



Parliamentary Budget Office

Government funding of Victorian schools

Submission to the inquiry into the state
education system in Victoria

OFFICIAL

Parliamentary Budget Office

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Postal address Parliament House Spring Street East Melbourne Victoria Australia 3002

Email address enquiries@pbo.vic.gov.au

Telephone 1300 615 862

Online pbo.vic.gov.au



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In brief

In this submission, we outline the Australian and Victorian government funding of Victorian schools. This includes funding responsibilities under the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) and the total public funding provided to government and non-government schools.

Funding responsibility

State and territory governments are responsible for delivering and regulating school education in their jurisdictions. Each jurisdiction's school education system consists of government and non-government schools, with the non-government sector including Catholic and independent schools. The Australian Government, and state and territory governments are jointly responsible for funding each school sector.

Figure 1 – School funding reforms



Source: Parliamentary Budget Office.

Commencing with the 2011 release of the Gonski review, there has been considerable reform in education funding arrangements. The review recommended a needs-based funding model for recurrent school funding – the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS). The Australian Government committed to the SRS model in 2017, and signed a bilateral agreement with the Victorian Government on SRS funding in 2019.

Schooling Resource Standard

Funding commitments

The SRS is a needs-based funding model that estimates the total government funding required for schools to meet their students' educational needs. The Australian and Victorian governments each have funding obligations for Victorian schools based on the SRS.

Under the bilateral agreement, the Victorian Government has committed to contribute at least:

- 70.4% of the SRS for government schools by 2023, and will reach its final share of 75% of the SRS for the sector by 2028
- 20% of the SRS for non-government schools by 2023.

Under the *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act), the Australian Government has committed to contribute at least:

- 20% of the SRS for government schools
- 80% of the SRS for non-government schools by 2023.

Figure 2 – Australian and Victorian government SRS transition schedule

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Victorian Government transition schedule						
Government sector	67.8	68.0	68.4	69.0	69.7	70.4
Non-government sector	19.7	19.8	19.1	19.2	19.9	20.0
Australian Government transition schedule						
Government sector	17.2	17.8	18.4	19.0	19.5	20.0
Non-government sector	77.1	77.7	76.3	77.8	81.3	82.5
Combined transition schedule						
Government sector	85.0	85.8	86.8	87.9	89.2	90.4
Non-government sector	96.8	97.5	95.4	97.0	101.2	102.5

Note: Figure is based on publicly available information and some components may differ from information held by the Australian and Victorian governments. Figure may not sum due to rounding.

Source: Parliamentary Budget Office

The current transition schedule indicates that the Australian Government is expected to fund 82.5% of the SRS for the non-government school sector in 2023, indicating that some non-government schools will be funded above the final share of the SRS in 2023. Non-government schools funded above the final share for their sector will transition down to 80% by 2029.

Whilst funding of non-government schools is expected to reach at least 100% of their SRS, government school funding is expected to only reach 95% of their SRS, indicating a 5% gap in funding. Victorian government schools will be funded below their total needs-based funding unless this gap is closed, whether through increased Australian or Victorian government funding.

Funding contributions

The Australian and Victorian governments' reported contribution amounts were at, or above, the required contribution amount for both schooling sectors in 2021.

Figure 3 - Australian and Victorian government SRS contributions in 2021

SRS contributions	Government sector		Non-government sector	
	\$ million	Percent	\$ million	Percent
Total SRS	11,595.1	100	4,742.1	100
Victorian Government contributions				
Required contributions	7,999.5	69.0	909.1	19.2
Reported contributions	8,083.7	69.7	911.5	19.2
Australian Government contributions				
Required contributions	2,197.7	19.0	3,689.4	77.8
Reported contributions	2,197.7	19.0	3,836.3	80.9
Total contributions				
Required contributions	10,197.1	87.9	4,598.4	97.0
Reported contributions	10,281.4	88.7	4,747.8	100.1

Note: Figure may not sum due to rounding.

Source: National School Resourcing Board and Australian Department of Education.

In 2021, Victorian:

- government schools received \$10,281.4 million in SRS funding, comprising \$8,083.7 million from the Victorian Government and \$2,197.7 million from the Australian Government
- non-government schools received \$4,747.8 million in SRS funding, comprising \$911.5 million from the Victorian Government and \$3,836.3 million from the Australian Government.

Output funding

Output funding is broader in scope as it includes government funding towards the SRS as well as funding that sits outside of the SRS. Government output funding that does not contribute to the SRS can include:

- payroll tax paid by the Victorian Department of Education on behalf of government schools for teaching staff
- Australian Government grants to the non-government school sector to implement national policy initiatives under the National School Reform Agreement.

All Victorian Government output funding provided to non-government schools solely relates to funding contributions made towards the SRS. Similarly, all Australian Government output funding provided to government schools solely relates to SRS funding contributions. This means that in both instances, there is no output funding which sits outside of the SRS.

The output funding we outline in Figure 4 excludes grants for capital projects and support (centralised) costs that benefit both school sectors, such as umbrella department costs.

Figure 4 – Government output funding of Victorian schools in 2021

Funding (\$ million)	Government schools	Non-government schools	All schools
Victorian Government funding			
SRS funding	8,083.7	911.5	8,995.2
Other output funding	588.5	-	588.5
Total	8,672.2	911.5	9,583.7
Australian Government funding			
SRS funding	2,197.7	3,836.3	6,034.0
Other output funding	-	35.6	35.6
Total	2,197.7	3,871.9	6,069.6
Total government funding			
SRS funding	10,281.4	4,747.8	15,029.2
Other output funding	588.5	35.6	624.1
Total output	10,869.9	4,783.4	15,653.3

Note: Australian Government funding to non-government schools only includes grants provided under the Act. This funding does not include grants provided outside of the Act as we could not source this data from publicly available information. Grants made outside of the Act relate to Indigenous education grants (excluding Indigenous loadings as part of the SRS), JobKeeper payments, and all other Australian Government recurrent grants (excluding funding under the Act). Figure is based on publicly available information and some components may differ from information held by the Australian and Victorian governments.

Source: Parliamentary Budget Office.

We estimated that in 2021 Victorian:

- government schools received \$10,869.9 million in total government output funding
- non-government schools received \$4,783.4 million in total government output funding.

Figure 5 – Government output funding per student for Victorian schools in 2021

Per student (dollars)	Government schools	Non-government schools	All schools
Victorian Government funding			
SRS funding	12,548	2,495	8,910
Other output funding	913	-	583
Total	13,461	2,495	9,493
Australian Government funding			
SRS funding	3,411	10,501	5,977
Other output funding	-	97	35
Total	3,411	10,598	6,012

Government funding of Victorian schools

Per student (dollars)	Government schools	Non-government schools	All schools
Total government funding			
SRS funding	15,959	12,996	14,887
Other output funding	913	97	618
Total per student	16,872	13,093	15,505

Note: Figure is based on publicly available information and some components may differ from information held by the Australian and Victorian governments.

Source: Parliamentary Budget Office.

