

# Submission

to

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education  
References Committee

## **Inquiry into Commonwealth Funding for Schools**

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**Submission no:** 10

**Received:** 23/06/2004

**Submitter:** Mr Neville Pollard  
Principal

**Organisation:** Bethel Christian School Limited

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22 June 2004



The Secretary  
Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education reference Committee  
Suite SG, 52 Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find enclosed a submission on behalf of Bethel Christian School Limited, 104-112 Mount Druitt Road, Mount Druitt NSW 2770.

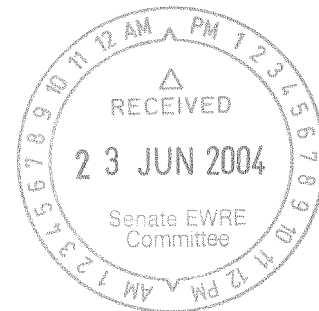
Would you please ensure that this submission is presented to the 'Inquiry into Commonwealth Funding for Schools?'

Yours sincerely,

**Neville Pollard**  
**Principal**

**Bethel Christian School Ltd.**  
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104-112 Mt. Druitt Road, Mt. Druitt. NSW 2770.  
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Submission to 'Inquiry into Commonwealth Funding for Schools'  
Bethel Christian School Limited  
104-112 Mount Druitt Road Mount Druitt NSW 2770  
Po Box 3080 Mount Druitt Village NSW 2770



## **Introduction**

Bethel Christian School is a single stream school catering for students from Kindergarten to Year 10. The school is in its 26<sup>th</sup> year of operation. The school is fully registered and accredited to offer courses leading to the award of the School Certificate. Results in state wide academic competitions and the annual school literacy and numeracy testing indicate that the school is average to slightly above state norms.

The school is partially housed in a two-storey brick building, which provides administration and classroom facilities. Primary students are largely accommodated in a converted house and demountable accommodation. . Some high school classes are also accommodated in demountable accommodation.

The school has recently purchased a small brick house and is at present converting this into a food technology precinct.

The school also lease a hall and church building operated by Bethel Christian Assembly.

## **Drawing Area**

The school draws its enrolment from the wider Mount Druitt area located in the western suburbs of Sydney. Much of the area is noted for low socio economic status. Some students come from suburbs such as Shalvey, where many families have SES scores of 70. A small number of students come from higher socio economic areas such as Minchinbury. The school's SES is 92.

A feature of the school's enrolment is the large number of children coming from broken homes and parents who are unemployed.

The school reflects the multicultural mix of its surrounding area; a large proportion of enrolments emanate from local Filipino communities.

## **A Key Principle**

Our school believes that all parents have a right to government funding to for their children's education at least the level of what it takes to teach a student in a government school.

## **The Problem**

Our funding problem in a nutshell is that, because of the above constraints, the school is not able to collect a level of funding to match the average cost of funding a child in a state school. The figures below expand this assertion:

Cost of educating a child at a government school (per student)	\$ 8844
Bethel Christian School (per student)	
Commonwealth contribution (average)	\$4231
State contribution	\$1884
Parent contribution	\$1471
Total contribution which Bethel Christian School receives per student	\$ 7586
<b>Total Shortfall (Cost of education per student in a government school minus total contribution to Bethel Christian School)</b>	<b>(\$ 1258)</b>

**Note:** Because of the low ability of parents to be able to pay fees contributions from parents have been kept as low as possible eg \$650 per term for high school and \$550 for primary school. There are also discounts for parents with more than one child at the school. Coupled to this we have slightly fewer than 50% of our parents on additional rebates because of their low financial status.

### The Implications

The deficit outlined above means that whilst we are able to produce a very small surplus on operating expenses each year there are basically no resources left over to finance any capital works. We would have difficulty servicing a reasonable bank loan.

To work within these tight constraints the school recently purchased three demountable buildings and the cottage mentioned above. With Blacktown Council only allowing a five-year life on these demountable buildings we will need to complete a significant building project within that time. Even with a BGA Grant we will find this building project difficult financially.

### The Request

The school appreciates very much the increased funding allocated to schools since the introduction of SES funding. We argue, however, that schools with low SES scores still have difficulty because of the inability to maintain adequate fee collection. This is an area, which needs to be redressed as soon as possible.

### Attachments

Please find enclosed two graphs:

**Graph 1** is a visual portrayal of the figures outlined above.

**Graph 2:** shows revenue per student between 1997 and 2004. Note here that school fees have not been able to keep up with other increases in revenue meaning that there has been a continual problem meeting rising costs.

