


Workshop:
MISSION POSSIBLE:
Fixing Australian education

ACT Education Directorate Leadership Conference

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1. The state of global education
2. Our challenge
3. Fixing it

1 The state of global education



“260 million children, adolescents and youth are not at school and only three quarters of 15-year-olds in middle income countries attend school, and just half of them achieve the basic level of proficiency required.” – Global Education Monitoring Report 2020



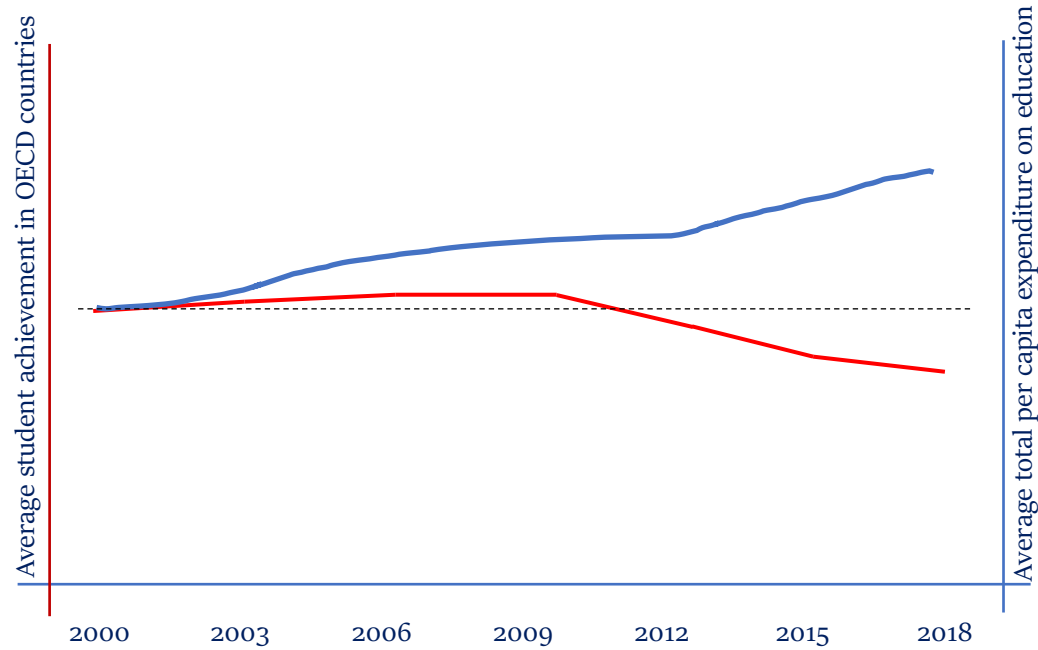
The performance differences across the OECD countries between the most socio-economically advantaged and disadvantaged students is equivalent to over 3 years of schooling. –PISA 2018



There is a global learning crisis that amplifies educational inequalities that severely hobbles the disadvantaged youth who most need the boost that a good education can offer. – World Bank Human Development Report 2018

