

EDMUND RICE EDUCATION AUSTRALIA FLEXIBLE SCHOOLS LTD QUEENSLAND SCHOOLS NEEDS-BASED FUNDING ARRANGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Edmund Rice Education Australia Flexible Schools Ltd (EREAFLS) has prepared this Needs-Based Funding Arrangement to outline a proposed redistribution of recurrent Commonwealth funding to each of its Flexible (Flexi) Schools located in Queensland. This redistribution will enable greater opportunities and resources for the most vulnerable young people across Queensland.

BACKGROUND

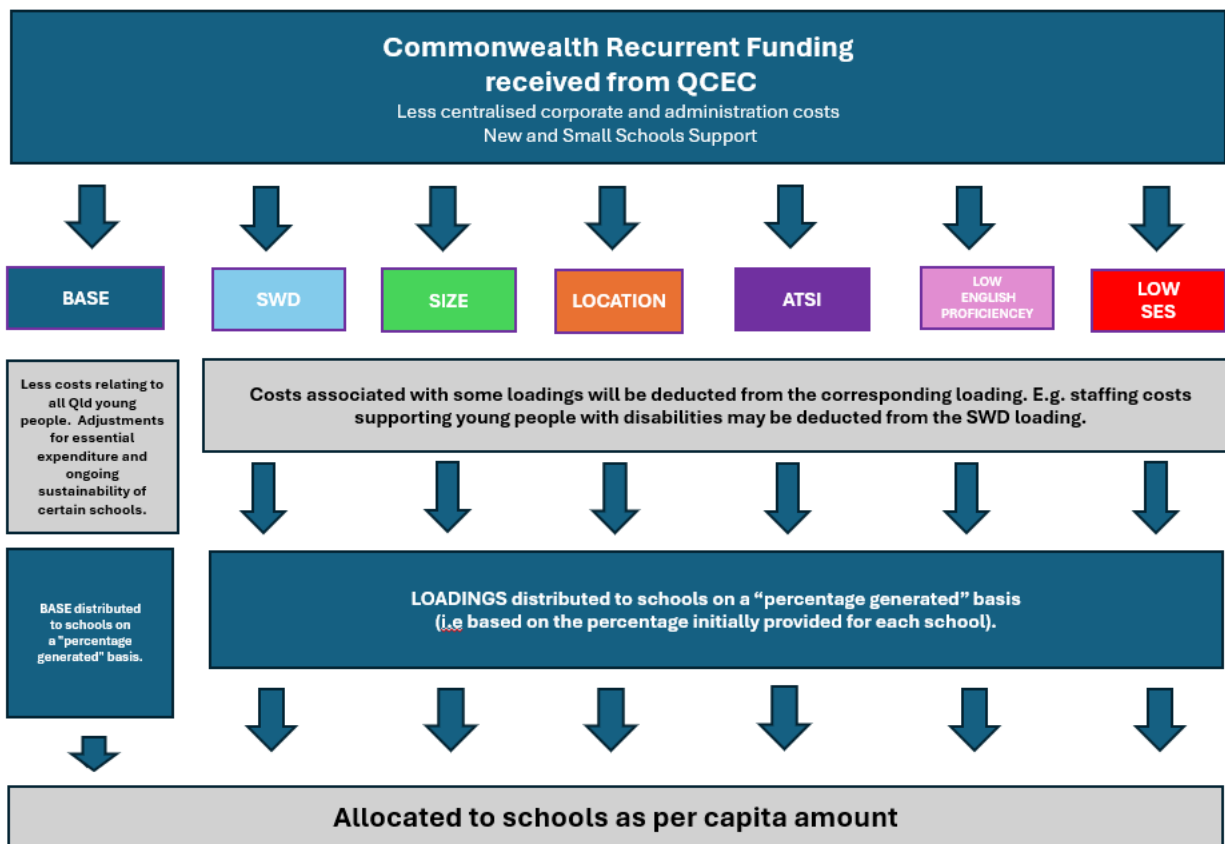
EREAFLS currently supports the education of 1,247 Young people across 12 Flexible Schools in Queensland. We are deeply committed to empowering young people to discover and realise their potential through a liberating, inclusive, and high-quality education. Of those enrolled, 32% identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, and 88% are young people with disabilities.

EREAFLS supports and educates young people experiencing complex social and educational challenges. Through personalised, strengths-based learning and authentic relationships, EREAFLS creates safe and inclusive environments where each young person is valued and supported to discover their potential and flourish.

