

Direct quotes provided to the Office of Andrew Wilkie MP from school associations on the impact of budget cuts at state schools in Denison

South Hobart Primary

My daughter is in grade 4 and one of 29 students squeezed into a class room that looks like it was built for 20 children. A ratio of 29 in a grade 3/4 class with just one teacher is a bit big don't you think? Especially when they are squeezed into a room that is not big enough.

Princes Street Primary

The cuts have resulted in our class sizes increasing – both grade 3 and 4s are at 30, preps are at 26 and everyone else is between 25 and 27.

We have also:

Discontinued the strings program

Cut music generally – no longer offering guitar or recorder (only choir and marimba)

A third specialist was planned (Drama) but this has not eventuated

Our language (Japanese) is now non-instructional time for teachers, which is not great (otherwise the class teachers actually wouldn't have had enough time off class!)

Rosetta Primary

We lost the following:

One fulltime teacher which meant extra literacy and numeracy support for our students has been reduced

Class size increase by 1-2 students, the highest class is 28

IT support – trainee time reduced in the school

Canteen closed – the canteen manager's wage which was paid by the school became a saving (the canteen was operating at a loss)

New Town Primary School

We have collapsed a class. This means that instead of having nearly all straight grades, we have nearly all composite classes. It means that teachers have to plan and teach for 2 separate grade levels and The Australian Curriculum is a very involved curriculum. If teachers can plan for and teach to one grade level, there is more in depth coverage which is ideal for learning outcomes. Trying to cover two grades also increases teacher stress/workload.

Our class sizes are higher than what they were last year. We now have a few classes of 26 students. The problem with that is we gain a lot of students throughout the year so those classes may be very large by December.

We have lost ½ a day of PE a week

We have lost some literacy support – ½ a day a week

Campbell Street Primary School

We have lost our library technician (10hours) so now we will have to pay someone to come in (once there is enough work in one go) to complete cataloguing. Although we have staff capable of doing this they are not allowed to complete the cataloguing in their teacher aide role.

We have had to reduce "flying start"/literacy support to 0.2 a significant reduction in hours. We are now reliant on parent help for reading support.

We have lost the numeracy support program. This program targeted those students who needed support to gain benchmark standards, as well as those requiring extension in their skills.

Personal stories

I am a Mum of an additional needs primary school child who has a diagnosis of high functioning autism. My son has entered Grade 4 this year in the mainstream State School system. Whilst my son does not qualify for funding for any one-to-one Teacher Assistant time it greatly concerns me that the subjects of Music and Japanese are not being offered for Grade 4s at my son's school this year due to budget cuts. My son started learning Japanese last year at school and showed a real aptitude for learning a second language. My son has an absolute love of geography and by learning Japanese it has helped open our world to conversation at home. As a result of the budget cuts I have made a decision this year to enrol my son in an outside school music lesson of learning how to play the guitar. I believe music to be very beneficial for my young son as we navigate our journey with autism. I know we are fortunate to be in a position to afford outside tuition fees. However, I am very concerned for those children whose parents or carers cannot do the same.

As a mum of a child with special needs the impact the budget cuts have had has been significant. Teacher aides' hours have been cut which means more stress on the teachers and in my sons class in particular there are 6 children, 3 of which have very high needs. He attends Bowen Rd Primary and last year they offered a special afternoon activities class which allowed the kiddies time after lunch to relax and be themselves without stressing about the other children or school work which some struggle with terribly. We are not sure if we can continue this due to the cuts and the children are devastated and some are becoming increasingly stressed. Literacy and numeracy has suffered as we are unsure of what teaching staff we are entitled to. Physical education is now only one or two days a week as we aren't entitled to a full time teacher. Music is the same.