

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS OF SA SNAPSHOT

2026 EDITION



LATEST AVAILABLE FACTS AND FIGURES

The South Australian Independent school sector is a diverse and growing group of non-government schools.

This snapshot provides an overview of the key characteristics of SA Independent schools, the students, the teaching and non-teaching staff, and how these schools are funded.

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 2025, there were 105 Independent schools in SA, including 10 boarding schools and one Majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander School.



105
INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS



56,240
TOTAL STUDENTS

TYPES OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

66% (69)
COMBINED

27% (28)
PRIMARY

3% (3)
SECONDARY

5% (5)
SPECIAL/SPECIAL ASSISTANCE SCHOOLS

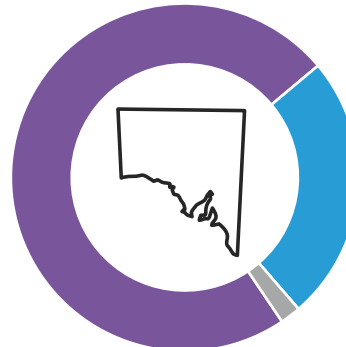


LOCATION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

73.3%
MAJOR CITIES

24.8%
REGIONAL

1.9%
REMOTE



STUDENT ENROLMENTS

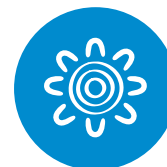
The rate of growth in Independent schools has been increasing. In 2025, enrolments in SA Independent schools grew at a rate of 2.2%, higher than government (-0.9%) but lower than Catholic (+3.5%) schools.



SA ENROLMENTS BY SCHOOL SECTOR AND LEVEL (%) 2025

	GOVERNMENT	CATHOLIC	INDEPENDENT
SECONDARY SCHOOL	57.6	19.9	22.5
PRIMARY SCHOOL	63.8	18.8	17.4
TOTAL ENROLMENTS	60.9	19.3	19.8

SA INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS IN 2025:



1,327

ABORIGINAL and
TORRES STRAIT
ISLANDER STUDENTS

SA ENROLMENT CHANGE OVER TIME BY SCHOOL SECTOR (%)

	GOVERNMENT	CATHOLIC	INDEPENDENT
2000	70.2	16.5	13.3
2005	66.3	18.2	15.5
2010	64.3	18.3	17.4
2015	64.0	18.2	17.8
2020	64.6	17.0	18.4
2025	60.9	19.3	19.8

Shown as percentage of total enrolments.



507

OVERSEAS STUDENTS

TOTAL NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL ENROLMENTS BY SA SCHOOL SECTOR 2000-2025

INDEPENDENT	22,548
CATHOLIC	13,120
GOVERNMENT	-4,602



976

BOARDING STUDENTS

ENROLMENTS BY GENDER AND LEVEL SA INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS 2025

	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
PRIMARY	13,218	13,224	26,442
SECONDARY	14,677	14,995	29,672
TOTAL	27,895	28,219	56,114



14,400

STUDENTS WITH
DISABILITY (ESTIMATED)

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY (EST.) SA INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS* 2025

SUPPORT PROVIDED WITHIN A QUALITY DIFFERENTIATED TEACHING PRACTICE	4,300
SUPPLEMENTARY	7,500
SUBSTANTIAL	2,000
EXTENSIVE	600

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

SCHOOL FUNDING

Parents and communities contributed over 41% of all SA Independent school funding (recurrent and capital combined).



FAMILIES CONTRIBUTED
\$619 MILLION
(RECURRENT AND CAPITAL)
TO SA INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS IN 2024



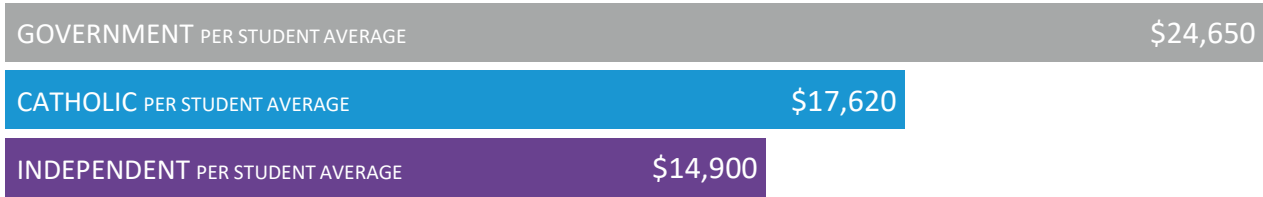
AN ESTIMATED SAVING OF
\$550 MILLION
TO GOVERNMENTS



MEDIAN ANNUAL FEE
FOR SA INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS IN 2024
\$4,554