### **Commonwealth Payments For Students With Disabilities**

There needs to be increased funding for students with disabilities in non-government schools. Disadvantaged children in government schools receive far better financial help than those in non-government schools. This is tantamount to discrimination.

### **Conclusion**

Bethel Christian School appreciates this opportunity to make this submission. Please contact the school if we can be of further help or if these matters need further clarification.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Pollard', written in a cursive style.

**Neville Pollard**

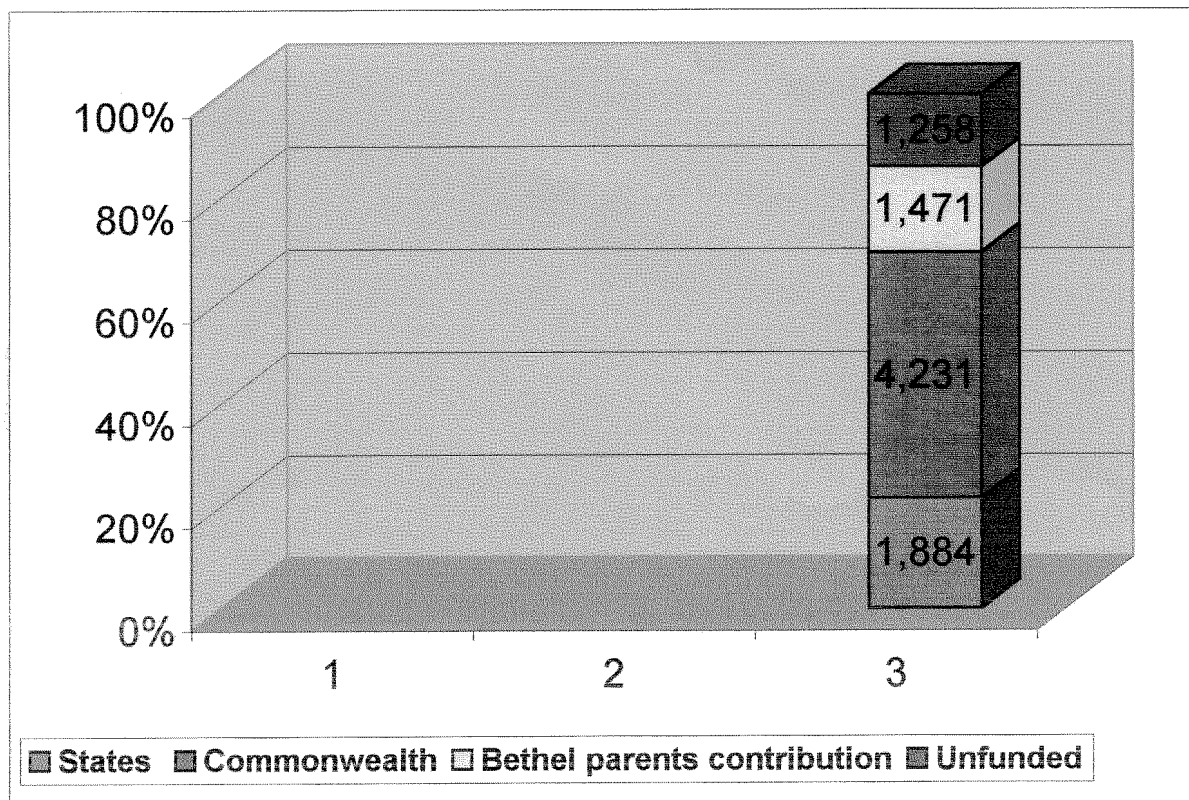
**Principal**

## BETHEL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL LIMITED REVENUE PER STUDENT

### Non - Government Schools Funding

States	1,884	
Commonwealth	4,231	
Total Non-government schools funding	6,115	
Gap between government & non-government	-	
- Bethel parents contribution	1,471	
- Unfunded	1,258	
	2,729	
Government schools support	8,844	

Extracted from ABS Data for 2003 - 2004 year



## BETHEL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL LIMITED REVENUE PER STUDENT

Per student

	Grants - State	Commonwealth	Fees	Total revenue
1997	883	1,845	1,453	4,181
1998	1,034	2,175	1,403	4,612
1999	1,105	2,453	1,404	4,962
2000	1,137	2,664	1,354	5,155
2001	1,178	2,996	1,466	5,640
2002	1,250	3,366	1,466	6,082
2003	1,333	3,912	1,471	6,716
2004	1,385	4,369	1,477	7,231

