

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS IN NSW SNAPSHOT

2025 EDITION



The Association of
Independent Schools
of New South Wales

LATEST AVAILABLE FACTS AND FIGURES

The New South Wales Independent school sector is a diverse and growing group of non-government schools. This is a snapshot of key characteristics of Independent schools, the students, the teaching and non-teaching staff, and how these schools are funded.

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

CHARACTERISTICS OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

- ✓ Choice for parents
- ✓ Strong community links
- ✓ Diversity of school type, size and focus
- ✓ Autonomous governance arrangements
- ✓ Comprehensive accountability

SCHOOL METRICS

In 2024, there were 430 Independent schools in NSW, including 39 boarding schools.



430

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS



245,452

TOTAL STUDENTS

TYPES OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

17% (73)

PRIMARY

8% (33)

SECONDARY

60% (257)

COMBINED

16% (67)

SPECIAL/SPECIAL ASSISTANCE SCHOOLS



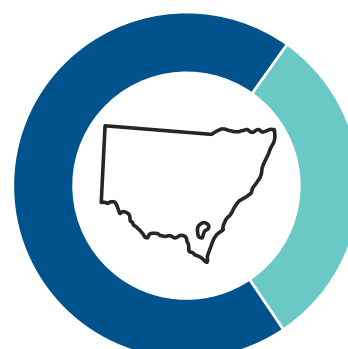
LOCATION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

69.3%

MAJOR CITIES

30.7%

REGIONAL/
REMOTE



STUDENT ENROLMENTS

The rate of growth in Independent schools has been increasing. In 2024, enrolments in NSW Independent schools grew at a rate of 3.6%, higher than government (-0.7%) and Catholic (+1.6%) schools.



NSW ENROLMENTS BY SCHOOL SECTOR AND LEVEL (%) 2024

	GOVERNMENT	CATHOLIC	INDEPENDENT
SECONDARY SCHOOL	55.8%	18.2%	26.0%
PRIMARY SCHOOL	67.2%	18.5%	14.3%
TOTAL ENROLMENTS	62.1%	18.4%	19.5%

NSW INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS IN 2024:



6,468
ABORIGINAL and
TORRES STRAIT
ISLANDER
STUDENTS



1,083
OVERSEAS
STUDENTS

NSW ENROLMENT CHANGE OVER TIME BY SCHOOL SECTOR (%)

	GOVERNMENT	CATHOLIC	INDEPENDENT
2000	69.5%	17.4%	13.1%
2005	66.9%	18.2%	14.9%
2010	66.2%	18.2%	15.5%
2015	65.3%	18.5%	16.2%
2020	65.3%	17.6%	17.2%
2024	62.1%	18.4%	19.5%

Shown as percentage of total enrolments.

TOTAL NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL ENROLMENTS BY NSW SCHOOL SECTOR 2000-2024

INDEPENDENT	101,565
CATHOLIC	39,817
GOVERNMENT	18,500

ENROLMENTS BY GENDER AND LEVEL NSW INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS 2024

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
PRIMARY	50,305	49,409	99,714
SECONDARY	73,249	72,489	145,738
TOTAL	123,554	121,898	245,452



5,349
BOARDING
STUDENTS

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY (EST.) NSW INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS* 2024

SUPPORT PROVIDED WITHIN A QUALITY DIFFERENTIATED TEACHING PRACTICE	20,000
SUPPLEMENTARY	21,600
SUBSTANTIAL	6,400
EXTENSIVE	3,700

* More information on the levels of adjustment for students with disability is available at www.nccd.edu.au



51,700
STUDENTS WITH
DISABILITY
(ESTIMATED)

SCHOOL FUNDING

Parents and communities contributed over half (56%) of all NSW Independent school funding (recurrent and capital combined).



FAMILIES CONTRIBUTED
\$3.9 BILLION
(RECURRENT AND CAPITAL)
TO NSW INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS IN 2023

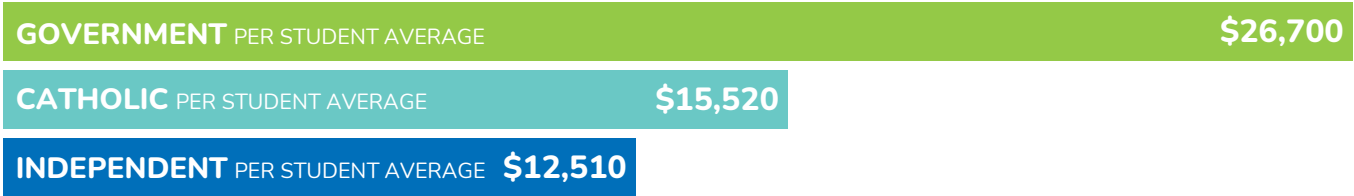


AN ESTIMATED SAVING OF
\$4.6 BILLION
TO THE NSW GOVERNMENT

The **median annual fee** was **\$5,989** for NSW Independent schools in 2023

Each NSW Independent school student received **\$14,000 less government funding** (on average) compared to students in government schools

AVERAGE GOVERNMENT RECURRENT FUNDING PER NSW STUDENT FY 2022-23



The Australian Government is the primary funding source for non-government schools, with the NSW Government the primary source for government schools. The Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) is a needs-based funding model that includes base funding plus loadings to address educational disadvantage.

