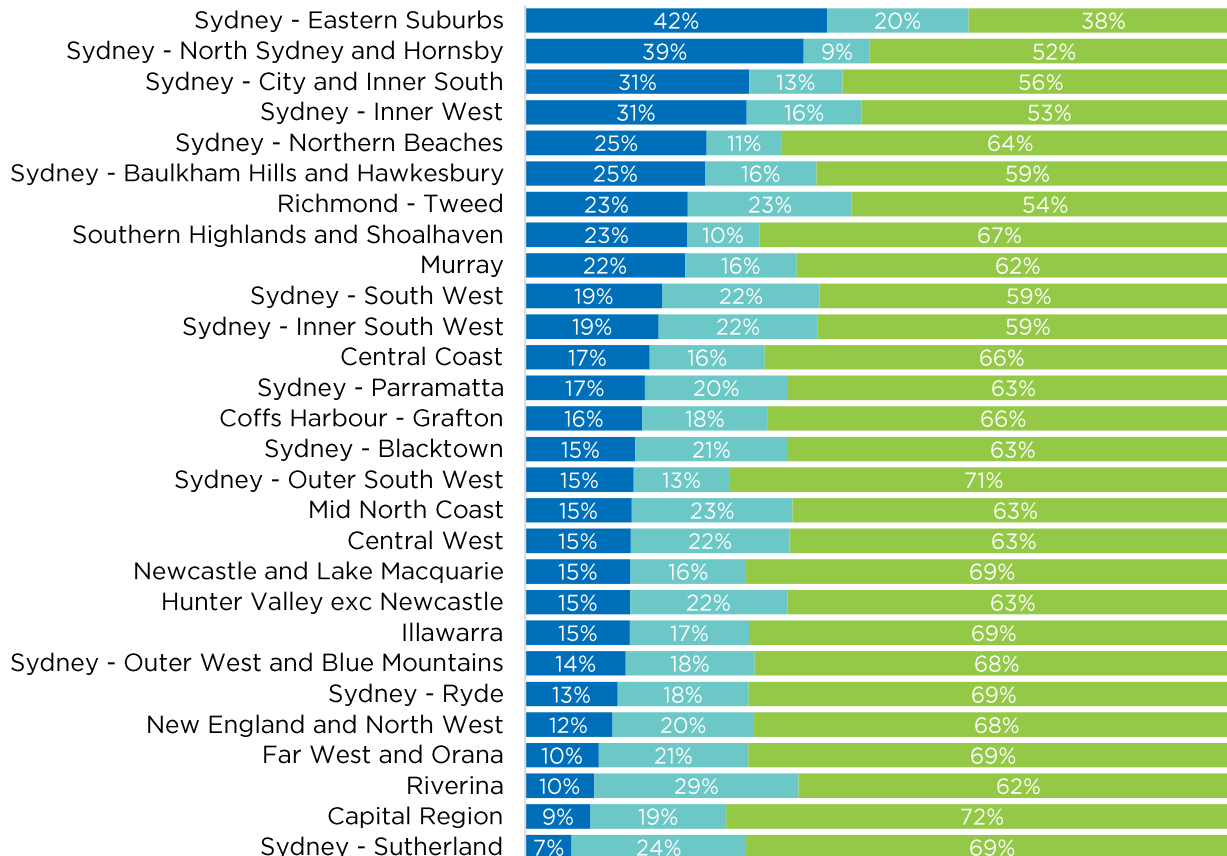


NSW Enrolment share by sector and region

At an SA4 level, enrolment share varies significantly, often driven by the number and size of the Independent schools within each area. In many cases, particularly outside Sydney, there are fewer Independent schools compared to (longer established) Government and Catholic Systemic schools.

NSW Enrolment share by sector, SA4, 2024

■ Independent ■ Catholic Systemic ■ Government



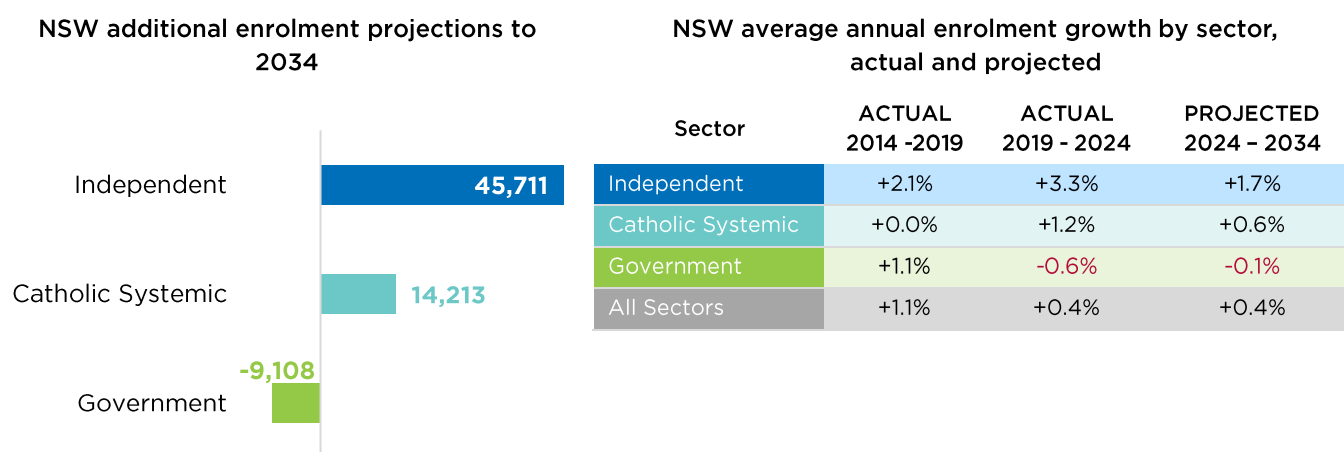
Enrolment projections

Independent Schools Australia (ISA) annually forecasts enrolment changes across each sector in every state and territory. Based on recent enrolment patterns, ISA forecasts that the Independent sector's enrolment share in NSW will continue to increase - from 19.5% in 2024 to 22.2% in the next 10 years.