We estimated that in 2021 Victorian:

- government schools received \$16,872 in per student output funding, which mainly comprised Victorian Government funding
- non-government schools received \$13,093 in per student output funding, which mainly comprised Australian Government funding.

The non-government school sector receives less output funding per student because non-government schools generally have a greater capacity to financially contribute to the school's operating costs through revenue generated from fees and donations.

Capital funding

Governments also provide capital funding and related grants to schools to construct new buildings and upgrade existing facilities. Capital funding is not counted towards SRS contributions.

Figure 6 – Government funding of Victorian schools in 2021

Funding (\$ million)	Government schools	Non-government schools	All schools
Victorian Government	2,169.2	89.9	2,259.1
Australian Government	-	46.7	46.7
Total capital	2,169.2	136.6	2,305.8

Note: Figure is based on publicly available information and some components may differ from information held by the Australian and Victorian governments.

Source: Parliamentary Budget Office.

We estimated that in 2021 Victorian:

- government schools received \$2,169.2 million in capital investment, which only relates to Victorian Government funding.
- non-government schools received \$136.6 million in grants for capital works, which mainly comprised Victorian Government funding.

Context

Request

On 22 June 2023, Mr Trung Luu MP, Chair of the Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee (the Committee), invited the Parliamentary Budget Officer to provide an independent submission to the Committee's inquiry into the state education system in Victoria (the Inquiry).

Inquiry terms of reference

On 17 May 2023, the Legislative Council agreed to the following motion: that the Committee inquire into, consider and report on the Victorian education system across government schools, including:

1. Trends in student learning outcomes from Prep to Year 12, including but not limited to:
 - a. the factors, if any, that have contributed to decline
 - b. disparities correlated with geography and socio-economic disadvantage.
2. The state of the teaching profession in Victoria, including but not limited to:
 - a. the adequacy of existing measures to recruit and retain teachers
 - b. training, accreditation and professional development, particularly for teaching students with special needs
 - c. the adequacy of the Department of Education's measures to support teachers
 - d. the impact of school leadership on student wellbeing, learning outcomes and school culture.
3. The current state of student wellbeing in Victoria, including but not limited to the impact of State Government interventions, following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, to address poor mental health in students, school refusal, and broader student disengagement.
4. The administrative burden on teachers and the availability of new technologies to alleviate the burden.
5. Examples of best practice in other jurisdictions and educational settings used to improve student learning outcomes and wellbeing.
6. School funding adequacy and its impact on student learning outcomes and wellbeing.

Scope

In this submission, we respond directly to the request from Mr Trung Luu MP, Chair of the Committee, for the latest financial year data on:

1. the current and future Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) funding responsibilities of the Australian and Victorian governments for government and non-government schools
2. the required SRS funding contributions of the Australian and Victorian governments for government and non-government schools
3. the actual SRS funding contribution provided by the Australian and Victorian governments for government and non-government schools

4. how total funding is separated into output, capital, and support funding, and subsequently distributed to schools.

Attachment A provides page number references against the Committee's request and the inquiry terms of reference.

Limitations

- We have relied on publicly available information to produce this submission due to the restricted use of confidential data. The figures we provide in this submission may differ from those held by the Australian and Victorian governments.
- We were not able to provide cost-related information regarding support (centralised) services because the Victorian Department of Education marked this information as confidential and we were unable to source alternative data through publicly available information.
- The Australian and Victorian governments generally report on school funding on a calendar year basis to reflect the duration of the school year from late January until mid-December. The legislative requirements and reporting of SRS funding are also prepared on a calendar year basis. As such, the figures we provide in this submission are on a calendar year basis rather than a financial year basis as requested by the Committee.

We prepared this advice on 13 October 2023.

Background

School sectors

Australia's schooling system consists of 2 sectors – the government sector and the non-government sector, with the non-government sector comprising Catholic and independent schools. In Victoria, most students (64%) are enrolled in a government school.

Figure 7 – Number of schools and student enrolments in Victoria in 2022

	Government	Non-government	Total
Number of schools	1,554	725	2,279
Number of students	644,598	369,695	1,014,293

Note: Number of students represents Full Time Equivalent (FTE) enrolments.

Source: Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority.

State and territory governments are responsible for delivering and regulating school education in their jurisdictions; however, funding responsibilities are shared with the Australian Government.

Government schools in Victoria receive:

- most of their income as recurrent government funding, primarily from the Victorian Government with some Australian Government contributions
- additional income from fees and parent contributions, although this only represents a small portion of their total income
- capital funding from the Victorian Government.

Non-government schools in Victoria:

- derive most of their recurrent government funding from Australian Government contributions rather than state government contributions
- generate a comparatively higher proportion of their income through fees and parent contributions, although recurrent government funding remains a large proportion of their total income
- receive grants for capital expenditure from both the Australian and Victorian governments, which are provided through the relevant block grant authority.

School funding reforms

The Australian and state and territory governments have implemented various reforms over the past decade to address student performance, particularly the outcomes of disadvantaged students.

In 2010, the Australian Government commissioned a panel, led by David Gonski AC, to conduct a review of school funding and provide recommendations to the government on future funding arrangements. The review's terms of reference outlined that any future funding model recommended by the panel ought to be transparent, fair, financially sustainable, and effective in promoting educational outcomes. The panel released their findings in 2011 under the *Review of Funding for Schooling* (often referred to as the 'Gonski Review').

The Gonski Review recommended, amongst other reforms, that the Australian and state and territory governments adopt a targeted needs-based funding model as the basis for their recurrent funding of government and non-government schools. The needs-based funding model, known as the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS), would apply to all students in all schooling sectors. The SRS would include separate per-student funding amounts for primary and secondary school students, and loadings for a range of measures to address disadvantaged students and schools. The Australian Government implemented these reforms in June 2017 under the *Australian Education Amendment Bill 2017*.

In addition to these reforms, the Australian Government commissioned a second review, also led by David Gonski AC, to assess how school funding should be used to achieve the best educational returns. Rather than focusing on the level of funding, the second review would assess the efficient use of funding through teaching and learning strategies to improve student outcomes and national performance. In March 2018, the panel released their findings and recommendations under the *Review to Achieve Education Excellence in Australian Schools* (often referred to as 'Gonski 2.0').

Gonski 2.0 helped inform the development of the National School Reform Agreement, which is a joint agreement between the Australian and state and territory governments to improve student performance by providing high-quality and equitable education for all students. The Council of Australian Governments, an intergovernmental body comprising the Australian Government and state and territory governments, agreed to the National School Reform Agreement in November 2018.

Under the National School Reform Agreement, each state and territory government signed a negotiated bilateral agreement with the Australian Government to outline its school funding and reform responsibilities. Victoria was the last jurisdiction to enter into a bilateral agreement. The Victorian Government signed the final agreement on 17 June 2019, which was set to expire on 31 December 2023.

In December 2022, the Education Ministers agreed to extend the National School Reform Agreement and bilateral agreements for a further 12 months to 31 December 2024, to allow for a review to inform the next agreement.