1

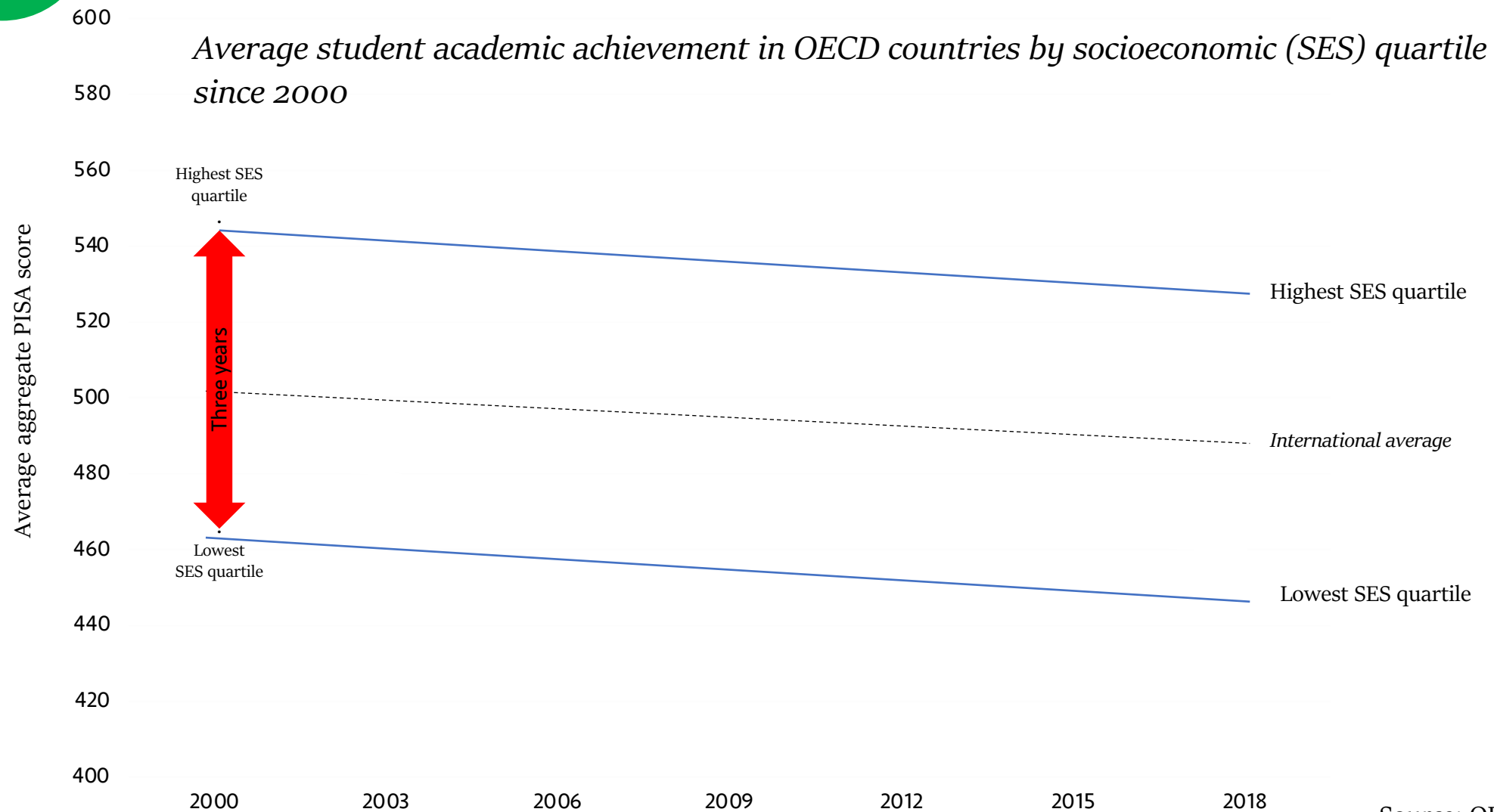
Education outcomes vs. spending



“Real spending on education has grown steadily over the last 10 years. But government education spending as a share of GDP has remained flat in the past 10 years.”