The Catholic Systemic sector's share is forecast to edge up from 18.4% to 18.7%, while the Government sector's share is expected to decline from 62.1% to 59.1%.

This would result in 45,700 more students in the Independent sector, 14,200 more in the Catholic Systemic sector and a decline of 9,100 in the Government sector. Overall growth therefore would be 50,800 students across all sectors in NSW, annualised at 5,080 students per year - less than half the pre-pandemic average.

All enrolment growth over the next 10 years is expected to be in the non-government sector; some 75% of those additional enrolments are expected to be in the Independent sector. The projections assume that growth in the Independent sector will remain strong, although overall growth in the non-government school sectors will slow as the Government sector's recent enrolment decline begins to stabilise.



HOW ISA FORECASTS ENROLMENT CHANGES

Independent Schools Australia utilises the Australian Bureau of Statistics' [population projections, released in 2023, for NSW population projections](#), then applies its own detailed historical data to calculate projected enrolment growth for each school sector. It uses the ABS's Medium Series population projections which forecast that the student population across NSW and Australia will remain low, primarily due to sustained low fertility rates which have reduced the number of births feeding into the school-aged population.

Australia's fertility rate has reached a record low of 1.5 births per woman, according to data from the ABS's Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey from 2005 to 2023. Economists consider cost of living challenges to be the main factor behind the record low fertility rate; housing affordability, the cost of raising children and career/salary aspirations are inter-related concerns, contributing to the decision by many couples to delay having children.

The ABS projects that while births will gradually increase in absolute terms, they will not return to the higher levels of earlier decades. As a result, the natural increase (births minus deaths) is projected to moderate, contributing less to population growth overall.

In contrast to historical trends where school-aged populations benefited from both natural increase and migration, the current projections show that net overseas migration, although still positive, is expected to contribute more to the working-age population than to children. Migrants typically arrive as young adults, and while some may have children, this effect is delayed and relatively modest. Moreover, recent government policies, including restrictions on international student visas, are projected to lead to lower net overseas migration from recent peaks. For NSW specifically, persistent net interstate migration losses (primarily to Queensland) are also limiting population expansion. Additionally, the median age of the population is rising, which further dampens growth in younger age cohorts.

LBOTE Students

ACARA collects **Language Background Other Than English** (LBOTE) data from schools as part of its annual Student Background Data collection.

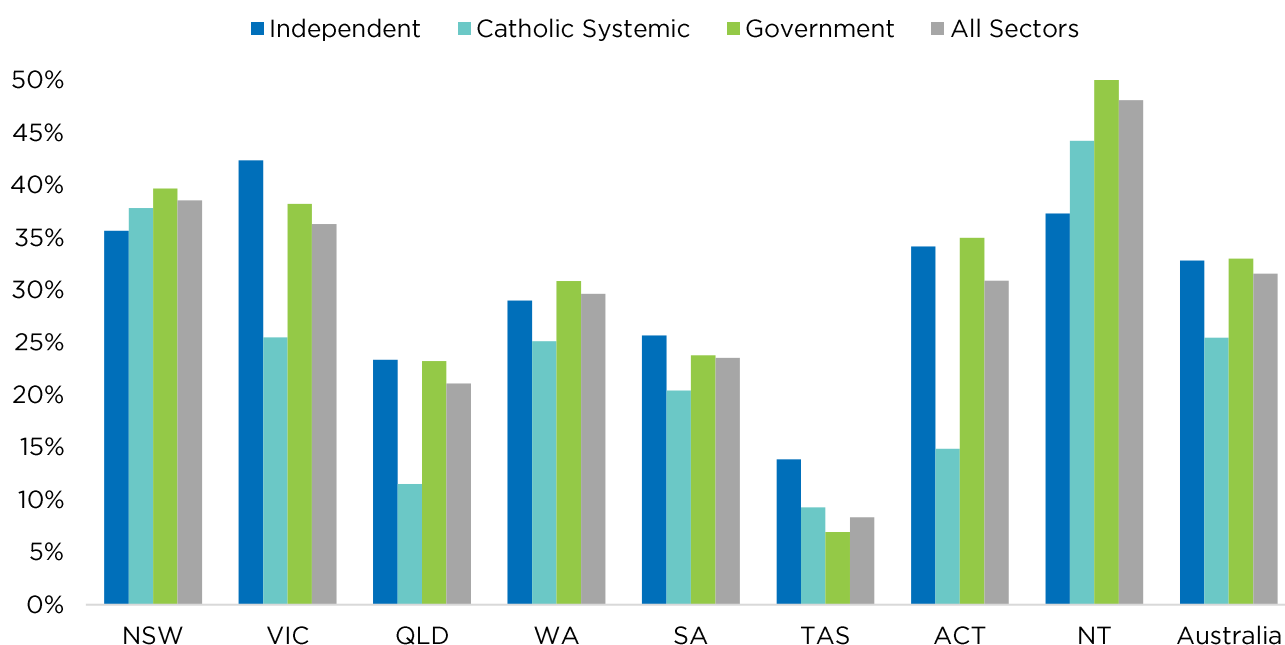
This classification refers to students who:

- speak a language other than English at home, or
- have at least one parent or guardian who speaks a language other than English at home

Within each state and territory, NT and NSW have the highest rates of students with a language background other than English (48% and 39% respectively).