Government funding of Victorian schools

The bilateral agreements generally express school funding commitments as a share of the SRS. The Victorian bilateral agreement binds the Victorian Government to a set of national reform initiatives that align with the National School Reform Agreement. These reform initiatives broadly relate to:

- educational reform on student learning and achievement
- teacher support and school improvement
- improvements in data and the national evidence base.

State legislative requirements

In addition to the funding commitments outlined in the bilateral agreement, the *Education and Training Reform Act* also requires the Victorian Government to provide funding to non-government schools that is at least 25% of the per-student funding provided to government schools.

The Victorian Government determines the per-student funding provided to government schools based on a 'basket of goods' that captures specific recurrent funding lines, on which the 25% is applied. These recurrent funding lines relate to teaching, learning and welfare of students in order to capture education costs that are also applicable to non-government schools.

These costs exclude:

- payroll tax and capital expenditure
- Australian Government funding to government schools
- funding for programs or initiatives provided to both government and non-government schools.

Schooling Resource Standard contributions

In this section

In this section we outline:

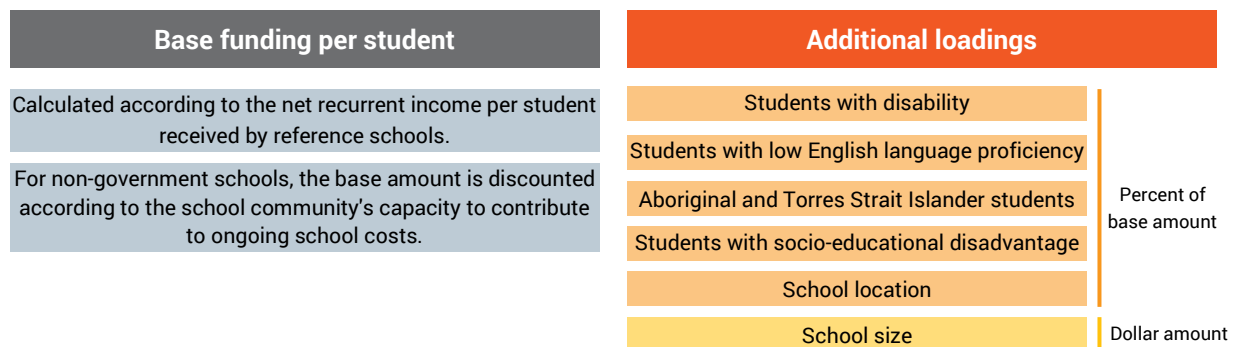
- the components of the SRS
- the SRS funding responsibilities of the Australian and Victorian governments
- the required and reported SRS contributions in 2021.

Overview of the Schooling Resource Standard

The SRS is a targeted needs-based funding model that estimates the total government funding required for schools to meet their students’ educational needs. The Gonski Review designed the SRS model to replace all previous government recurrent school funding arrangements.

The SRS comprises a base funding amount for each student, plus loadings to provide funding for students with additional needs.

Figure 8 – Components of the Schooling Resource Standard



Source: National School Resourcing Board and Parliamentary Budget Office.

Base funding

The base per-student funding amount is the same for government and non-government schools but differs between primary and secondary school students.

The SRS calculates base funding amounts according to the net recurrent income per student received by reference schools, where:

- ‘net recurrent income per student’ represents the income per student minus deductions, and is a measure of the total funding schools require to meet their ongoing staff and operating costs
- ‘reference schools’ refers to schools where at least 80% of students achieved above the national minimum standard for reading and numeracy in NAPLAN for 3 years in a row.

Based on this methodology, the Australian Government has prescribed the following base SRS funding per student:

Figure 9 – Base SRS funding per student

Base amount (\$ per student)	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Primary student	10,953	11,343	11,747	12,099	12,522	13,048
Secondary student	13,764	14,254	14,761	15,204	15,736	16,397

Source: Australian Government Department of Education.

From 2019, the SRS base funding amounts per student are indexed annually by either 3% or the weighted average of the wage price index for all industries (75%) and consumer price index (25%), whichever is greater. Alternatively, the Australian Government Minister for Education can prescribe an indexation rate for individual years.

For non-government schools, the base amount is discounted according to the assessed capacity of the school community to financially contribute to the school's operating costs. The discounting of base funding amounts does not apply to:

- government schools
- non-government special schools or special assistance schools
- non-government majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander schools
- non-government sole-provider schools, which are situated in remote areas and have no other schools providing the same level of education within a defined distance.

The maximum discount for non-government schools is up to 80% of the base amount.

From 2022, a non-government school's capacity to contribute is assessed according to the median family income of students at the school, known as the Direct Measure of Income. Prior to this, the SRS used the socio-economic status score of the areas where students reside to assess a school's capacity to contribute.

Loadings

The SRS allocates additional funding to target students with additional needs and disadvantaged schools. There are 6 loadings under the SRS – 5 of which are calculated as a percentage of the base amount, with one calculated as a dollar amount.

Students with disability

Additional funding is provided for students with a disability. Students with a disability are categorised into 3 levels: extensive, substantial and supplementary.

Figure 10 – Students with disability loading by level of adjustment

	Supplementary	Substantial	Extensive
Primary student	42%	146%	312%
Secondary student	33%	116%	248%

Source: Australian Government Department of Education.

Students with low English language proficiency

Additional funding is provided for students from a language background other than English, where at least one parent has completed school education only to Year 9 or below.

- Rate is equal to 10% of the SRS funding amount.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Additional funding is provided for each Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student.

- Loading amount increases with the proportion of Indigenous students enrolled at a school:
 - If a single Indigenous student is enrolled in a school, the loading is 20% of the SRS.
 - If all students at a school are Indigenous students, the loading is 120% of the SRS.

Students with socio-educational disadvantage

Additional funding is provided for each student who is socio-educationally disadvantaged, based on the percentage of students in the lowest 2 quartiles of Socio-Educational Advantage (SEA). The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) developed the SEA to assess schools based on their relative disadvantage (bottom quarter) through to their relative advantage (top quarter).

- Loading amount increases with the proportion of students in each of the bottom 2 quartiles of the SEA, up to 50% of the SRS amount for Quartile 1 and 37.5% for Quartile 2.

School location

Additional funding is provided for schools located in regional and remote areas to account for the increased costs of educating students enrolled in these schools.

- Loading is based on a school's location percentage, as defined by the Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia (ARIA) score, and is applied as a percentage of the SRS funding amount and the school's size loading.

School size

Additional funding is provided to primary schools with up to 300 students and secondary schools with up to 700 students. This is the only loading that is calculated as a set dollar amount.

- The loading amount is scaled:
 - Primary schools with between 15 and 200 students attract the maximum loading amount of \$205,774 in 2023.
 - Secondary schools with between 100 and 500 students attract the maximum loading of \$329,241 in 2023.

SRS funding transition

Victorian Government minimum contributions

The bilateral agreement outlines the Victorian Government's minimum contributions as a percentage of the SRS for each schooling sector.

Figure 11 – Victorian Government minimum funding contributions as a percentage of the SRS

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Government sector	67.8	68.0	68.4	69.0	69.7	70.4
Non-government sector	19.7	19.8	19.1	19.2	19.9	20.0

Source: Australian Government Department of Education.