- UIS; OECD; IMF; World Bank databases

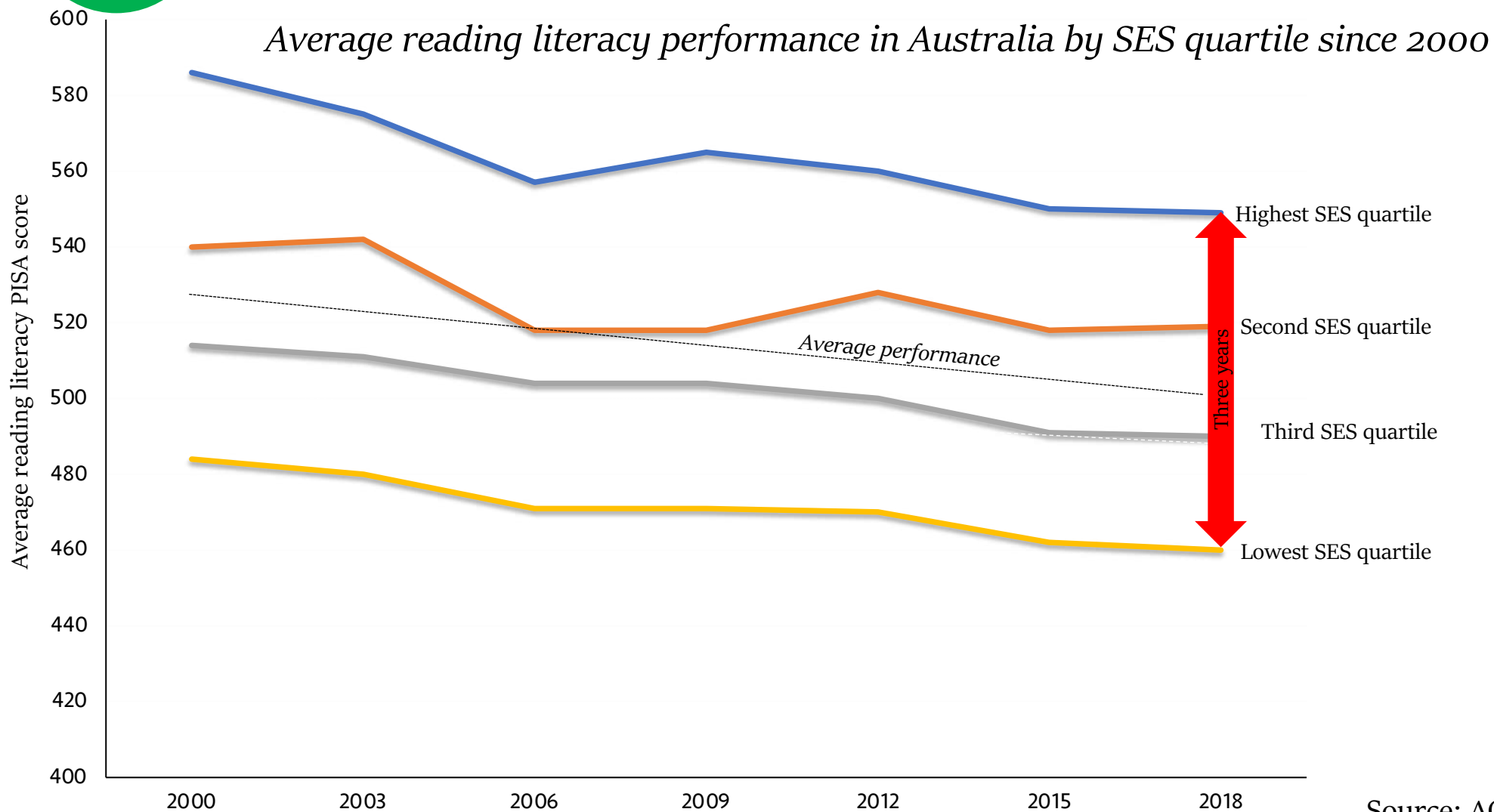
2 Large inequalities



Source: OECD 2021

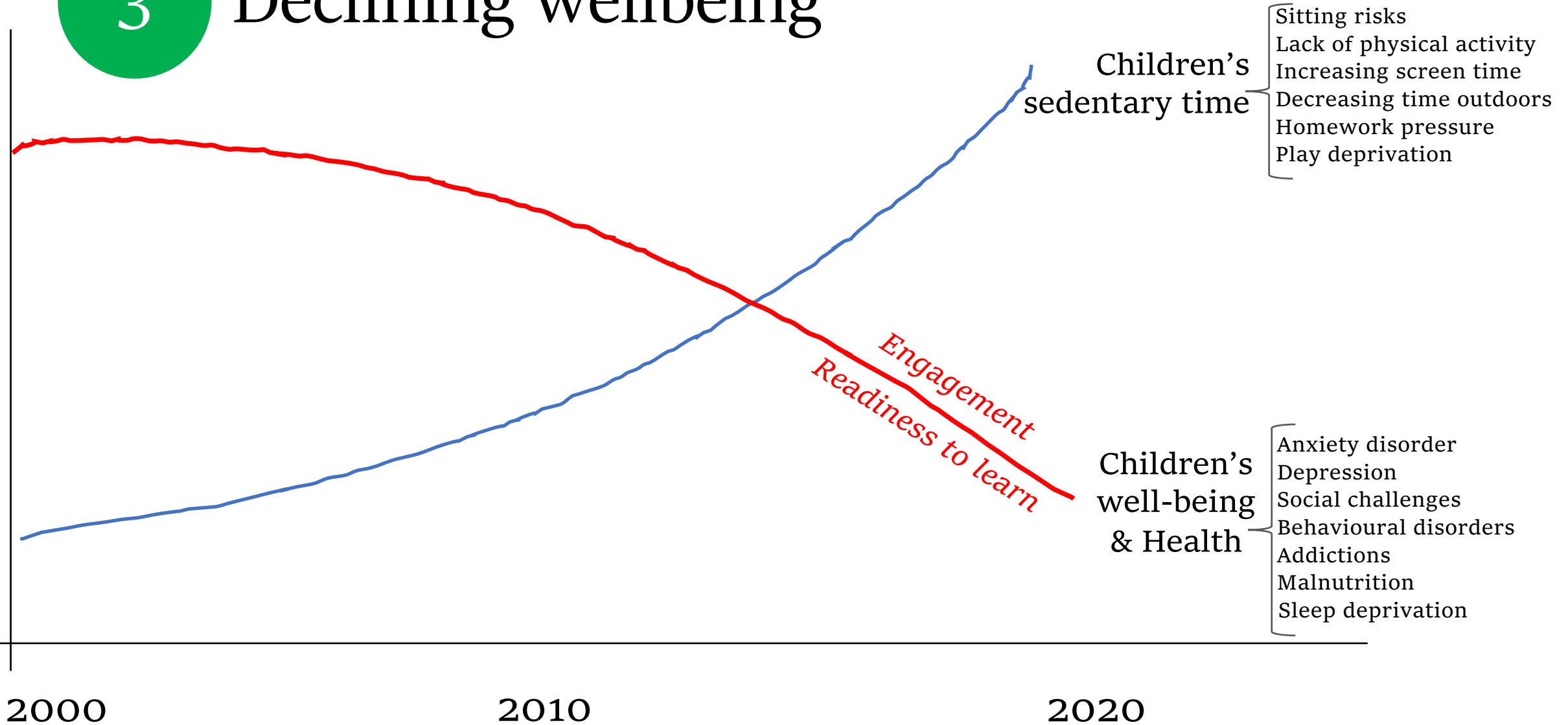
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Large inequalities