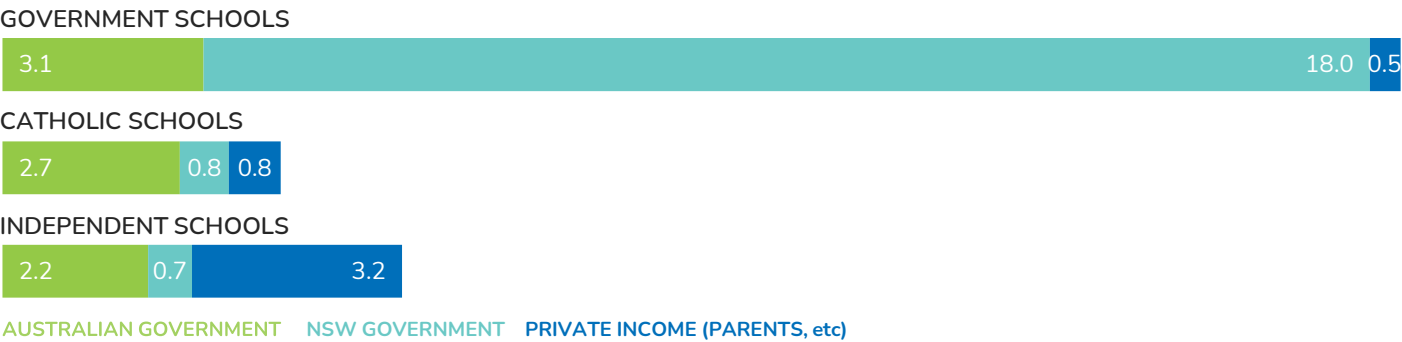
Base funding for Independent schools is adjusted according to families' estimated capacity to contribute (CTC), assessed on parental income tax data. Schools with a higher CTC score receive less per student base funding, and schools with a lower CTC receive more.

Example of base funding for two NSW Independent schools:

HIGH CTC SCORE
\$3,430
per student

LOW CTC SCORE
\$14,260
per student

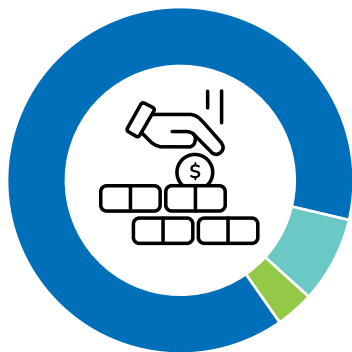
RECURRENT FUNDING FOR SCHOOL EDUCATION IN NSW \$BILLION FY 2022-23



CAPITAL FUNDING

Parents and communities of Independent schools contribute the vast majority of capital investment – through fees, fundraising and voluntary contributions.

SOURCES OF CAPITAL FUNDING NSW INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS 2023



PRIVATE SOURCES (parents and donors)

\$488 MILLION (88%)

Most capital funding is sourced through borrowing, fundraising, levies on parents or school reserves.

NSW GOVERNMENT

\$44 MILLION (8%)

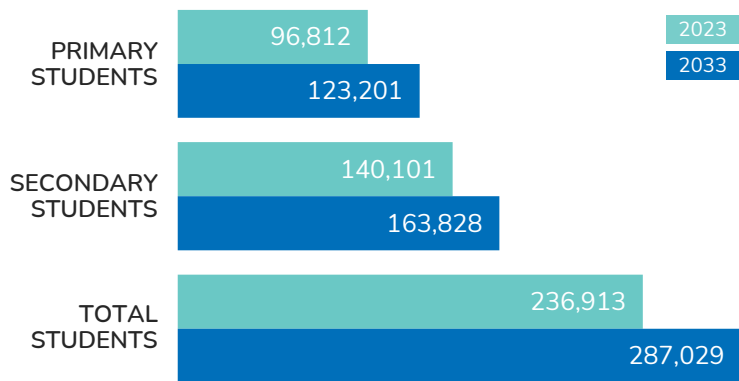
The NSW Government assistance for capital funding is limited.

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT CAPITAL GRANTS PROGRAM

\$20 MILLION (4%)

Australian Government grants are distributed to Independent schools on a needs-basis through Block Grant Authorities, with priority given to disadvantaged school communities with the least capacity to raise funds.