Within the Independent sector, Victoria enrolls the highest proportion of students with a language background other than English (42%), followed by NT (37%) and NSW (36%).

Proportion of students with a language background other than English, by State/Territory



Proportion of students with a language background other than English, by State/Territory

Note: Those highlighted in green are where the proportion is 30% or higher.

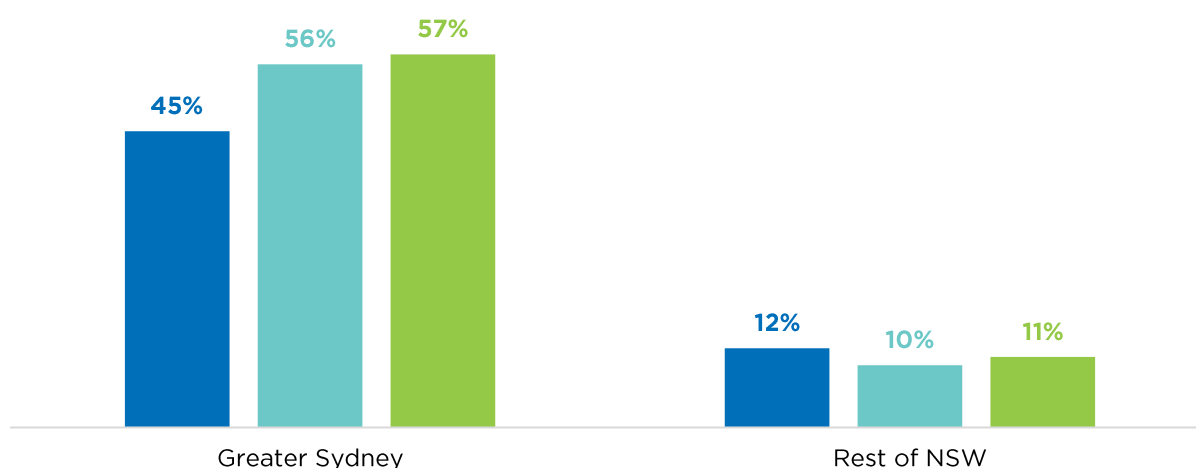
State	Independent	Catholic Systemic	Government	All Sectors
NSW	36%	38%	40%	39%
VIC	42%	26%	38%	36%
QLD	23%	12%	23%	21%
WA	29%	25%	31%	30%
SA	26%	20%	24%	24%
TAS	14%	9%	7%	8%
ACT	34%	15%	35%	31%
NT	37%	44%	51%	48%
Australia	33%	25%	33%	32%

Within Greater Sydney, 54% of students across all sectors have a language background other than English, while outside of Sydney, this figure reduces to 11%.

Within Sydney, 45% of NSW Independent students have a language background other than English, while outside of Sydney this figure falls to 12%, but remains in line with other school sectors.

Proportion of NSW students with a language background other than English, by Remoteness

■ Independent ■ Catholic Systemic ■ Government



ENROLMENT DYNAMICS, 2025 EDITION

Within NSW, the proportion of students with a language background other than English is primarily related to geographic area, rather than the type of school a student attends.

Proportion of NSW students with a language background other than English, by Greater Sydney SA4

SA4	Independent	Catholic Systemic	Government	All Sectors
Sydney - Inner South West	82%	83%	82%	82%
Sydney - Parramatta	76%	68%	84%	79%
Sydney - South West	73%	80%	79%	78%
Sydney - Blacktown	57%	61%	65%	63%
Sydney - Inner West	50%	71%	60%	58%
Sydney - Baulkham Hills and Hawkesbury	40%	34%	59%	50%
Sydney - Outer South West	34%	17%	42%	38%
Sydney - Ryde	31%	63%	70%	64%
Sydney - North Sydney and Hornsby	29%	37%	58%	45%
Sydney - City and Inner South	27%	67%	49%	44%
Sydney - Eastern Suburbs	27%	46%	51%	40%
Sydney - Outer West and Blue Mountains	24%	22%	26%	25%
Sydney - Northern Beaches	23%	25%	26%	25%
Sydney - Sutherland	18%	28%	24%	24%
Greater Sydney	45%	56%	57%	54%

Proportion of NSW students with a language background other than English, by Rest of NSW SA4

SA4	Independent	Catholic Systemic	Government	All Sectors
Riverina	27%	12%	15%	15%
Illawarra	17%	10%	18%	17%
Far West and Orana	15%	8%	7%	8%
Newcastle and Lake Macquarie	13%	14%	13%	13%
Richmond - Tweed	12%	6%	11%	10%
Murray	12%	6%	10%	10%
Central Coast	12%	15%	13%	13%
Coffs Harbour - Grafton	12%	12%	12%	12%
Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven	11%	5%	9%	9%
Hunter Valley exc Newcastle	11%	8%	6%	7%
Mid North Coast	10%	8%	6%	7%
New England and North West	10%	7%	8%	8%
Capital Region	7%	8%	11%	10%
Central West	6%	8%	6%	6%
Rest of NSW	12%	10%	11%	11%

ABS Population & Housing Census: Income

This section focuses on statistics derived from the ABS Population & Housing Census. The income data reported here considers the total income of students' family members (typically their parents but may include other family members) as reported in the Census.

There are no standard definitions for what constitutes a low, middle or high income household. For the purposes of comparison, *Enrolment Dynamics* uses a breakdown of roughly 25% of the national student population in the low-income bracket, 50% in the middle and 25% in the high-income bracket.

