

SCHOOL FEES REPORT

2024

About the report

The Edstart School Fees Report is the largest analysis of non-government school fees in Australia. It is an annual report designed to help you understand the trends in school fees at schools across the country.

Our 2024 report analysed fees from over 700 schools looking at the cost of tuition, compulsory additional fees and boarding fees for a Year 12 student. Note that our analysis only includes schools that have published their schedule of fees to the general public as at 22 January 2024.

We hope you find our analysis informative.

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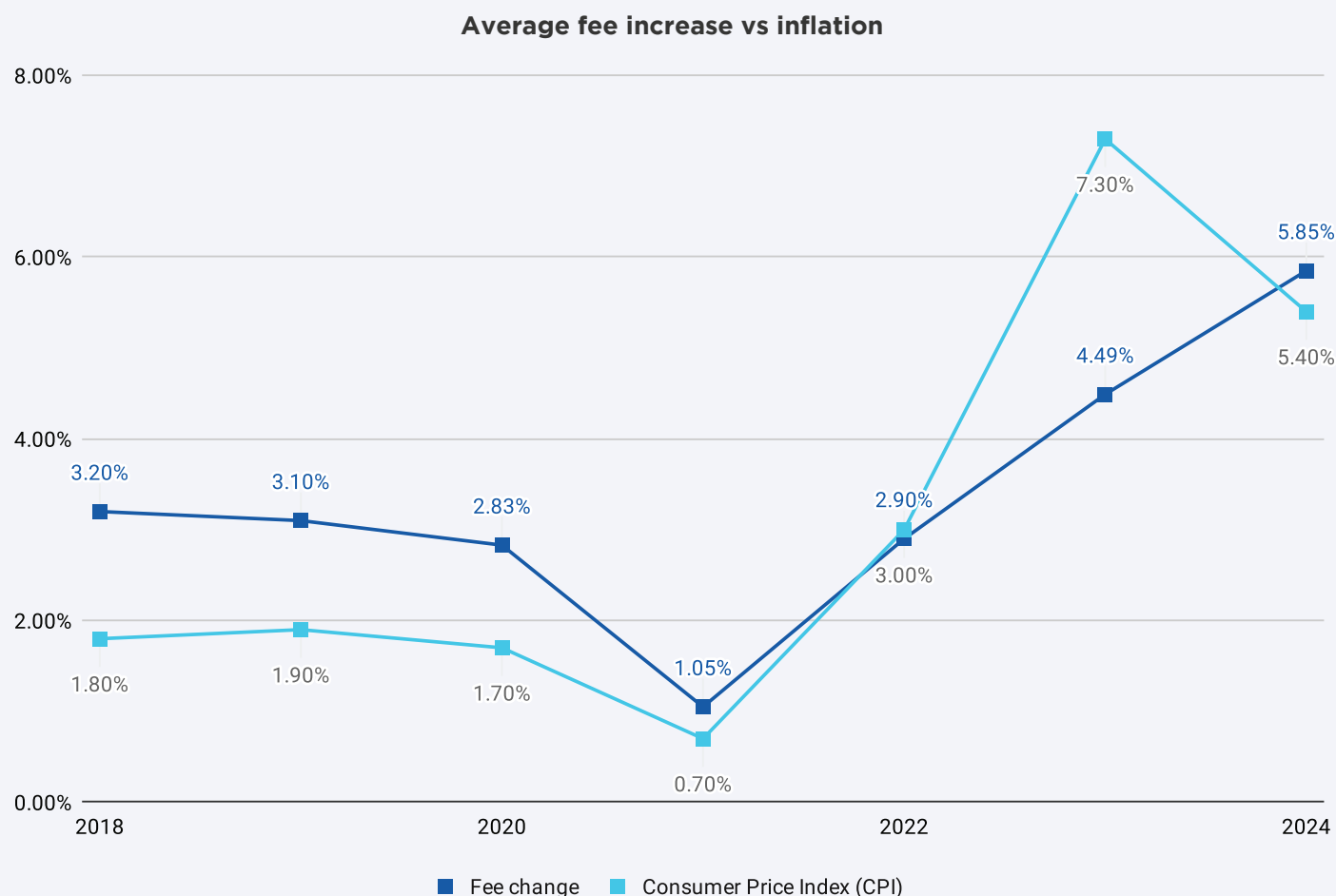
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Summary of findings

This is our 7th annual Edstart School Fees Report where we have analysed fee data at 703 independent and Catholic schools across Australia to identify key trends and insights.

Larger fee increases as schools face higher operating costs

After minimising fee increases and keeping them below inflation last year, the average school fee increase has risen in 2024 creeping above inflation to 5.85%.



Inflation, which peaked at 7.8% at the end of 2022, is continuing to cascade through to the cost of operations for schools, increasing the price of expenses such as construction and maintenance, utilities, insurance and school supplies in turn forcing schools to adjust their fees to cover these costs.

