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My School Shows the Need for Funding Changes

The Australian Education Union said today the huge resources gap between public and private schools exposed on the My School website highlighted the need for an overhaul of federal funding arrangements.

AEU Federal President Angelo Gavrielatos said that elite private schools, bolstered by millions in federal funding, had up to three times as much recurrent income to spend on students as government schools.

“My School confirms the most federal recurrent funding is going to the richest private schools,” Mr Gavrielatos said.

“That is fuelling a resources divide and making it harder to ensure that every child gets a high quality education. Why is it that rich private schools with up to \$60 or \$70 million in annual income get more federal funding than the poorest public schools?

“My School shows that, on average, government schools spent less than a third of what Independent schools did in 2009 on buildings and facilities and half what Catholic schools did.

“Compared to the average government school spending of \$469,000 on capital works there are elite private schools spending up to \$39 million in one year.

“These figures are really only the tip of the iceberg as well because My School does not yet include details of the profits, investment portfolios and accumulated assets of private schools.

“While overall public and private schools perform equally well when the socioeconomic background of students is taken into account, there is clear evidence of growing inequity in education in Australia.

“To tackle that we need a new federal funding system that ensures every child has access to a high quality public school in their local community.

“That can only be achieved by investing more in our quality public schools which are open to all students and meet the needs of all students.”

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