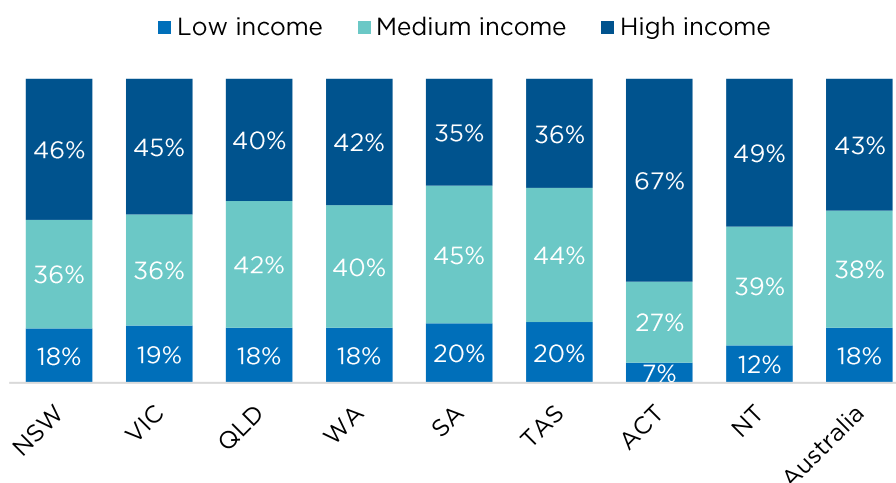
The data cuts used for the 2021 Census were:

Low income	< \$77,999
Medium income	\$78,000 to \$181,999
High income	\$182,000 or more

Contrary to popular belief, not all high-income earning families in NSW choose Independent schools for their children; about half of such households have enrolled their children in government schools.

However, as all schools charging more than \$10,000 per annum are in the Independent sector, it is self-evident that the NSW Independent sector educates a higher proportion of children from high- and middle-income families than the Catholic and government school sectors, in line with national trends and other major regions.

Independent sector fees by state/territory

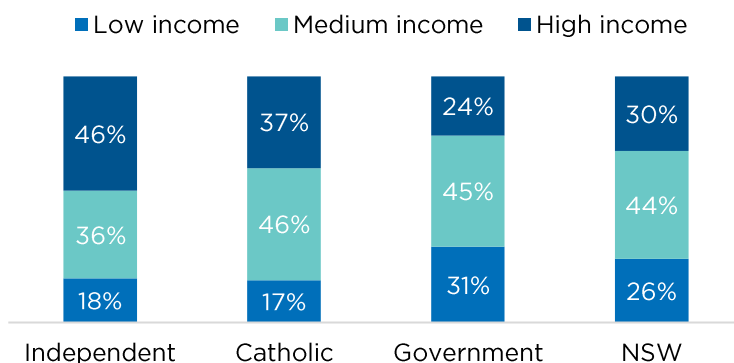


Across all school sectors, NSW parents are slightly over-represented in the high-income bracket, as incomes within Sydney are typically higher than the national average.

NSW Independent and Catholic System schools enrol a similar proportion of students from low-income families (18% and 17%, respectively), dispelling the notion that Independent schools do not serve low-income families or that Catholic schools primarily enrol students from low-income families.

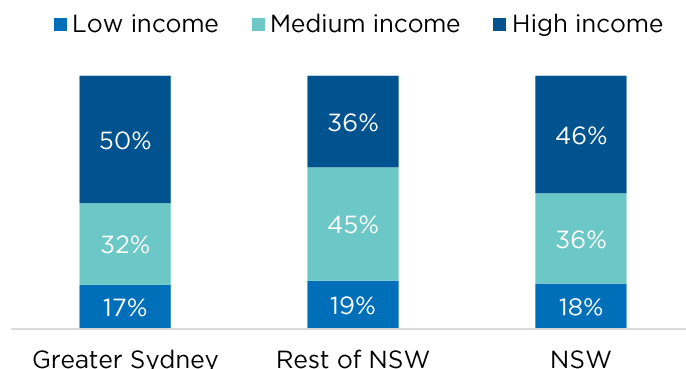
More than half of NSW Independent school students (54%) are from low-to-medium income families.