PROJECTED ENROLMENT GROWTH IN NSW INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS 2023-2033

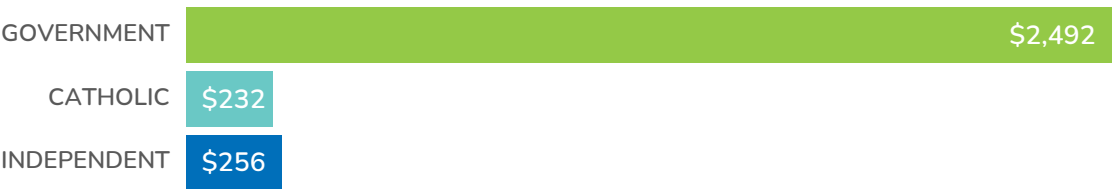


123 NEW SCHOOLS
will need to be built in
NSW by 2033

(Based on average Independent school size)

In 2023, total government capital expenditure per student for government schools was over **9 times more** than in Independent schools in NSW

TOTAL GOVERNMENT CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PER NSW STUDENT COMPARISON 2023



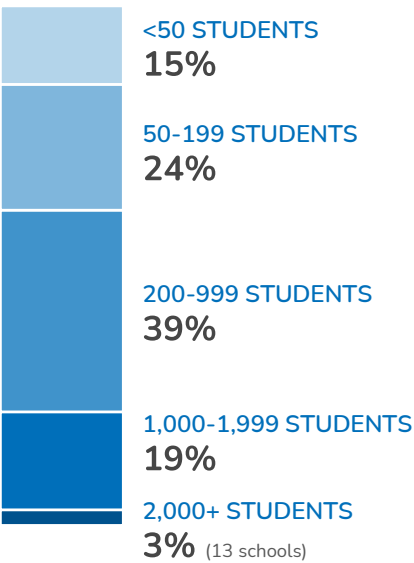
SCHOOL PROFILE

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

AFFILIATIONS OF NSW INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS 2024

AFFILIATION	NUMBER of SCHOOLS	STUDENTS FTE	STUDENTS %
ANGLICAN	64	65,057	26.5%
CATHOLIC INDEPENDENT	54	43,359	17.7%
CHRISTIAN	78	38,307	15.6%
SECULAR	92	29,022	11.8%
ISLAMIC	25	22,618	9.2%
UNITING CHURCH	8	12,432	5.1%
SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST	18	7,789	3.2%
PRESBYTERIAN	5	5,168	2.1%
BAPTIST	12	4,295	1.7%
STEINER	21	3,999	1.6%
ORTHODOX	8	3,813	1.6%
JEWISH	5	3,383	1.4%
PENTECOSTAL	6	3,214	1.3%
MONTESSORI	16	1,002	0.4%
BRETHREN	12	991	0.4%
LUTHERAN	4	870	0.4%
OTHER RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION	2	134	0.1%

SIZE OF NSW INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS



GOVERNANCE

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

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

About 10% of NSW Independent schools operate within an approved system authority. These include the Anglican, Lutheran or Seventh Day Adventist systems.

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



SCHOOL TEACHERS

Independent schools employ more than 22% of all teachers in NSW schools. The ratio of student to teacher in Independent schools is the lowest of the school sectors.



21,227

NUMBER OF TEACHERS
FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT
IN 2024



23,944

NUMBER OF TEACHERS
HEADCOUNT IN 2024



40,061

NUMBER OF TEACHING AND
NON-TEACHING STAFF
HEADCOUNT IN 2024

TEACHERS IN THE NSW INDEPENDENT SECTOR BY GENDER AND LEVEL 2024



PRIMARY TEACHERS

19.5% (1,397)
MALE

80.5% (5,779)
FEMALE



SECONDARY TEACHERS

39.6% (5,563)
MALE

60.4% (8,489)
FEMALE

NSW STUDENT TO TEACHER RATIOS BY SCHOOL LEVEL 2005-2024

	PRIMARY SCHOOLS			SECONDARY SCHOOLS		
	GOVERNMENT	CATHOLIC*	INDEPENDENT	GOVERNMENT	CATHOLIC*	INDEPENDENT
2005	16.7	18.4	14.9	12.4	13.0	10.2
2010	15.7	18.3	14.4	12.5	13.1	10.3
2015	15.8	17.9	14.0	12.5	13.0	10.2
2020	16.0	16.1	14.1	13.4	12.2	10.0
2024	14.1	15.6	13.6	12.7	12.0	10.2

NSW STUDENT TO TEACHER RATIOS (AVERAGE) 2024



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS
11.5 to 1



GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS
13.5 to 1



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS*
13.5 to 1

* Independent Catholic schools are included with Catholic schools.

SOURCES

Figures in this snapshot are derived from data provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the Australian Government Department of Education, the Productivity Commission and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. Some figures may not add due to rounding. Funding figures in the snapshot use the latest available financial data which is for the financial year 2022–23, or for the calendar year 2023. Unless otherwise specified, student enrolment figures are full-time equivalent.

Produced by Independent Schools Australia.

Enrolment figures include some for-profit independent schools, which are not currently included in various datasets due to the data collection method.

WWW.AISNSW.EDU.AU



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