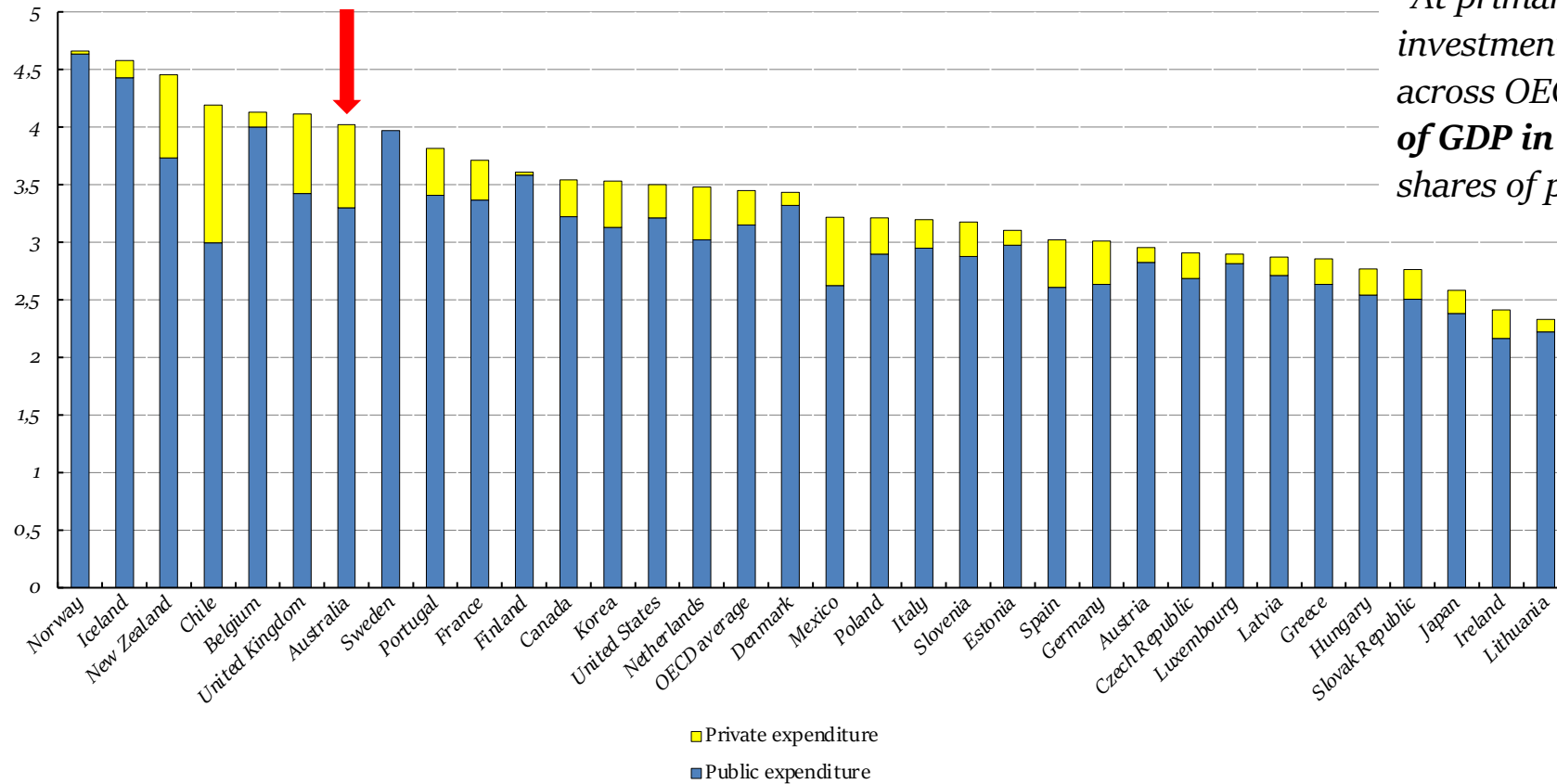
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Declining wellbeing