NSW family income by sector



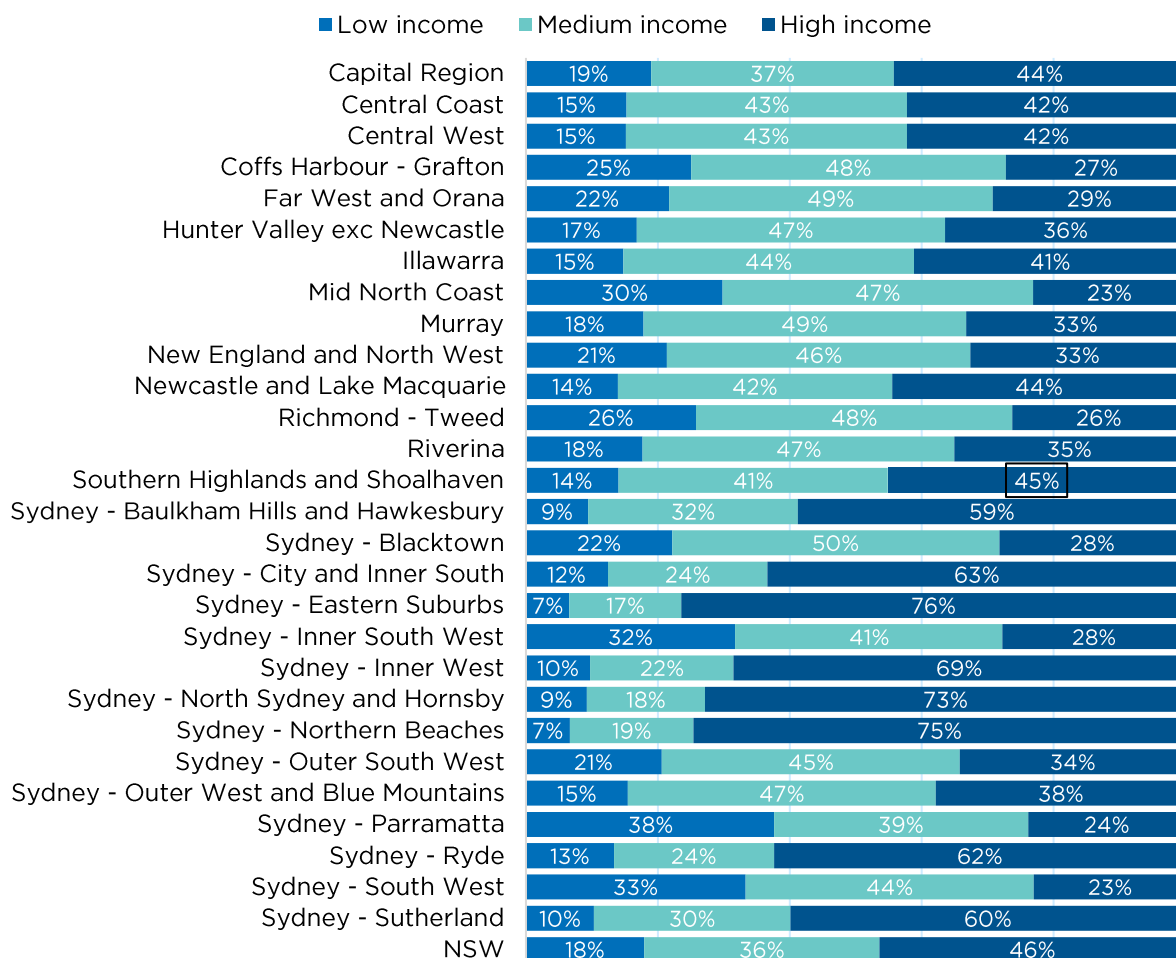
Within NSW Independent schools, over half of students are from low-to-medium income families; outside Sydney, 64% or almost two thirds of students are from low-to-medium income families.

NSW Independent sector fees by region



The income ranges of families attending NSW Independent schools vary based on location. For example, 77% of parents in the Parramatta area have low-to-medium incomes whereas in the Northern Beaches, it is only 26%. Income largely reflects the demographics of each area.

NSW Independent sector fees by SA4



Among high-income families with school-age children, 50% choose to enrol their children in government schools. This data disproves the common assumption that high-income families exclusively attend non-government schools. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that a higher proportion of high-income families opt for Catholic schools (generally low fee) compared to Independent schools.

Proportion of school-aged children in high income families, NSW



In 26 of NSW's 28 SA4 regions, a clear majority of high-income earning families enrolled their children in Government schools.

The Independent sector holds this majority in just one SA4 region (Sydney Eastern Suburbs).

Furthermore, the Independent sector had the lowest proportion of high-income earners in 22 of the 28 SA4 regions; the Catholic sector had the lowest proportion of high-income earners in the remaining six areas.

Proportion of school-aged children in high income families, NSW, by SA4

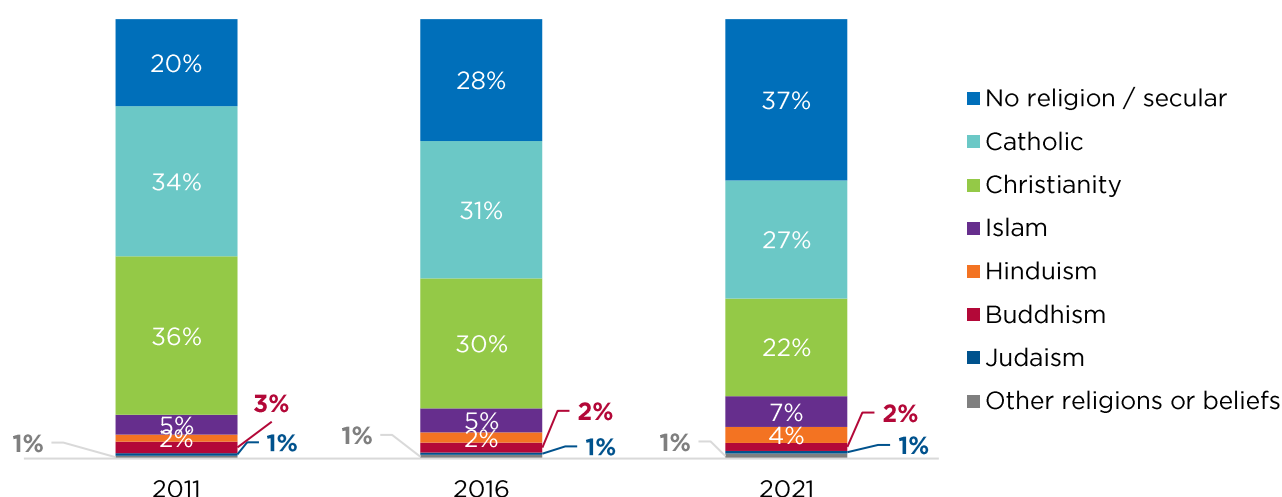
	Independent	Catholic	Government
Capital Region	16%	35%	49%
Central Coast	26%	24%	49%
Central West	18%	36%	45%
Coffs Harbour - Grafton	25%	27%	47%
Far West and Orana	17%	36%	47%
Hunter Valley exc Newcastle	22%	32%	45%
Illawarra	13%	30%	57%
Mid North Coast	21%	36%	43%
Murray	28%	32%	41%
New England and North West	23%	30%	46%
Newcastle and Lake Macquarie	20%	22%	58%
Richmond - Tweed	23%	39%	39%
Riverina	17%	43%	41%
Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven	35%	22%	43%
Sydney - Baulkham Hills and Hawkesbury	23%	22%	56%
Sydney - Blacktown	14%	28%	58%
Sydney - City and Inner South	20%	24%	56%
Sydney - Eastern Suburbs	45%	23%	32%
Sydney - Inner South West	20%	36%	44%
Sydney - Inner West	24%	28%	48%
Sydney - North Sydney and Hornsby	32%	18%	50%
Sydney - Northern Beaches	23%	21%	57%
Sydney - Outer South West	24%	31%	45%
Sydney - Outer West and Blue Mountains	20%	29%	50%
Sydney - Parramatta	12%	31%	56%
Sydney - Ryde	17%	26%	57%
Sydney - South West	20%	35%	45%
Sydney - Sutherland	11%	29%	61%
NSW	23%	27%	50%