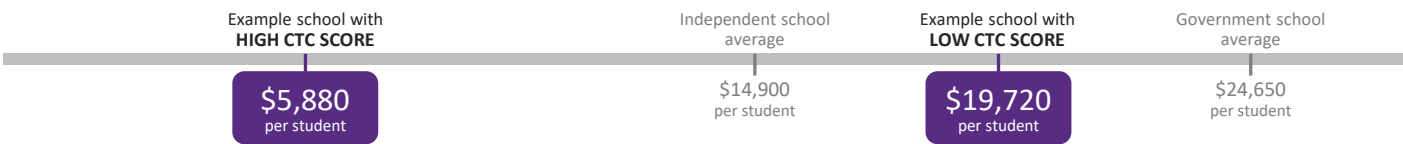
Each SA Independent school student received \$9,700 less government funding (on average) compared to students in government schools

AVERAGE GOVERNMENT RECURRENT FUNDING PER SA STUDENT FY 2023-24

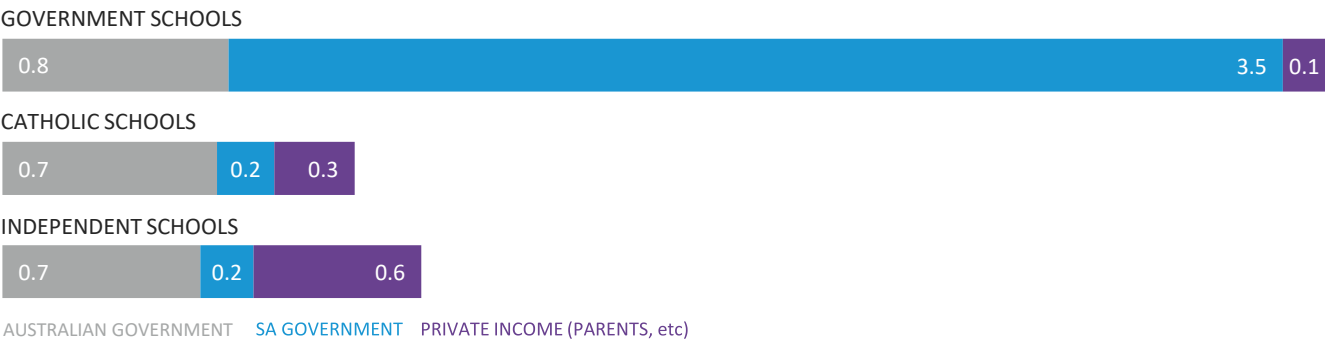


The Australian Government is the primary funding source for non-government schools, with the SA Government the primary source for government schools. The Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) is a needs-based funding model that includes base funding plus loadings to address educational disadvantage.

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.



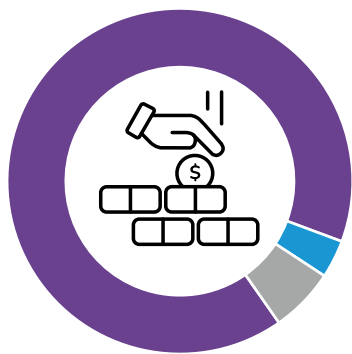
RECURRENT FUNDING FOR SCHOOL EDUCATION IN SA \$BILLION FY 2023-24



CAPITAL FUNDING

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

SOURCES OF CAPITAL EXPENDITURE SA INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS 2024



PRIVATE SOURCES (parents and donors)

\$199 MILLION (90%)

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

SA GOVERNMENT

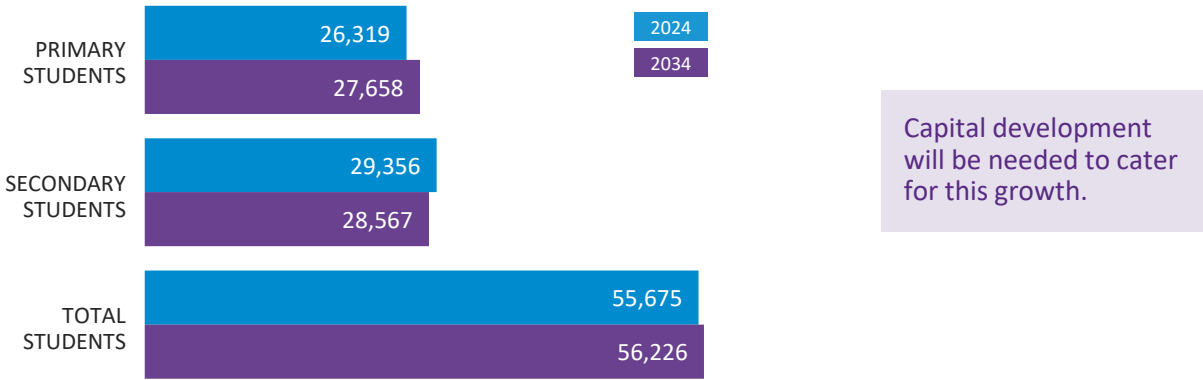
\$7.8 MILLION (4%)