Rising staff wages are also behind the higher fee increase, with teacher wages in most states facing significant upward pressure. State governments in NSW, Queensland and Tasmania have all increased the salaries of public school teachers within the last 18 months, including back pay and cost of living payments in some cases. In Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia increases are on the table, with negotiations ongoing.

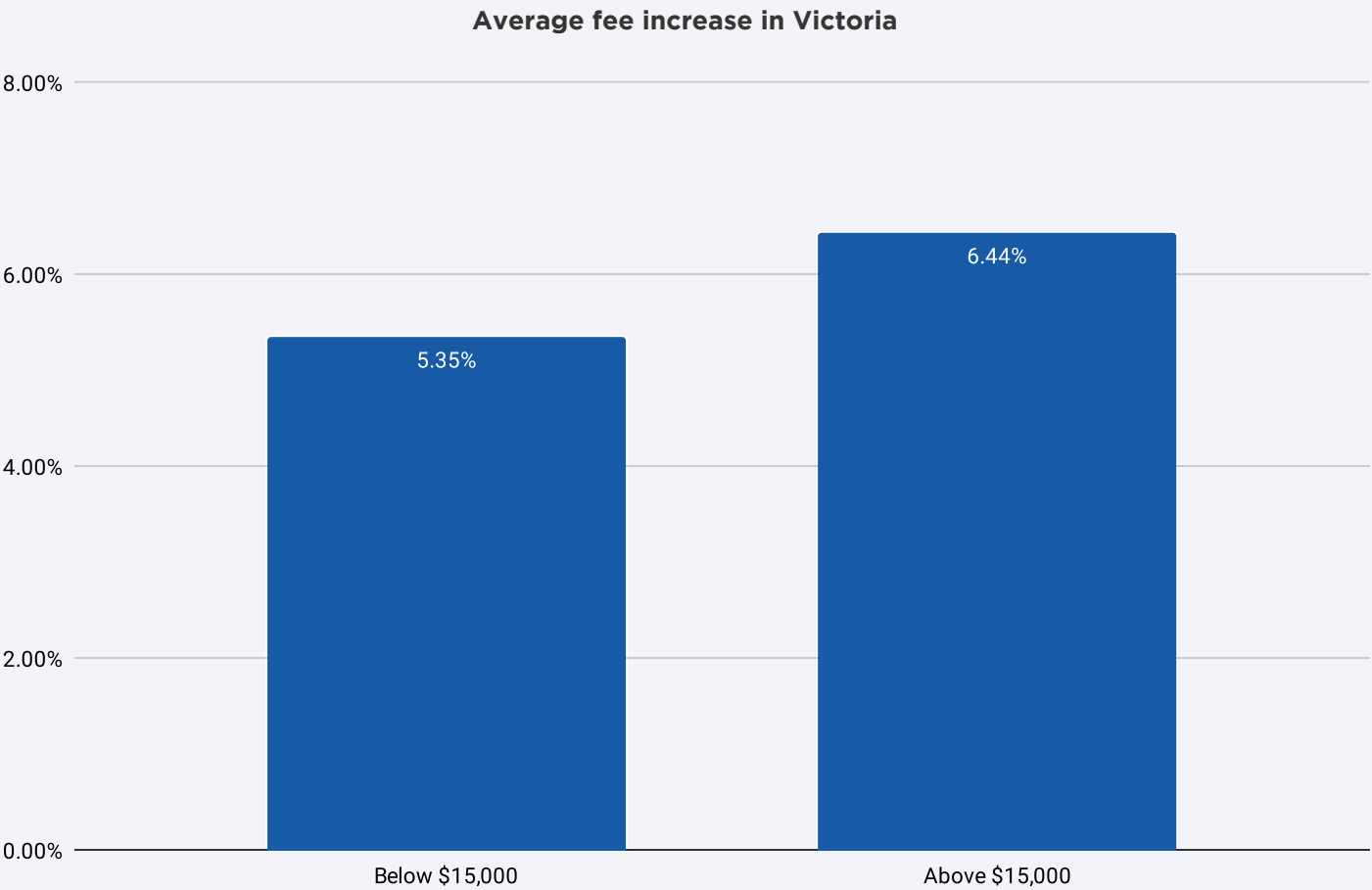
For non-government schools, this means they are having to match these salary increases in order to attract and retain quality staff, especially given the current teacher shortage and cost-of-living crisis. With salaries comprising around 70% of a school's expenditure, this can place significant pressure on their budget.

Similar to last year, we saw a wide variance in fee changes as schools faced differing factors impacting their finances. Some schools have kept their fees steady, while others have listed increases of above 10%. Despite the higher average fee increase, 8% of schools did not increase their fees this year, twice as many as the 4% with no raise in 2023.

Impact of the new payroll tax in Victoria

Many of Victoria’s non-government schools are set to lose their exemption to payroll tax later this year following the Victorian Government’s announcement in May 2023. Schools with an income per student of more than \$15,000 will be subject to payroll tax from July 2024.