ABS Population & Housing Census: Religion of students

Two out of three Australians report having some form of religious affiliation. In NSW schools, approximately one in four students identify as Catholic and one in five as Christian. Catholic schools tend to enrol more Catholic students, while over half of government school students do not report a religious affiliation. Independent schools enrol a mix of predominantly Christian and non-religious students.

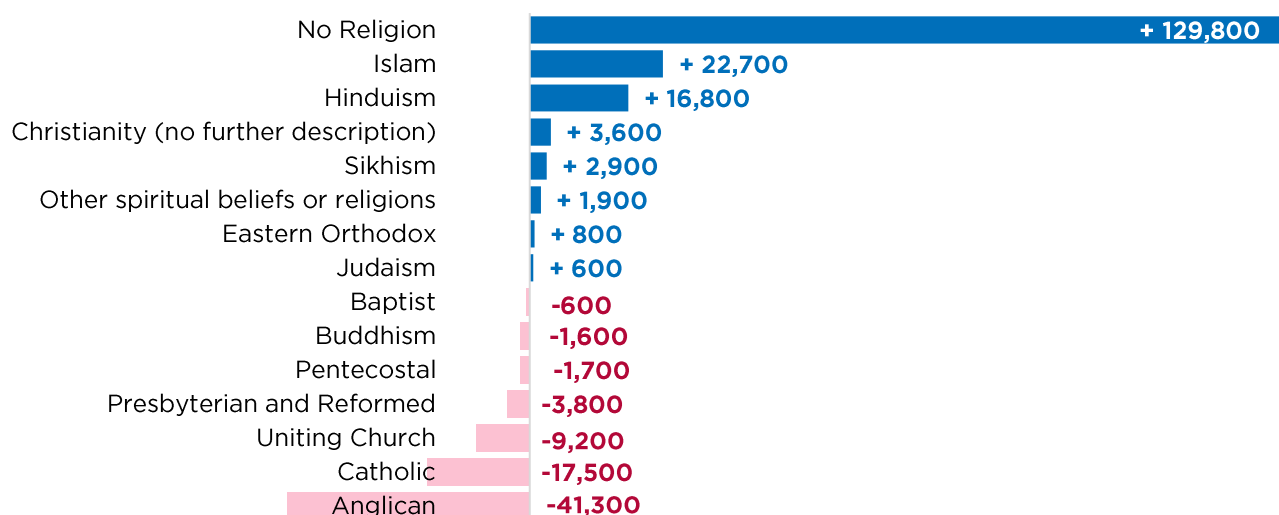
Within NSW, the percentage of students with non-religious backgrounds has steadily increased each Census, from 20% in 2011 to 37% in 2021. During the same period, there has been a decrease in the proportion of students identifying as Catholic or Christian, although both groups remain significant. Additionally, the percentage of Islamic students has increased from 5% to 7%.

Religious affiliation of NSW students (all sectors), 2011-2021



From 2016 to 2021, the NSW student population saw notable growth in those identifying as 'no religion', Islam, and Hinduism. Within Christianity, Anglican and Catholic affiliations declined, while general Christian identification slightly increased, suggesting some students now prefer a broader label. These changes in Christian identification were minor overall.

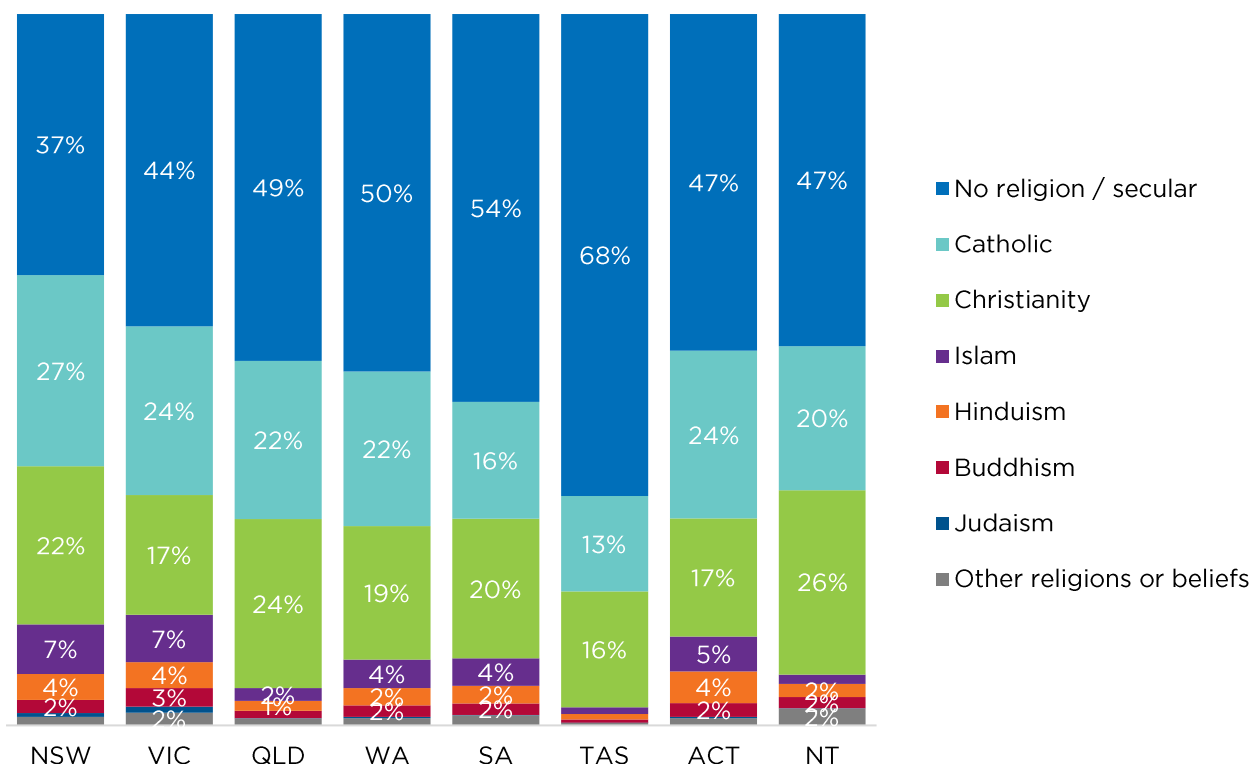
Change in religious affiliation of NSW students (all sectors), 2016 - 2021