The bilateral agreement requires the Victorian Government to contribute at least:

- 70.4% of the SRS for government schools by 2023, and will reach its final share of 75% of the SRS for the sector by 2028
- 20% of the SRS for non-government schools by 2023, which is the Victorian Government's final share of the SRS for the sector.

Australian Government contributions

The *Australian Education Act 2013* (the Act) outlines the Australian Government's recurrent school funding responsibilities. By 2023, the Australian Government has committed to contribute at least:

- 20% of the SRS for government schools
- 80% of the SRS for non-government schools; however, the current transition schedule indicates that funding is expected to reach 82.5% of the SRS for the sector in 2023.

Figure 12 – Australian Government contributions as a percentage of the SRS

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Government sector	17.2	17.8	18.4	19.0	19.5	20.0
Non-government sector	77.1	77.7	76.3	77.8	81.3	82.5

Note: Figure is based on publicly available information and some components may differ from information held by the Australian and Victorian governments.

Source: Parliamentary Budget Office.

While the Australian Government contribution amounts reflect each school sector in aggregate, some individual schools may be funded above the final SRS share for their sector. The Australian Government's contribution amounts for non-government schools are expected to exceed 80% in 2022 and 2023, indicating that some non-government schools in Victoria are being funded above their final share. Under the Act, non-government schools that are funded above the final share will transition down to 80% of the SRS by 2029.

Total government contributions

When considering both Australian and Victorian government funding:

- Victorian government schools will receive 90.4% of the SRS by 2023 and reach their final share of 95% of the SRS by 2028, indicating a 5% gap in needs-based funding

- Victorian non-government schools will receive 102.5% of the SRS by 2023 and will transition to their final share of 100% of the SRS by 2029, indicating that they will be funded above their total needs-based funding from 2022 until 2029.

Figure 13 – Australian and Victorian government combined contributions as a percentage of the SRS

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Government sector	85.0	85.8	86.8	87.9	89.2	90.4
Non-government sector	96.8	97.5	95.4	97.0	101.2	102.5

Note: Figure is based on publicly available information and some components may differ from information held by the Australian and Victorian governments.

Source: Parliamentary Budget Office.

The 5% gap in funding for the government school sector is common across the bilateral agreements of other jurisdictions and was a sticking point in negotiations between the Australian and state and territory governments. Victorian government schools will be funded below their total needs-based funding unless this gap is closed, whether through increased Australian or state government funding.

Required and reported SRS contributions – 2021 funding year

Victorian Government SRS contributions

Section 22A of the Act requires state and territory governments to meet their minimum school funding contributions to the SRS. The Act requires the National School Resourcing Board (the Board) to conduct an annual review of state and territory government compliance with section 22A.

Under Victoria's bilateral agreement, a shortfall in the state's reported contribution compared to its required contribution can be assessed as immaterial or material. An immaterial shortfall is defined as less than or equal to 0.6% of the total SRS for the sector. If a funding shortfall is within this threshold, the Board will not consider it as non-compliant with section 22A of the Act.

Where a material shortfall exists, meaning that the amount of funding shortfall exceeds the immaterial threshold of 0.6% of the SRS, the Board will consider any mitigating factors that may have contributed to non-compliance.

As part of the bilateral agreement, the Victorian Government may, at its discretion, include additional expenditure of up to 4% of the total SRS for the government school sector each year for capital depreciation, direct school transport, regulatory and reform costs.

Figure 14 – Victorian Government required and reported funding of schools in 2021

SRS contributions	Government sector		Non-government sector	
	\$ million	Percent	\$ million	Percent
Total SRS	11,595.1		4,742.1	
Victorian Government contributions				
Required contributions	7,999.5	69.0%	909.1	19.2%
Reported contributions	8,083.7	69.7%	911.5	19.2%
Victorian Government funding shortfall				
Allowed immaterial shortfall	69.6	0.6%	28.5	0.6%
Total shortfall	-	-	-	-
Material shortfall	-	-	-	-

Notes: The Board reports the 'total shortfall' as the reported SRS contributions less the required SRS contributions, and the 'material shortfall' as the amount of shortfall that exceeds the immaterial threshold of 0.6%. Reported contributions include \$67.8 million (0.6% of SRS) in regulatory costs agreed to in the bilateral agreement, as well as \$463.8 million (4.0% of SRS) under the cap on additional expenditure of up to 4% of the SRS for the government sector for capital depreciation and the School Bus Program for rural and regional Victoria.

Source: National School Resourcing Board and Parliamentary Budget Office.

In the 2021 funding year, the Victorian Government contributed:

- \$8,083.7 million to government schools, which was 0.7% more than the required funding for the sector
- \$911.5 million to non-government schools, which was negligibly higher than the required funding for the sector.

Australian Government SRS contributions

Section 127 of the Act requires the Australian Education Minister to report on the financial assistance paid by the Australian Government to the school sector. The Australian Government recurrent funding outlined in the *Australian Government Schools Funding Report* is based on the SRS.

Figure 15 – Australian Government target and reported funding of schools in 2021

SRS contributions	Government sector		Non-government sector	
	\$ million	Percent	\$ million	Percent
Total SRS	11,595.1		4,742.1	
Required contributions	2,197.7	19.0%	3,689.4	77.8%
Reported contributions	2,197.7	19.0%	3,836.3	80.9%

Source: Australian Government Department of Education and Parliamentary Budget Office.

In the 2021 funding year, the Australian Government contributed:

- \$2,197.7 million to government schools, which was in line with their required funding for the sector
- \$3,836.3 million to non-government schools, which was 3.1% more than their required funding for the sector.

Output funding

In this section

In this section we:

- provide estimates of the total government output funding provided to Victorian schools
- outline how output funding is allocated and then distributed to Victorian schools.

The Australian and Victorian governments contribute to Victorian schools by providing output funding for the general operation of schools such as teaching staff salaries, minor maintenance works, and targeted education programs.

Output funding includes government contributions towards the SRS as well as other government expenditure that sits outside of the SRS. Output funding that sits outside of the SRS includes, but is not limited to:

- Victorian Government funding over the 4% limit that counts towards the SRS for the provision of education in schools
- payroll tax paid by the Victorian Department of Education, which employs most government school staff, including all teaching staff
- financial assistance paid by the Australian Government to Non-Government Representative Bodies, which support the non-government school sector in implementing national policy initiatives under the National School Reform Agreement.

Apart from the funding received from the government, schools, particularly non-government schools, may also generate revenue through fees, donations, hire of school facilities, and other operations.

Total output funding

The funding we outline in Figure 16 does not include grants for capital projects or support (centralised) costs that benefit both school sectors such as umbrella department costs.

