

Message to Kew High School parents from the President of School Council

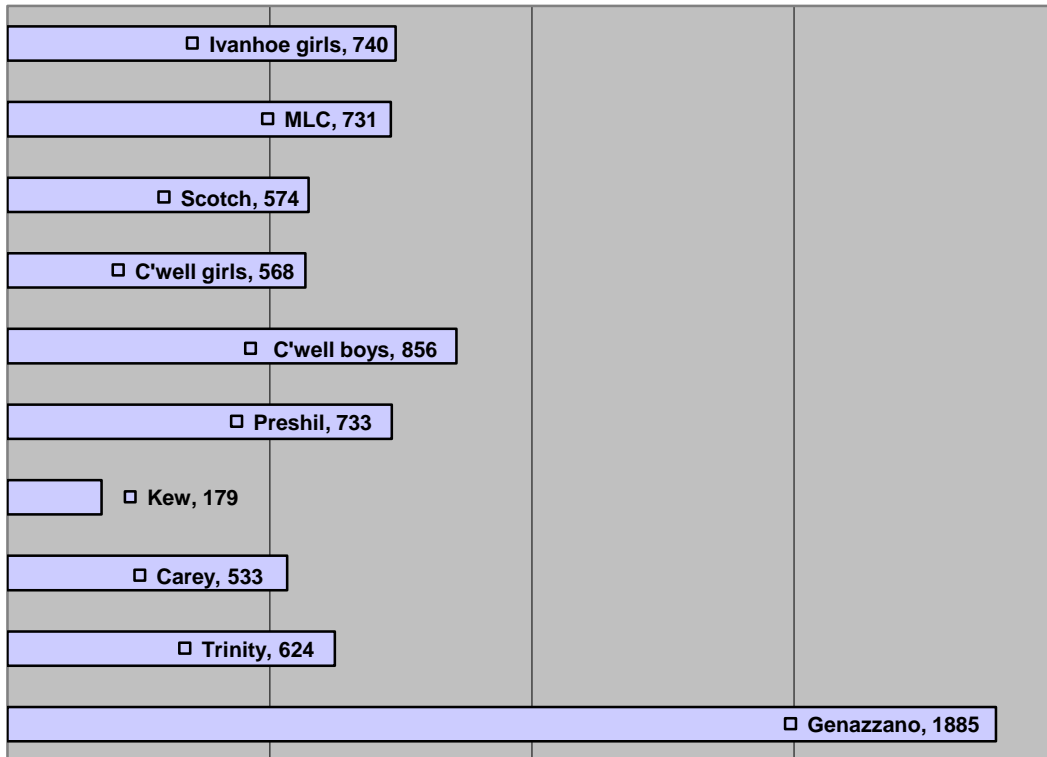
(via parent portal on Kew High School website)

Dear Kew High parents,

At recent meetings of School Council we have spent some time discussing the issue of the funding of government schools in light of the findings of the Gonski Report. School Council members have been keen to engage in this important debate from the perspective of our school, noting the context of an imminent federal election and the opportunity this represents for us to potentially influence political outcomes.

Your School Council has formed the strongly held view that funding for state schools (including Kew High) is woefully inadequate and that we should try to persuade governments to address this. Our reasons for taking this view are outlined in the attached letter which details some of the inequities of current policy and practice identified in the Gonski Report.

We are concerned about the gross inequities in school funding represented in the Kew area alone. An example of this can be seen in the table below which compares capital works funding by governments of schools in the immediate vicinity of Kew High:



Dollars per student spent by Federal and State governments on Capital works in 2010
(source: My School website downloaded 7/9/11)

Why we should take action now

Unusually this year, we have the convergence of a long election campaign together with a very extensive school funding report to focus everyone's attention on the issue. This is an opportunity we should not pass up. Parents are voters with influence. We should exercise it.

The Gonski Report encourages us (at p 15) "to ensure that schools and their communities are more involved in the development and planning of school facilities to ensure that the best design outcomes are achieved."

What we are doing

The attached open letter has been sent from School Council to federal and state education ministers and other relevant politicians asking for a commitment to significant extra state school funding.

While writing to politicians is an important part of the process, this alone may not achieve much. We are also keen to investigate a longer term campaign using as many different approaches as the talents and resources of the parent community permits. We would love to hear from parents who are interested in being involved in pursuing this important agenda.

What you can do individually

There are a number of existing groups pressing for better state school funding, which parents can join and/or support. Examples include:

- I Give a Gonski: <http://igiveagonski.com.au/> and see their resources page at <http://igiveagonski.com.au/resources/>
- Defence of Government Schools (DOGS): <http://www.adogs.info/>

For more information see:

- Gonski report: <http://igiveagonski.com.au/what-s-gonski/>
- Australian government's explanation of school funding: <http://aphnew.aph.gov.au/binaries/library/pubs/bn/sp/schoolsfunding.pdf>

Please don't hesitate to contact myself or other School Council members if you would like to discuss any aspect of this issue and our engagement with it.

Elizabeth Capp

President, Kew High School Council

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