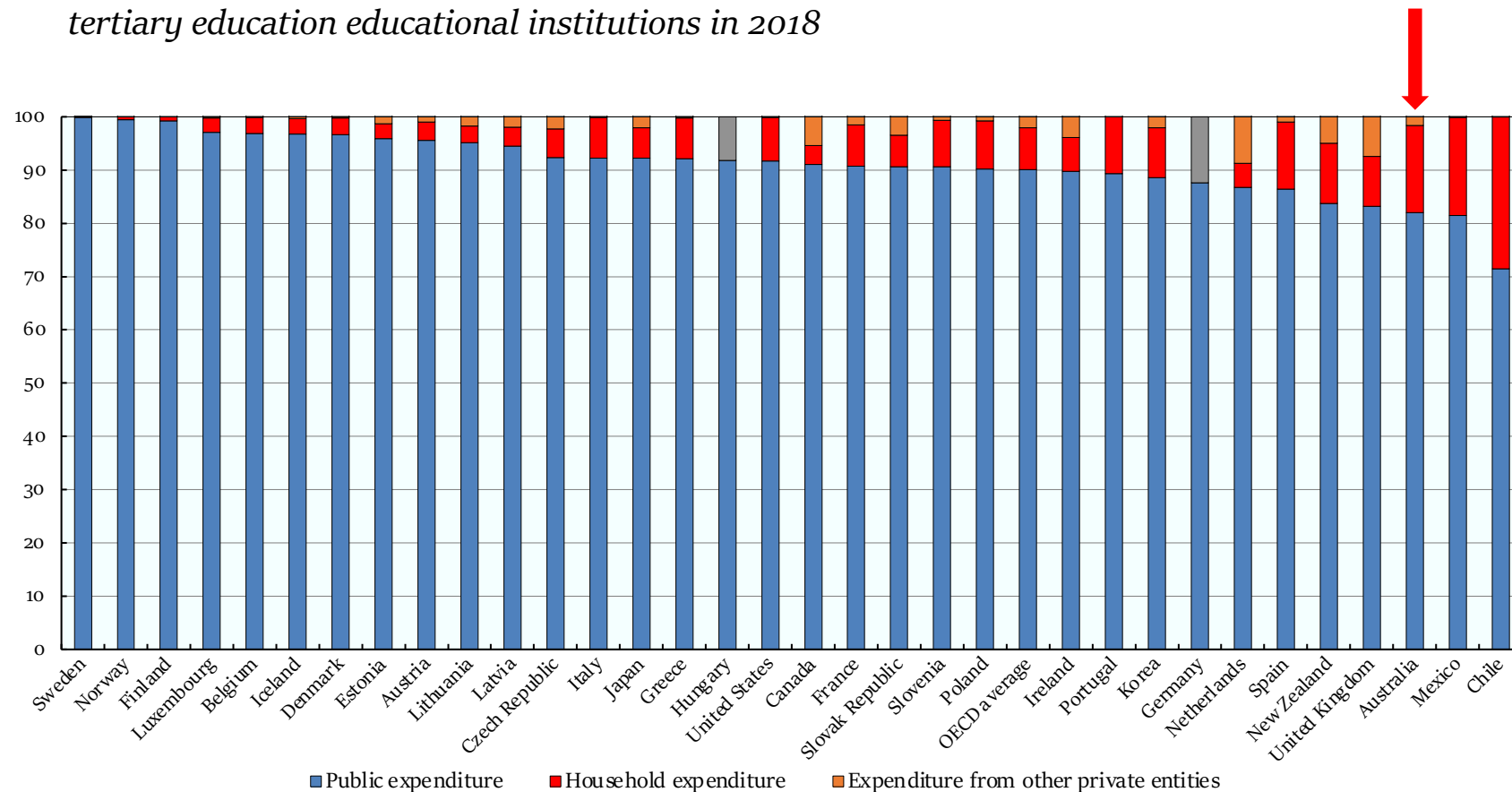
2 The challenge

Total expenditure on primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary institutions as a percentage of GDP in 2018