Figure 16 – Australian and Victorian government output funding of schools in 2021

Funding (\$ million)	Government schools	Non-government schools	All schools
Victorian Government funding			
SRS funding	8,083.7	911.5	8,995.2
Other output funding	588.5	-	588.5
Total	8,672.2	911.5	9,583.7
Australian Government funding			
SRS funding	2,197.7	3,836.3	6,034.0
Other output funding	-	35.6	35.6

Funding (\$ million)	Government schools	Non-government schools	All schools
Total	2,197.7	3,871.9	6,069.6
Total government funding			
SRS funding	10,281.4	4,747.8	15,029.2
Other output funding	588.5	35.6	624.1
Total output	10,869.9	4,783.4	15,653.3

Note: Australian Government funding to non-government schools only includes grants provided under the Act. This funding does not include grants provided outside of the Act as we could not source this data from publicly available information. Grants made outside of the Act relate to Indigenous education grants (excluding Indigenous loadings as part of the SRS), JobKeeper payments, and all other Australian Government recurrent grants (excluding funding under the Act). Figure is based on publicly available information and some components may differ from information held by the Australian and Victorian governments.

Source: Parliamentary Budget Office.

In 2021, we estimate that:

- the Victorian Government provided \$9,583.7 million in output funding to Victorian schools, with government schools receiving \$8,672.2 million (90.5%) of this funding
- the Australian Government provided \$6,069.6 million in output funding to Victorian schools, with non-government schools receiving \$3,871.9 million (63.8%) of this funding.

Figure 17 – Government output funding per student in 2021

Per student (dollars)	Government schools	Non-government schools	All schools
Victorian Government funding			
SRS funding	12,548	2,495	8,910
Other output funding	913	-	583
Total	13,461	2,495	9,493
Australian Government funding			
SRS funding	3,411	10,501	5,977
Other output funding	-	97	35
Total	3,411	10,598	6,012
Total government funding			
SRS funding	15,959	12,996	14,887
Other output funding	913	97	618
Total per student	16,872	13,093	15,505

Note: Figure is based on publicly available information and some components may differ from information held by the Australian and Victorian governments

Source: Parliamentary Budget Office.

Government funding of Victorian schools

We estimated that in 2021 Victorian:

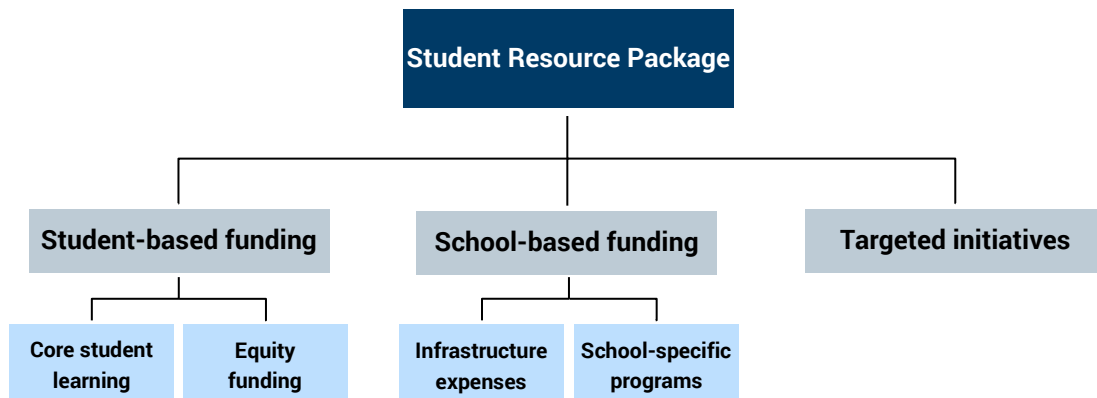
- government schools received \$16,872 in per student output funding, which mainly comprised Victorian Government funding
- non-government schools received \$13,093 in per student output funding, which mainly comprised Australian Government funding.

Allocating output funding

Government schools

The Victorian Department of Education allocates both the Australian and Victorian government output funding to government schools using an allocation model called the Student Resource Package (SRP).

Figure 18 – Components of the Student Resource Package



Source: Parliamentary Budget Office.

The SRP consists of 3 components: student-based funding, school-based funding, and targeted initiatives funding.

Student-based Funding

Funding is based on student numbers, level of schooling and socio-economic traits. This consists of:

- core student learning – which relates to funding for different levels of learning, school type, school size and school location
- equity funding – which accounts for the additional costs for students with further learning needs, such as students with disabilities.

School-based funding

Relates to funding provided for infrastructure and programs specific to individual schools. This consists of:

- infrastructure expenses – such as school cleaning, utilities and maintenance
- school-specific programs – such as instrumental music programs, language assistance, bus coordination and school restructures.

Targeted initiatives

Relates to funding provided for specific government programs delivered through schools, such as doctors in secondary schools, refugee and asylum seeker wellbeing, and apprenticeship and traineeship pathways for secondary students.

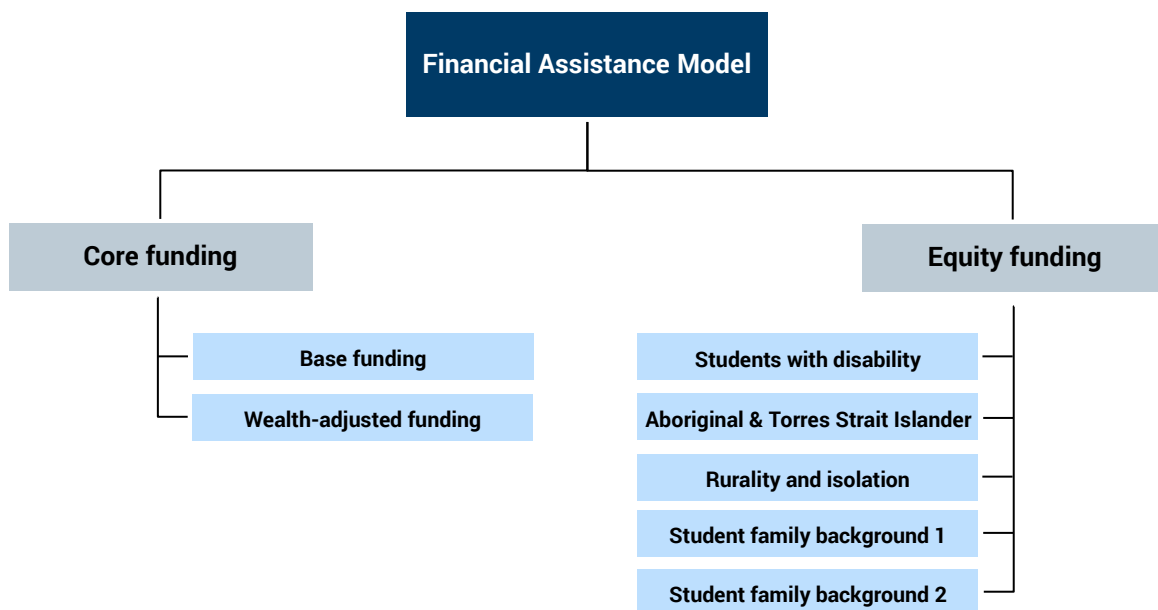
Non-government schools

The Victorian Department of Education allocates state recurrent grants to non-government schools using the Financial Assistance Model (FAM).