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Compared to other states and territories, NSW has the lowest proportion of non-religious students at 37%, the highest proportion of students identifying with the Catholic faith (27%), and the second-highest proportion of students aligned to a Christian faith (22%).

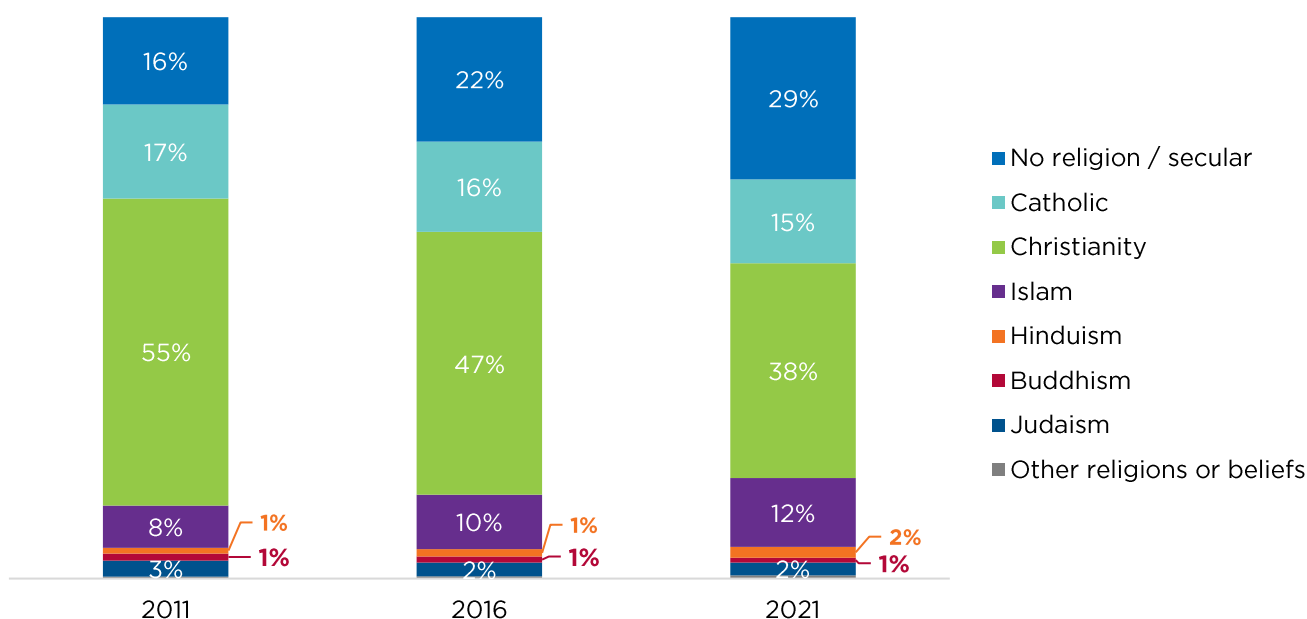
Religious affiliation of students (all sectors) by state/territory



In the NSW Independent sector, there has been a perceptible rise in the proportion of students identifying with no faith, now approaching 30%. This trend is accompanied by a significant decline in students identifying as Christian - from 55% to 38% - and an increase in those identifying as Islamic (from 8% to 12%).

The increase in non-religious students has not affected school enrolments negatively; on the contrary, religious schools have a record number of enrolments and they continue to grow each year. Religion is merely one of several factors influencing parents' school choice. Other significant reasons include the presence of strong values and morals, classroom discipline, highly qualified teachers, curricula choice and facilities.

