

Your report loses me as early as Figure 1 on page 4. This year, our few-strings-attached federal funding for private schools topped \$10 billion for the first time, a very large budget item in an Australian federal context. Generally speaking, progressive OECD countries don't siphon off around a quarter of their total federal-state education kitty for self-motivated private (religious) schools that can freely hire and fire students and charge them uncapped fees. They don't necessarily make a habit of discouraging parents by persistently under-providing state-school places in big cities, which in our case absorb most of the predictably fast population growth flowing from our entrenched Big Australia policy. That is to say, not if said countries also want to continue to excel, in the early 21st century OECD league tables of educational equity and performance. Unless you parade these elephants in your data analysis and deliberations, I cannot take your report seriously. Your responsibility to be an independent and objective analyst is that much the greater when all three main political parties endorse (or acquiesce to) our presently skewed educational funding system. Instead, your main headline that 'substantial increases in expenditure' have led to 'little improvement' mirrors political spin rather than cutting through with critical analysis. It invites federal and state governments to further privatise the system and starve real funding, to secular government schools at least.

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