

Submission Text: Committee Secretariat

Victorian Legislative Council Legal and Social Issues Committee

Inquiry into Public School Funding

Parliament House

Spring St

EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

10 December 2025

Submission to the Inquiry into Public School Funding

Dear Committee Members,

We write to you on behalf of the School Council and the Parents Association (SKiPPA) of St Kilda Park Primary School (SKiPPS). While we appreciate the complexity of state budgets, we are compelled to convey the profound frustration and exhaustion felt by our school community regarding the decision to delay full funding until 2031.

As you are aware of the mechanics of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) and where Victoria stands compared to other jurisdictions, we will not reiterate the statistics. Instead, we wish to convey the human cost of these statistics. The decision to delay reaching the 75% benchmark until 2031 is not simply a deferral of numbers on a spreadsheet; it is a decision to knowingly underfund the education of an entire generation of primary school children.

The chronic underfunding of Victorian public schools has fundamentally broken the compact of 'free' public education. The funding gap is not an abstract concept at SKiPPS; it is a tangible deficit that is currently being covered by the wallets of our families. When government funding stops short, parents are asked to step in. We are constantly fundraising, not for 'nice-to-haves' or extras, but to meet the basic needs of our students and to keep the school running safely.

The delay in funding has a direct, corrosive impact on the classroom environment. Our

community sees the strain daily, through situations such as the below.

We are witnessing an inability to access required allied health support. Children who require psychologists, speech therapists or extra literacy and numeracy support are missing out because the funding simply isn't there to employ the necessary staff.

SKiPPS families are currently covering the cost of our school nurse's wages. It is an indictment of the system that the physical health and safety of students in a public school relies on the fundraising capacity of parents. This is an essential service that, through the government's inaction, has been relegated to a line item in a fundraising budget.

We know that Victoria's teachers are the lowest paid in the country, but beyond the pay packet, they are being asked to do more with less. We see larger class sizes and understaffing, leading to quality educators leaving the profession or moving interstate. The government's inaction is driving a brain drain that hurts our children.

Our children are trying to learn in facilities that require maintenance and upgrades that the school cannot afford. The physical environment tells the students how much their education is valued, and currently, the message is demoralising.

By delaying the full SRS funding until 2031, the Victorian Government's message is that for the next six years, it is acceptable for public schools to rely on charity to provide essentials.

This reliance on parental income exacerbates inequity. While SKiPPS has a community that fights hard to fill the gaps, we are acutely aware that underfunding hits the most disadvantaged students in our state the hardest. A public education system should level the playing field, not entrench disadvantage.

Our children are in the classroom now. They cannot pause their education while they wait for the 2031 budget. We urge the Committee to recommend an immediate acceleration of funding to the 75% SRS benchmark.

Yours sincerely,

Elisa Webb, School Council President

Kara Barbuto, St Kilda Park Parents Association (SKiPPA)

St Kilda Park Primary School