



THE CLASSROOM

The Independent Education Union of Australia notes that national and international research consistently demonstrates that class size does matter.

Students need to be able to work in a setting where they are not competing all the time for the attention of the teacher. Many educators believe that some years are even more crucial than others, for example, the first years of schooling. An ideal learning environment would enable small group and individualised instruction to take place regularly, but this is not possible in the more typical classroom setting of one teacher and a large group of students.

The quality of learning that could take place if students could receive quality individualised attention is undisputed - the challenge is to redress the increasing trend towards larger classes, with little specialist support.

Also of concern is the pressure to maintain large class sizes in areas of the curriculum that require the use of machinery, close supervision, practical work, hazardous chemicals, technology.

A quarter of a century ago the Commonwealth Schools Commission proposed a community standard for class sizes in Australian schools. This standard has still not been realised.

Student to teacher ratios have improved only marginally in non-government schools over the last two decades. All statistics indicate less favourable ratios in primary schools than in secondary schools.

The IEUA believes that the community standard on class size as established by the Commonwealth Schools Commission (1984) should be reached in all schools

Prep	15
Years 1-2	20
Years 3-6	25
Secondary	20
Practical classes	15

Further, the IEUA believes that where class sizes exceed these numbers, because of team teaching or organisational/educational decisions about learning requirements such as multi age groupings, that there be guaranteed additional support provided to teachers, for example, a teacher aide, literacy support, LOTE support.

In consultation with teachers, school leadership should take into account the number of students with identified specific needs, the nature of these needs and the specific needs of each teacher when classes are being arranged.

Appropriate additional loading and/or classroom support should be determined in consultation with the teacher and the school leadership