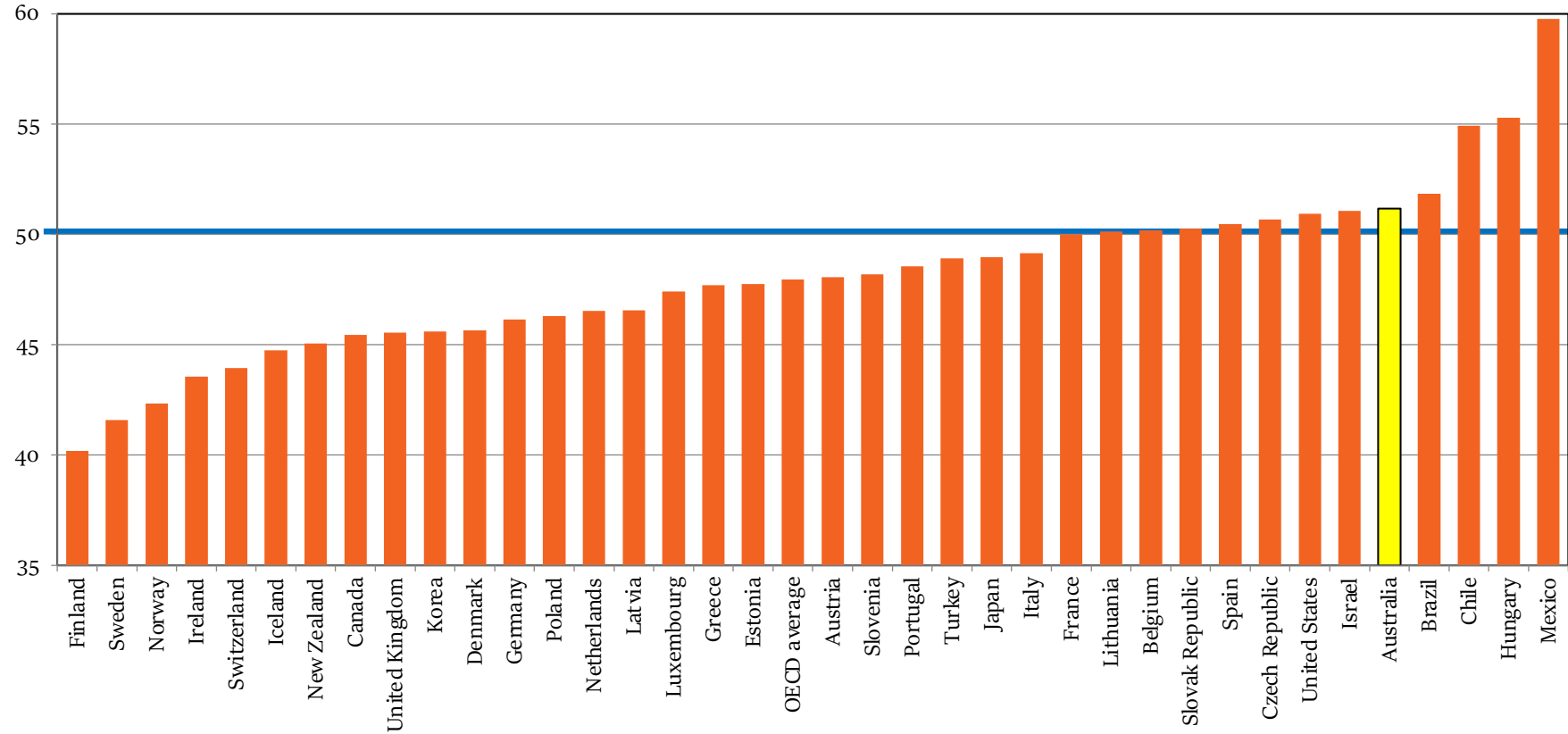
*“At primary and secondary education, private investment accounts for 0.3% of GDP on average across OECD countries. **It amounts to at least 0.7% of GDP in Australia**, one of the largest relative shares of private funding of non-tertiary education.”*

Distribution of public and private expenditure on primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education educational institutions in 2018



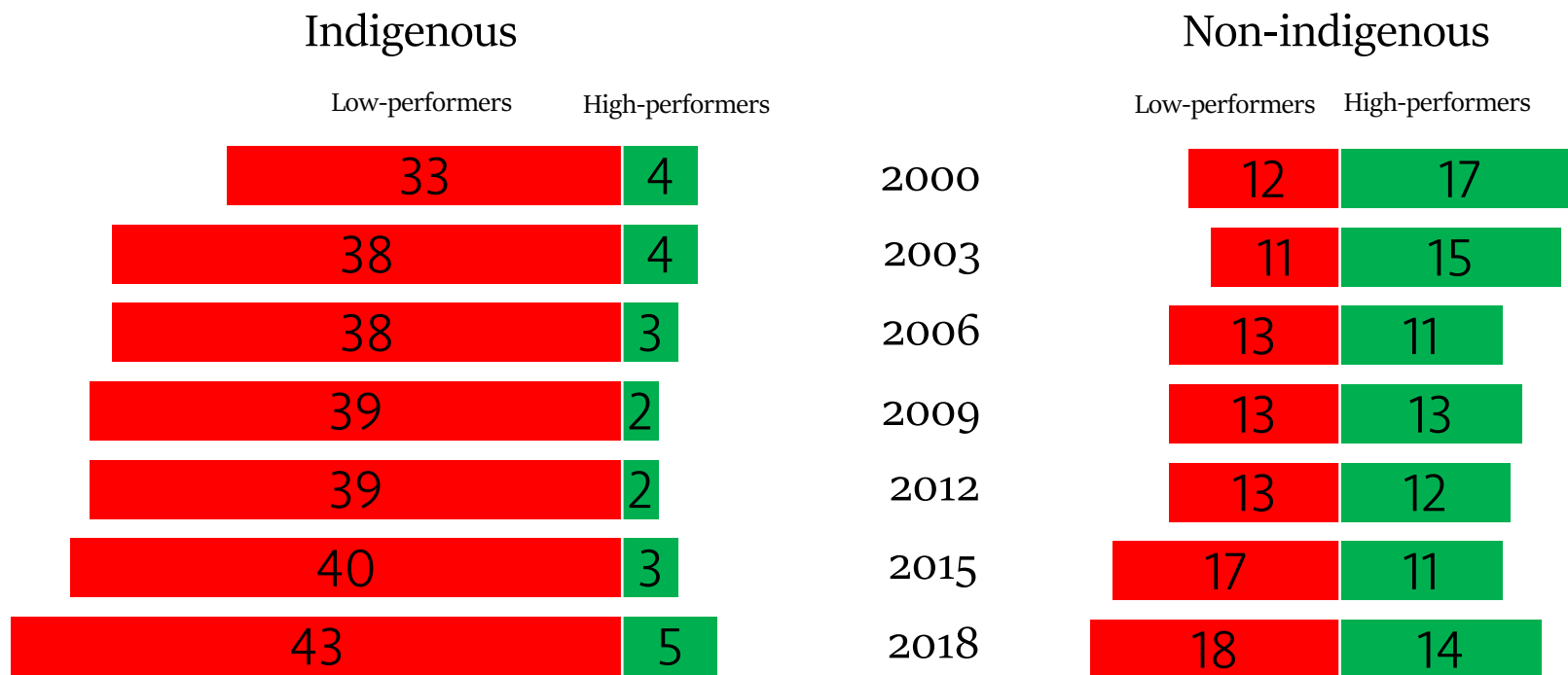
*“Public funding dominates in primary, secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary in all countries. Private funding accounts for 10% of expenditure at these levels of education on average across OECD countries, although **it reached 20% in Australia.**”*