NEEDS-BASED FUNDING OVERVIEW AND REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION ACT 2013 (THE ACT)

Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) is the Approved System Authority for the Flexi Schools in Queensland and is responsible for managing and distributing funding in accordance with the Act. Commonwealth recurrent funding flows through the QCEC before being allocated to by EREAFLS to Queensland Flexi Schools in a lump sum.





Requirements for a needs-based-funding arrangement, as defined under subsection 78(5) of the Act

- (a) Provides an amount per student that:
 - (i) represents the recurrent resources required to support a student with minimal educational disadvantage to achieve expected educational outcomes; and
 - (ii) takes account of efficiencies that can be realised while improving educational outcomes; and
- (b) in addition to the amount per student mentioned in paragraph (a), provides loadings to students and schools with additional needs to order to support student achievement, including loadings for the following:
 - (i) Students with disability;
 - (ii) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students;
 - (iii) Students with socio-educational disadvantage;
 - (iv) Students who have low English proficiency;
 - (v) schools based on location;
 - (vi) schools based on size; and
- (c) Is publicly available and transparent.



NEEDS-BASED FUNDING ARRANGEMENT OVERVIEW

ERAFSL ensures that funding is distributed based on the needs of its young people while maintaining financial sustainability in accordance with Subsection 75(3) of the Act.

Step 1: ERAFSL Central Administration Costs and School Support Services

ERAFSL centralises corporate and administration costs which are deducted directly from the Commonwealth funding amount received from QCEC. These costs specifically pertain to staff, office costs, contingencies and programs that provide support for all Queensland schools at a system level. Additional funding is also set aside for new schools, and small schools where the size loading is inadequate. New schools require support due to significant expenditure in initial years of operation until enrolments are at a level where economies of scale and subsequently financial viability can be achieved.

Step 2: ERAFSL Distributions and adjustments applied to Base Funding and Loadings

After taking out centralised costs in step 1, the remaining Commonwealth funding is split into base funding and loadings, using the same percentages as the funding was originally received from QCEC. Next, ERAFSL program costs are deducted from the base and loadings where applicable.

ERAFSL Distributions of the Base Funding

The 'Base per student amount' is set in the Australian Education Act as part of the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS). Costs for staffing and programs that benefit all young people in Queensland are taken from the base funding.

Secondly, an appropriate redistribution of the base funding, responsive to local need, will ensure all schools are able to cover operational costs, including staffing, learning resources and young people support services.

After the abovementioned costs have been deducted, the funding is distributed on a 'percentage generated' basis which is based on the percentage the funding was initially provided.

ERAFSL Distributions of the Loadings

Costs for programs that support specific groups of young people are taken from the relevant loading. For example, a program supporting young people with disabilities would be taken from the SWD loading.

Students with disability loading (SWD)

This loading provides extra funding, in addition to the SRS base amount, for young people with disability. The loading amount for a school depends on the numbers of young people receiving additional support in the classroom to enable them to participate fully in school, and the level of that additional support.

The loading calculation uses information reported in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Young people with Disability (NCCD). This information is provided by teachers and other classroom professionals who use their professional, evidence-based judgement to indicate the level of additional support a young person is provided in the classroom.



Before the loading is distributed to schools, staffing costs relating to the loading which support all young people with disabilities, including related program costs, may be deducted from the loading. As there is already a formula in the Act on how the young people with disabilities loading is calculated for each school, the remaining funding is distributed to the schools based on the 'percentage generated' by each school.

Size Loading

This loading provides extra funding for small and medium schools in recognition that they cannot achieve the same efficiencies of scale as a large school.

The size loading is distributed to the schools based on the 'percentage generated' by each school.

Location Loading

This loading provides extra funding for schools in regional and remote locations. It recognises it generally costs more to educate young people in regional and remote schools than in city-based schools.

The location loading is distributed to the schools based on the 'percentage generated' by each school.

Socio-educational Disadvantage Loading

This loading provides extra funding, in addition to the SRS base amount, for each young person from a socio-educationally disadvantaged background.

The socio-educational disadvantage loading is distributed to the schools based on the 'percentage generated' by each school.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander loading

This loading provides extra funding, in addition to the SRS base amount, for each Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young person.

Before the loading is distributed to schools, staffing costs relating to the loading which support all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, including related program costs, may be deducted from the loading. As there is already a formula contained in the Act, on how this loading is calculated for each school, the remaining funding is distributed to the schools based on the 'percentage generated' by each school.

Low English language proficiency loading

This loading provides extra funding, in addition to the SRS base amount, for young people from a language background other than English where at least one parent has completed school education only to Year 9 (or equivalent) or below.

The low English language proficiency loading is distributed to the schools based on the 'percentage generated' by each school.