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT CAPITAL GRANTS PROGRAM

\$13.3 MILLION (6%)

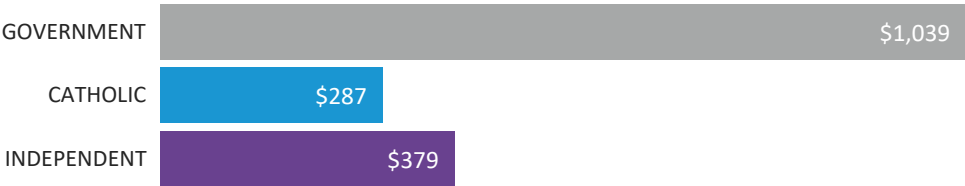
Australian Government grants are distributed to Independent schools on a needs-basis through Block Grant Authorities, with priority given to disadvantaged school communities with the least capacity to raise funds.

PROJECTED ENROLMENT GROWTH IN SA INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS 2024-2034



In 2024, total government capital expenditure per student for government schools was almost 3 times more than in Independent schools in SA

TOTAL GOVERNMENT CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PER SA STUDENT COMPARISON 2024



SCHOOL PROFILE

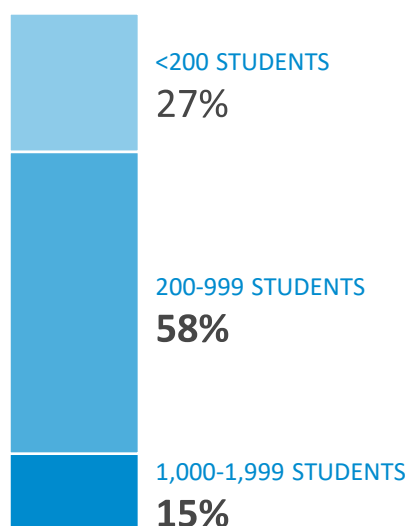
Independent schools have diverse religious or philosophical affiliations. They represent a range of approaches to teaching and learning.

AFFILIATIONS OF SA INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS 2025

AFFILIATION*	NUMBER of SCHOOLS	STUDENTS FTE	STUDENTS %
Christian	30	14,430	25.7%
Anglican	15	13,269	23.6%
Lutheran	29	13,122	23.3%
Uniting Church	6	4,909	8.7%
Non-Denominational	9	4,428	7.9%
Islamic	4	2,343	4.2%
Seventh-day Adventist	3	1,375	2.4%
Secular	5	1,290	2.3%
Montessori/Steiner	4	1,074	1.9%

* When an affiliation has fewer than 3 schools it cannot be shown as an individual line item.

SIZE OF SA INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS



GOVERNANCE

Independent AISSA member schools are not-for-profit. 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 36% of SA Independent schools operate within an approved system authority. These include the South Australian Anglican Schools System, Seventh-day Adventist and Lutheran systems.

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



SCHOOL TEACHERS

Independent schools employ 21% of all teachers in SA schools.

The ratio of student to teacher in Independent schools is the lowest of the school sectors.



4,635

NUMBER OF TEACHERS
FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT
IN 2025



5,432

NUMBER OF TEACHERS
HEADCOUNT IN 2025



10,243

NUMBER OF TEACHING AND NON-
TEACHING STAFF
HEADCOUNT IN 2025

TEACHERS IN THE SA INDEPENDENT SECTOR BY GENDER AND LEVEL 2025



PRIMARY TEACHERS

20.4% (393)

MALE

79.6% (1,532)

FEMALE



SECONDARY TEACHERS

44.2% (1,197)

MALE

55.8% (1,513)

FEMALE

SA STUDENT TO TEACHER RATIOS BY SCHOOL LEVEL 2005-2025

	PRIMARY SCHOOLS			SECONDARY SCHOOLS		
	GOVERNMENT	CATHOLIC	INDEPENDENT	GOVERNMENT	CATHOLIC	INDEPENDENT
2005	16.1	17.5	15.5	12.5	12.6	11.4
2010	15.3	16.8	15.7	13.0	12.1	11.3
2015	14.9	17.0	15.4	13.2	12.3	10.7
2020	14.5	16.0	13.9	12.5	12.7	11.5
2025	13.3	14.5	13.7	13.1	12.3	11.0

SA STUDENT TO TEACHER RATIOS (AVERAGE) 2025



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

12.1 to 1



GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

13.2 to 1



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

13.3 to 1

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 2023-24, or for the calendar year 2024. Due to data availability, capital expenditure by source has been used instead of capital income, as was the case in previous snapshots. Unless otherwise specified, student enrolment figures are full-time equivalent.

Produced by Independent Schools Australia.

WWW.AIS.SA.EDU.AU



Association of
Independent Schools
of South Australia