% *Proportion of disadvantaged students attending disadvantaged schools in OECD countries in 2018*



*“Disadvantaged students attending advantaged schools score **78 points higher** than those attending disadvantaged schools.”*

Proportion of low and high performers in Australia on the PISA reading literacy proficiency scale by Indigenous background since 2000



3 Fixing it

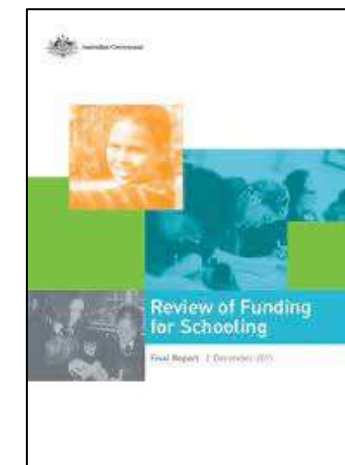
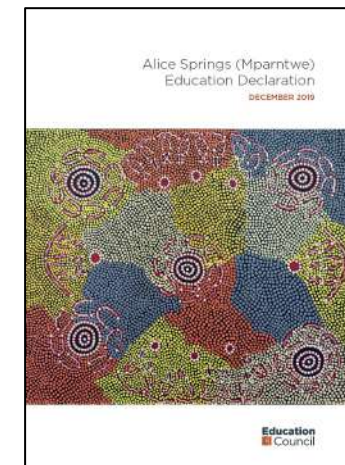
What are you doing already?

What can we do more?

1

Keep the past promises

- The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration (2019)
- The Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1990)
- The Review of Funding for Schooling (2011)



2

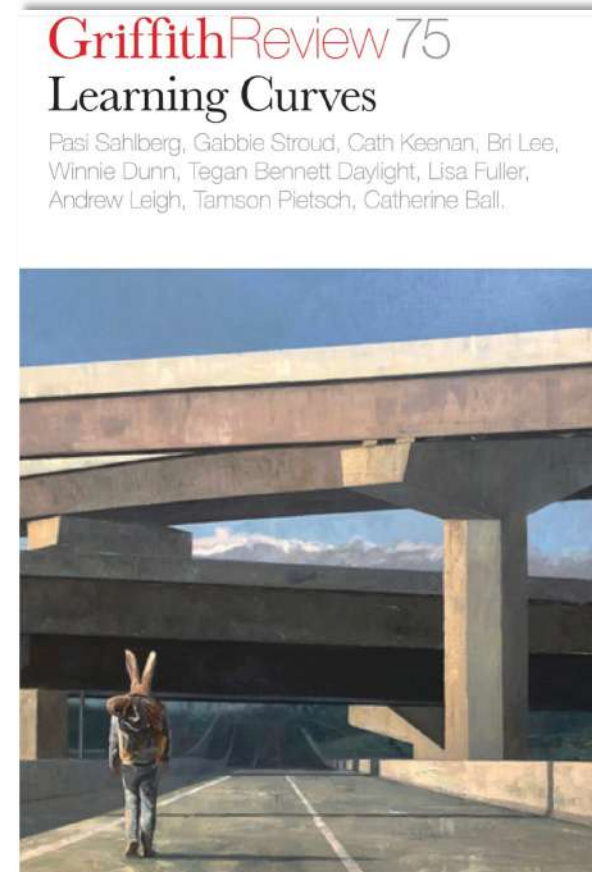
Put an end to growing inequalities

- Accept the positive link between equity and quality of outcomes
- Fund public schools according to the Schooling Resource Standard
- Stop wasting public funds to schools that don't need it

3 Understand the teaching profession

- Not just a teacher shortage, but a teaching crisis
- Swiftly improve teaching and learning conditions
- Pay teachers what they are worth, i.e., competitive pay

Thank you!