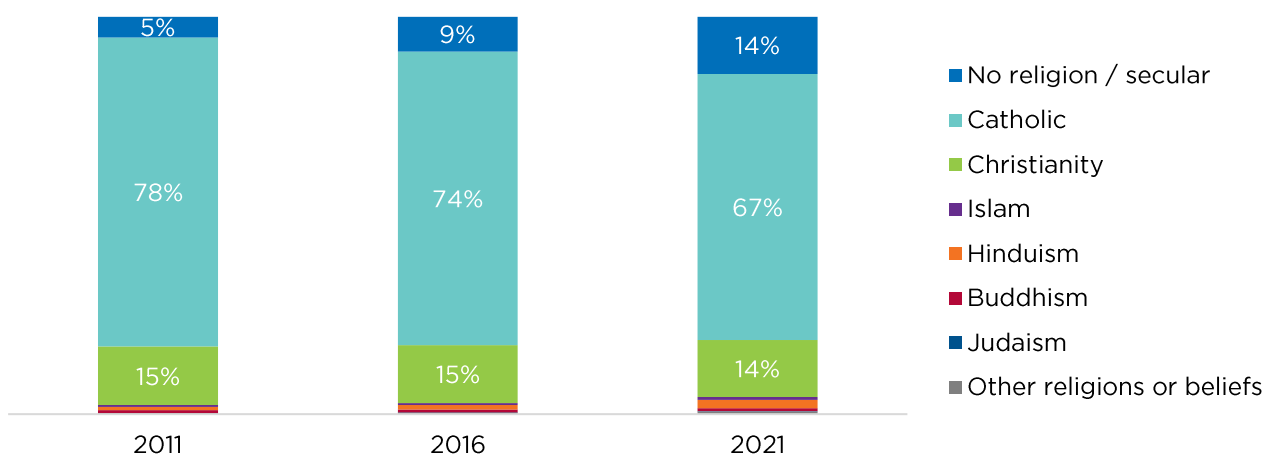
Religious affiliation of students within the Independent sector



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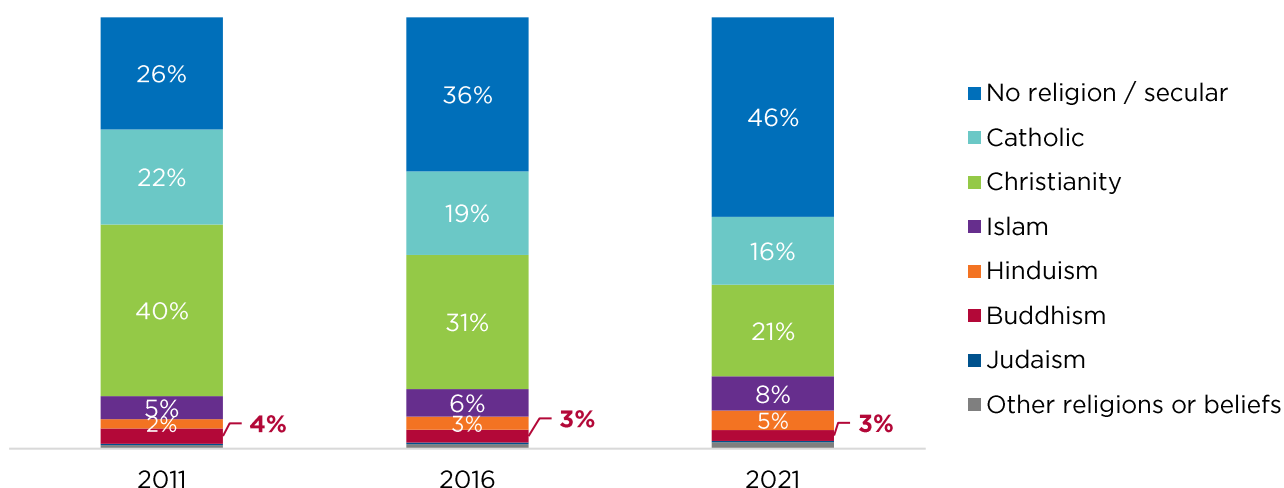
In the Catholic sector, the proportions of non-religious students have also risen - from 5% in 2011 to 14% in 2021. This has corresponded with a decrease in students of the Catholic faith (from 78% to 67%).

Religious affiliation of students within the Catholic sector



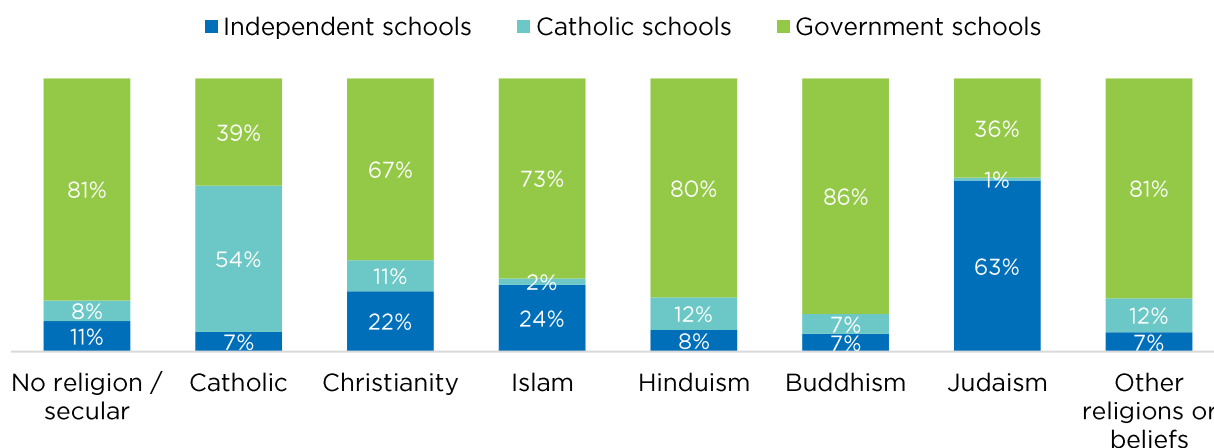
Almost half of all students in Government schools in 2021 claim no religion, up from a quarter a decade earlier.

Religious affiliation of students within the Government sector



No single faith dominates a particular school sector, apart from Catholic students being most likely to attend a Catholic school and Jewish students being most likely to attend a Jewish (Independent) school.

Proportion of students within each school sector, by religious affiliation





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