The Victorian Department of Education does not use this model to reallocate Australian Government output funding to non-government schools. Rather, the Victorian Department of Education transfers Australian Government funding for non-government schools directly to independent non-systemic schools and approved authorities for system schools.

Non-systemic schools are non-government schools which do not belong to a system. System schools refer to schools that are affiliated with a group or system of schools that share common aims, affiliations, or educational philosophies.

Figure 19 – Components of the Financial Assistance Model



Source: Parliamentary Budget Office.

The FAM consists of 2 components: core funding and equity funding. The funding provided under the FAM is untied recurrent funding, meaning that it allows non-government schools to autonomously determine how they will spend the funding to meet student education needs.

Core funding

This component consists of:

- base funding – which is allocated based on the number of enrolled students in a school, with rates differentiating between year level and across primary and secondary schooling
- wealth-adjusted funding – which is an additional core component that is adjusted to reflect a school’s capacity to contribute to its operating costs through income raised privately.

Equity funding

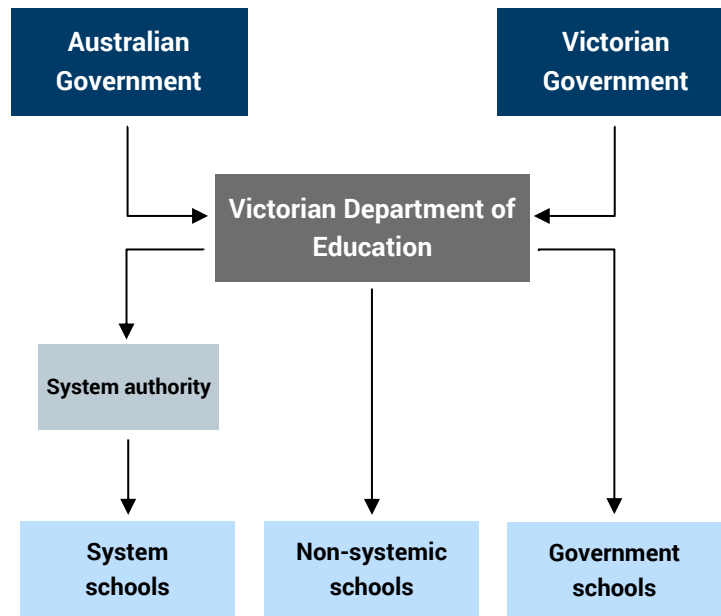
This component consists of 5 elements to allocate needs-based funding to address educational disadvantage:

- Students with disability – allocated based on the funding rate applied to every student with a disability in accordance with the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD). The NCCD considers the level of adjustment required to enable a student with a disability to access and participate in education on the same basis as students without a disability. This component is the only one where autonomy is not given, meaning that schools must use this funding to provide programs for students with a disability. However, schools are not obligated to allocate it on an individual student basis.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander – allocated based on the number of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander student enrolments.
- Rurality and isolation – allocated based on a rurality location index score which considers the school's distance from:
 - Melbourne
 - the nearest provincial centre with a population greater than 20,000
 - the nearest large school.
- Student family background 1 – allocated based on the number of students enrolled at the school who are eligible for funding through the Camps, Sports and Excursion Fund (CSEF). Families holding a valid means-tested concession card such as a Centrelink Health Care Card or a Pensioner Concession Card are eligible to apply for the CSEF. Eligible parents must apply for CSEF funding for the school to receive funding under this component.
- Student family background 2 – allocated based on a student's family's education and occupation. Schools receive funding based on their Student Family Occupation score, which calculates the proportion of parents at schools in each occupation category, with each category given a weighting.

Distributing output funding

The Australian and Victorian governments provide all output funding directly to the Victorian Department of Education, who then distribute it to government and non-government schools.

Figure 20 – Output funding flow for schools



Note: Non-government schools encompass both system schools and independent non-systemic schools.

Source: Parliamentary Budget Office.

The Australian Government provides recurrent school funding to approved authorities under the Act. Approved authorities are legal entities approved under the Act that are responsible for administering and operating schools.

For government schools, the approved authority is the relevant state or territory government, meaning that the Australian Government provides output funding for government schools directly to the Victorian Government (via the Victorian Department of Education). The Victorian Department of Education then distributes both Australian and Victorian government output funding directly to government schools.

For non-government schools, the approved authority is the legal body approved by the Australian Education Minister to receive Australian Government recurrent funding for one or more schools. The Australian Government initially provides this funding to the Victorian Department of Education, who are then required to pass on this funding to the independent non-systemic school or the relevant approved system authority:

- Independent non-systemic schools – These are schools that do not belong to a system. The approved legal body – which for functional purposes is generally a limited company trading as a school – must distribute Australian Government funding in accordance with the school funding formula outlined in the Act, and cannot retain funding for administrative purposes.
- Approved system authorities – These are approved legal bodies that are responsible for more than one school that are formally affiliated with a group or system of schools that share common aims, affiliations, or educational philosophies. These authorities distribute Australian Government funding to member schools within their system based on their own needs-based method in accordance with subsection 78(5) of the Act, and may retain part of the funding for administrative purposes.

Government funding of Victorian schools

The Victorian Department of Education provides Australian and Victorian government output funding:

- directly to government schools
- directly to independent non-systemic schools
- to the respective system authority responsible for the system school.

Capital funding

In this section

In this section we:

- provide estimates of the total government capital funding provided to Victorian schools
- outline how capital funding is allocated and then distributed to Victorian schools.

Total capital funding

The Victorian Government provides capital funding for government schools and related grants to non-government schools for constructing and upgrading buildings.

Prior to the release of the Australian Budget 2023–24, the Australian Government only provided capital grants to non-government schools. The introduction of the SRS resulted in the decision by the Australian Government to direct all federal funding to government schools under the SRS. However, the Australian Government announced in the Australian Budget 2023–24 that it would now provide funding to government schools to enable capital investments in new classrooms, buildings, or other refurbishments and upgrades.

Figure 21 – Australian and Victorian government capital and related grant funding of schools in 2021

Capital funding (\$ million)	Government schools	Non-government schools	All schools
Victorian Government	2,169.2	89.9	2,259.1
Australian Government	-	46.7	46.7
Total	2,169.2	136.6	2,305.8

Note: Figure is based on publicly available information and some components may differ from information held by the Australian and Victorian governments.

Source: Parliamentary Budget Office.

In 2021, we estimate that:

- the Victorian Government provided \$2,259.1 million in capital funding or related grants to Victorian schools, with government schools receiving 96.0% of this funding
- the Australian Government provided \$46.7 million in capital grants to Victorian schools, with non-government schools receiving the entirety of this funding.