Mission Possible: Fix Inequalities

Australia has a world class education system – but not for everyone. National data and international comparative reviews show that educational inequality is perhaps the most significant threshold that separates us from the pack of leading education nations in the world today. We deserve better as a nation, but moreover, we need to educate all our children so that they are given the tools to thrive and are capable of coping with the challenges that they may face in their lives. Some say that effecting meaningful change in an education system is too complicated and slow. We disagree and urge that as parents, caregivers, education stakeholders, policymakers, teachers and leaders, that we all can do better than we do now. But it takes all of us together to work for that better future and to implement small, but meaningful changes in our ingrained systems. Here are some examples what we all can do.

Mission for policymakers

Make equity a priority in education policy

Equity doesn't happen by chance. Effective and targeted policies can drive better practices. Policies should ensure that all schools have sufficient resources and enough trained personnel to make teaching and learning happen. Policies can also make clear what more equitable education would require schools to do. We know that quality education is easier to have with stronger equity. Consider these: High quality early childhood education for all, wellbeing as an essential outcome of schooling, and special needs education as an inclusive service to all children.

Mission for schools

Make wellbeing a cornerstone of a great school

Children learn better when they are healthy and happy. In recent times, the wellbeing of young Australians has been in steady decline. Similarly, teachers and principals are increasingly stressed, tired and burned-out. Health and wellbeing are particular concerns among underprivileged children. Therefore, care for children's health and mental wellbeing should be part of the work of every school. Sufficient time for recess, physical activity, music, arts and play can positively affect students' and teachers' wellbeing in school and make it a better place for all.

Mission for parents and caregivers

Host a school improvement BBQ

All parents and caregivers want to send their child to the best school. In Australia, unlike many other countries, much time and effort is spent selecting these best schools. What is best for one child may not be for others. Parents and caregivers play an essential role in supporting the school and can make significant contributions to the school community. Supporting your child's school could be as easy as organising a fun gathering with friends to talk about how ways of improving the school to better serve different children, not just your own child/children. Challenge each other to do one concrete thing for the school community.

Mission for businesses

Ask for excellence and equity

Employers know it: Well educated employees are the heart of successful business. This often leads to expectations for schools to raise levels of excellence at any cost. But inequality can be very expensive for companies and taxpayers. Advocate for high quality education in your local community. Don't stop there, insist that education system must deliver these high results in equitable ways. Establish new partnerships with high performing schools in both quality and equity of learning outcomes.

Mission for teacher educators

Give all new teachers a course: "Equity in Education 101"

Teachers play a key role in schools to make all students learn beyond expectations. Initial teacher education can provide new teachers with a broader mindset and approach to student learning in school. Design a course for all students in initial teacher education that provides new teachers with the basic knowledge, values and skills to work in a school and education system that promotes greater equity.

Mission for children

Look after one another

Because we all are different, so are the children in our schools. Some students find school a comfortable place to be and learn, others don't. We can do much better in every school to help each and everyone to think that school is their favourite place. Find someone who looks lonely and doesn't have many friends in school. Go and talk to a fellow student you don't know yet. Create a culture in your school that ensures helping everyone to succeed is the norm.

Mission for journalists

Tell the success stories

Media plays an important role in improving education systems. Too often, however, bad news stories are reported because this content seems to garner more attention. Australia has world class education writers who not just report the news of others but often investigate their own information for their stories. Write a story about a school or a community that has done extraordinary things in helping all children succeed in school, collect real stories from children and parents and encourage inspiring school leaders and teachers to communicate what is possible in our schools.

Mission for artists

Help every school to become an art school

Australian schools have a long tradition of teaching children about the rich culture of arts, music and drama. Still, success in school is determined by grades or test scores in a select few academic subjects. Arts subjects offer most children opportunities to actively engage in learning in school and that is a condition for greater equity in education. Work with students to teach them the work of an artist. Create a project with a school to use traditional storytelling and music that includes all children. Make every school in your community an art school.

Mission for politicians

Listen to the experts

When the going gets tough, we often turn to expert advice. When politicians in Australia were coping with the global health pandemic in 2020, they systematically relied on the experience of health specialists and the top national and international scientists. Now, when you continue to develop Australian education systems to provide world class teaching and learning for all our children, make your decisions after listening to the advice of your top experts and practitioners. Communicate to schools and school leaders an overall direction and trust them to lead the way. Equitable education can't be created by force.