Allocating capital funding

Government schools

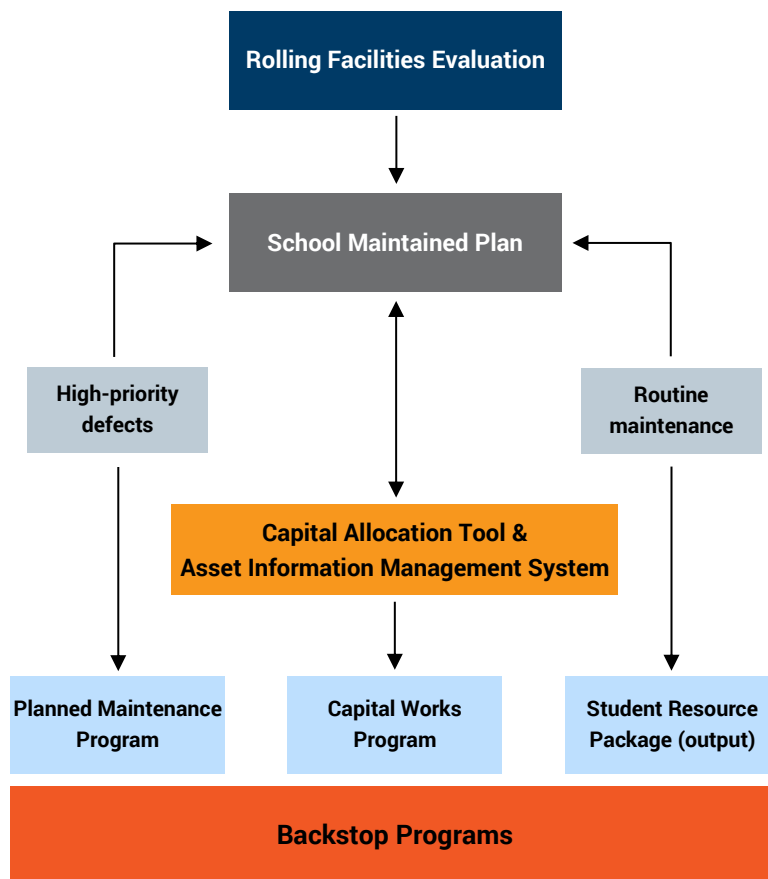
Victorian Government capital investment – existing schools

The Victorian Government provides capital funding to government schools through state budget appropriations. Capital funding relates to new school construction, capital works and planned maintenance.

The Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) is responsible for providing recommendations to the government regarding capital funding allocated through the state budget. The VSBA generates their recommendations using the Victorian Department of Education’s Capital Allocation Tool.

The Capital Allocation Tool incorporates Rolling Facilities Evaluations, School Maintained Plans and other data on school condition, functionality, area allocation and growth to generate recommendations on which schools require capital works as well as where to prioritise investment.

Figure 22 – Government school asset management and maintenance



Source: Department of Education.

As part of the VSBA asset management framework, schools have access to the Asset Information Management System. This system allows schools to record asset information including condition, financial valuation, and other asset-related information such as asbestos removal. This information management system sits alongside the Capital Allocation Tool to inform the VSBA and improve the management of school assets.

The VSBA engages with schools to conduct rolling 5-yearly Rolling Facilities Evaluations, which assess the conditions of school buildings and other infrastructure (such as car parks) at each government school. Actions identified through the Rolling Facilities Evaluation, along with routine maintenance actions, are then listed in a 5-year School Maintenance Plan for each school. The School Maintenance Plan supports schools to address maintenance issues by providing a list of maintenance works that need to be addressed over 5 years to support the upkeep of school assets.

School maintenance comprises both capital and output funding. Capital maintenance funding generally relates to high-priority defects concerning safety and asset failure, with funding provided through the Planned Maintenance Program. This includes maintenance works related to structural defects, replacing roofs, and repairing foundations. Conversely, low-priority defects relating to routine maintenance and compliance are managed by schools through their SRP recurrent funding allocation. This relates to maintenance works such as gutter clearance and replacing broken windows.

A backstop mechanism is also in place to address instances where schools have encountered unforeseen asset failures, such as those resulting from an accident or natural event, with funding provided through the Emergency Maintenance Program and other supplementary programs.

Victorian Government capital investment – new schools

The Victorian Department of Education undertakes forecasting and planning to develop its new school pipeline to identify its priority site acquisitions and school constructions. The VSBA develops a new school pipeline annually to identify where the government needs to establish schools to meet expected enrolment demands.

The forecasts estimate enrolment demand for government schools based on demographic data including Victorian Government population projections and information provided by local governments and other government agencies. The forecasts account for enrolment demand based on the population of school-aged children (adjusted for the percentage of students expected to attend government schools) and the capacity of existing government schools.

Where it identifies capacity shortfalls, the Victorian Department of Education assesses its options in responding to the expected growth in enrolments. Options include:

- redistributing demand by enforcing enrolment policies
- increasing existing capacity of schools through capital works
- constructing new schools.

Until the construction of new schools is complete, the Victorian Department of Education may utilise relocatable buildings to manage enrolment demand in the short term. The Victorian Department of Education can remove and relocate these buildings to other schools to accommodate for changes in enrolments when a school no longer needs them.

Australian Government capital grants

The Australian Government allocates capital grants to government schools under the ‘Schools Upgrade Fund’, which was introduced in the Australian Budget 2023–24. Grants are available under this fund to both government and non-government schools. The objective of the Schools Upgrade Fund is to provide grants for small-scale capital projects that support student learning in schools.

The Schools Upgrade Fund’s guidelines stipulate that the approved authority for the school must endorse the application for a school to receive funding. For government schools, the approved authority is the relevant state or territory government.

To be eligible for funding, the project must either:

- improve air quality to support healthier learning environments, such as upgrading ventilation in school facilities
- improve student outcomes through outdoor learning, such as building new outdoor learning spaces
- support equitable access to flexible learning for students, such as purchasing new information and communications technology equipment
- provide a safe learning environment, such as refurbishing classrooms.

While all schools can apply, the assessment process prioritises applications from the most disadvantaged schools. The Australian Department of Education assesses each application to determine suitability for funding, which comprises:

- up to 70 points for project need, as determined by responses provided in the application
- up to 30 points for school’s need, as determined by the school’s Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA).

The Australian Department of Education notifies approved authorities and schools of the outcome of their application.

Non-government schools

Victorian Government capital grants

The Victorian Government allocates capital grants to non-government schools through the ‘Non-Government Schools Capital Fund’. The government allocated:

- \$402.0 million in the Victorian Budget 2019–20 to the Non-Government Schools Capital Fund from 2019–20 to 2022–23
- \$450.2 million in the Victorian Budget 2023–24 to the Non-Government Schools Capital Fund from 2023–24 to 2026–27.

Schools are required to co-contribute at least 20% of the overall fund value over the life of the project.

If a school meets the eligibility requirements, the individual school is advised to apply for funding through the VSBA’s SmartyGrants website. Once submitted, the Victorian Department of Education and the sector body conduct concurrent assessments of all applications received:

- For independent schools, the Victorian Independent Schools Block Grant Authority Ltd is the sector body.
- For Catholic schools, the Catholic Capital Grants (Victoria) Ltd is the sector body.

Each round of funding generally outlines the proportion of funds allocated to independent and Catholic schools. The latest round of funding indicates that Catholic schools will receive 70% of funds, with independent schools receiving 30%.

The Victorian Department of Education and sector body then conduct an assessment against the following criteria, each carrying equal weighting, with recommendations for funding based on the applications that best meet the criteria:

- Enrolment demand – The project will provide additional enrolment capacity.
- Location – The school is located in a metropolitan growth area or in regional Victoria.
- Condition – Facilities at the school are below a reasonable, fit-for-purpose standard.
- Financial and socio-economic need – The school requires funding to complete the project based on their ability to raise revenue from student fees and other activities.
- Project outcomes – The project is a priority at the school which ensures better accommodation for students and staff with varied needs and aims to produce improved student outcomes.
- Project readiness – Time commitments outline when construction will begin, and planning permits have been issued or a permit application will be made.

The Victorian Department of Education makes recommendations to the Victorian Education Minister, who then determines which projects are successful and the grant funding allocated to each applicant.

Australian Government capital grants

Section 67 of the Act allows for the Australian Education Minister to provide and determine the amount of capital grant funding to block grant authorities if the Minister is satisfied that the financial assistance is required for capital expenditure at the school.

The Australian Government allocates the majority of capital grants to non-government schools under the 'Capital Grants Program', with some additional funding provided under the 'Schools Upgrade Fund' for small-scale improvements to schools to facilitate.

The objective of the Capital Grants Program is to assist non-government schools in improving infrastructure where they otherwise may not have access to sufficient funds. The Australian Government provides funding under the program to a block grant authority that administers the funds on behalf of non-government schools.

In Victoria:

- Victorian Independent Schools BGA Limited is the block grant authority responsible for independent schools
- Catholic Capital Grants (Victoria) Ltd is the block grant authority responsible for Catholic schools.

The program's guidelines outline the final distribution of non-government capital grant funds to the block grant authority in each year. The Australian Government applies a process to determine how much of the program's funding to distribute to each block grant authority. This process includes a calculation for administration allowance and project funds, with funding allocated based on:

- the state or territory's proportion of national non-government enrolments
- the proportion of enrolments and recurrent funding of each block grant authority.

Government funding of Victorian schools

Each year, the block grant authorities advise member schools of the funding available under the program and invite applications for funding. Once the block grant authority has established that a project for consideration is eligible for funding, they must rank projects primarily on the relative educational disadvantage of the school. The block grant authority determines the size of the grants that it recommends to the Australian Department of Education by assessing the ability of the school to contribute to the cost of the project.

The block grant authority submits a schedule to the Australian Department of Education, which includes the projects it recommends as well as the projects it received an application for but did not recommend. To receive funding, the Australian Education Minister must be satisfied that the schools require financial assistance for the capital expenditure and that the expenditure meets the objectives of the program.

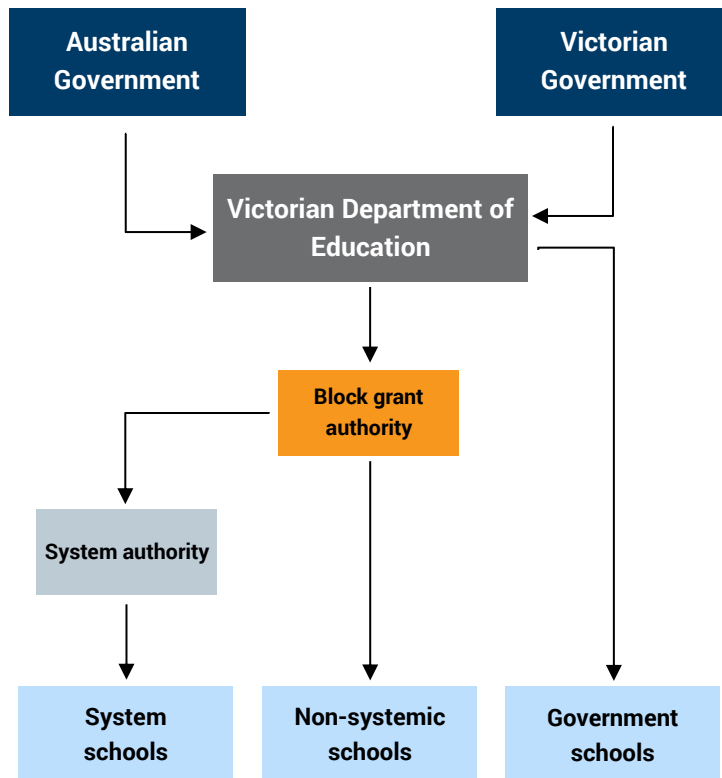
The Australian Department of Education informs each block grant authority of the approved projects and notifies individual schools in writing.

Distributing capital funding

The Victorian Government provides all capital funding and related grants for schools via the Victorian Department of Education. The Victorian Department of Education provides capital funding:

- directly to government schools
- directly to block grant authorities for non-government schools.

Figure 23 – Capital and related grant funding flow for schools



Note: Non-government schools encompass both system schools and independent non-systemic schools.

Source: Parliamentary Budget Office.

The Australian Government provides capital grants to government schools and non-government schools through the relevant approved authority.

For government schools, the approved authority is the state or territory government. For non-government schools, the approved authority is the block grant authority approved by the Australian Education Minister to administer capital grants for non-government schools.

According to the Capital Grants Program guidelines, Australian Government financial assistance provided to block grant authorities is paid through the relevant state and territory government.

Block grant authorities distribute related grant funding to the responsible system authority for system schools but provide funds directly to independent non-systemic schools.

Support (centralised) funding

In this section

In this section we provide an overview of the support (centralised) funding that governments provide which benefits both school sectors.

The Victorian Government provides funding for centralised services that benefit both government and non-government schools, such as umbrella department costs.

This funding cannot be directly attributable to a schooling sector as these services are available to all schools in Victoria to varying degrees.

This funding can include:

- administration costs – for the Victorian Department of Education’s head office and across the regions
- centrally reported costs for capital asset charge and depreciation expenses
- student transport
- leases
- information technology licences
- Victorian Regulation and Qualifications Authority
- insurance and copyright
- research
- school internet services.

We could not source cost information relating to support funding because this information is held centrally with the Victorian Department of Education and remains confidential until publicly released. Furthermore, we could not source alternative data through publicly available information.

Attachment A – Reconciliation against the request

Requested submission	Addressed in submission
Current and future Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) funding responsibilities of the Australian and Victorian governments for the government and non-government schools.	SRS funding transition (pp. 12-14)
Required SRS funding contributions of the Australian and Victorian governments for government and non-government schools	Victorian Government SRS contributions (pp. 14-15) Australian Government SRS contributions (pp. 15-16)
Actual SRS funding contribution provided by the Australian and Victorian governments for government and non-government schools	Victorian Government SRS contributions (pp. 14-15) Australian Government SRS contributions (pp. 15-16)
How total funding is separated into output, capital, and support funding, and subsequently distributed to schools.	Total output funding (pp. 17-19) Allocating output funding (pp. 19-21) Distributing output funding (pp. 21-23) Total capital funding (pp. 24) Allocating capital funding (pp. 25-29) Distributing capital funding (pp. 29-30) Support (centralised) funding (pp. 31)

Attachment B – Data sources

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