Our analysis found that the average fee increase at schools affected by the change is 1.09% higher than the average for schools with fees below \$15,000 that are still entitled to the payroll tax exemption.



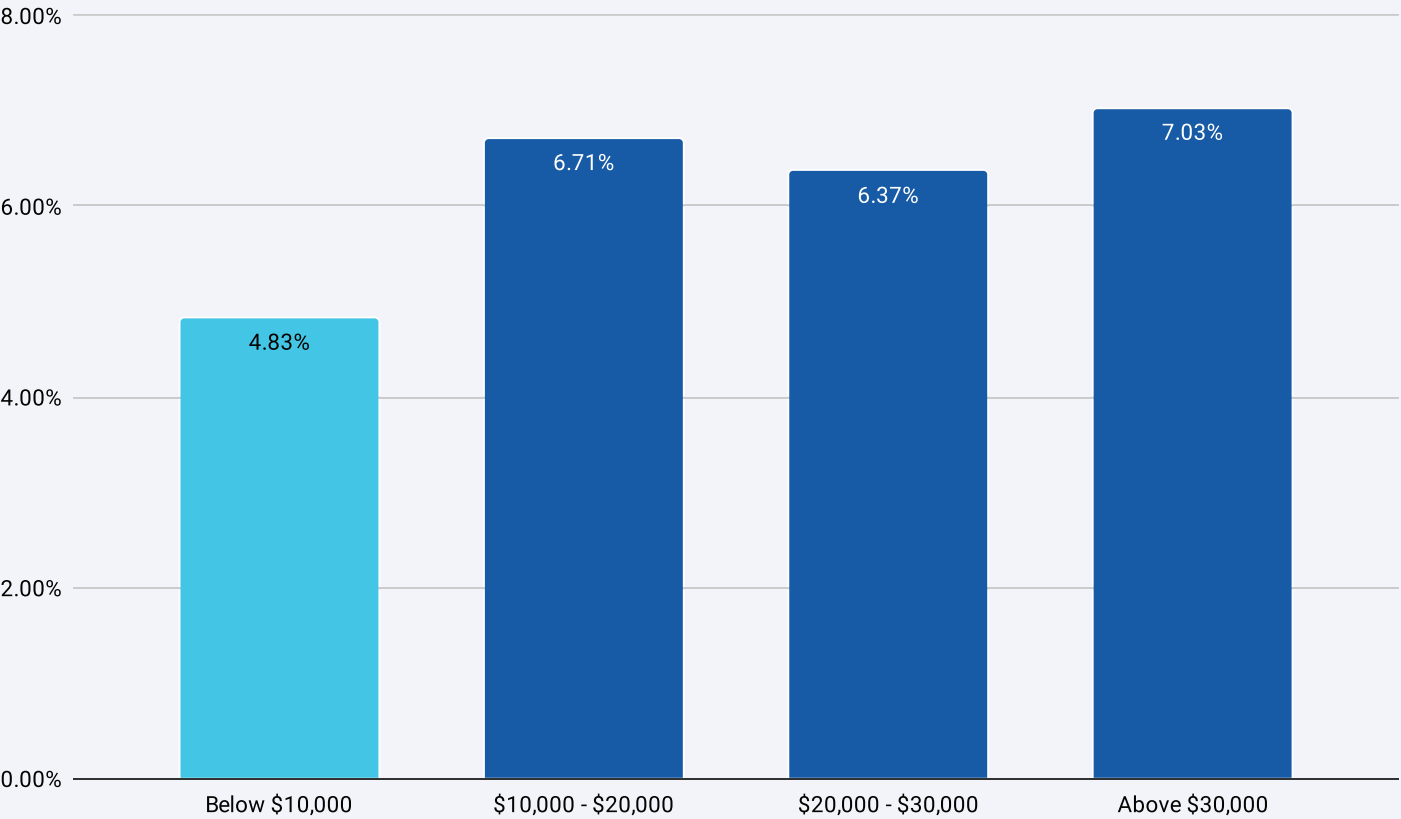
This indicates that many affected schools, already facing higher operating costs, have had to pass the additional cost onto families by increasing their fees by a higher amount to cover the new payroll tax. We observed a number of schools that have added an extra item on their fee schedule and invoice by explicitly listing a new “State Payroll Tax Surcharge” to provide transparency to parents.

As the payroll tax doesn’t come into effect until the second half of 2024, families are likely to not feel the full effect of the change by the Victorian Government until next year.

Low fee schools had the smallest average increase

When split by fee tier, schools with annual fees below \$10,000 had a significantly lower average increase to their fees compared with their more expensive counterparts. These lower fee schools, which have experienced the largest enrolment growth numbers over the last five years, had an average increase of 4.83% while all of the higher fee tiers saw rises above 6%, with the greatest average increase coming from schools above \$30,000 per year at 7.03%.

Average fee increase by fee tier



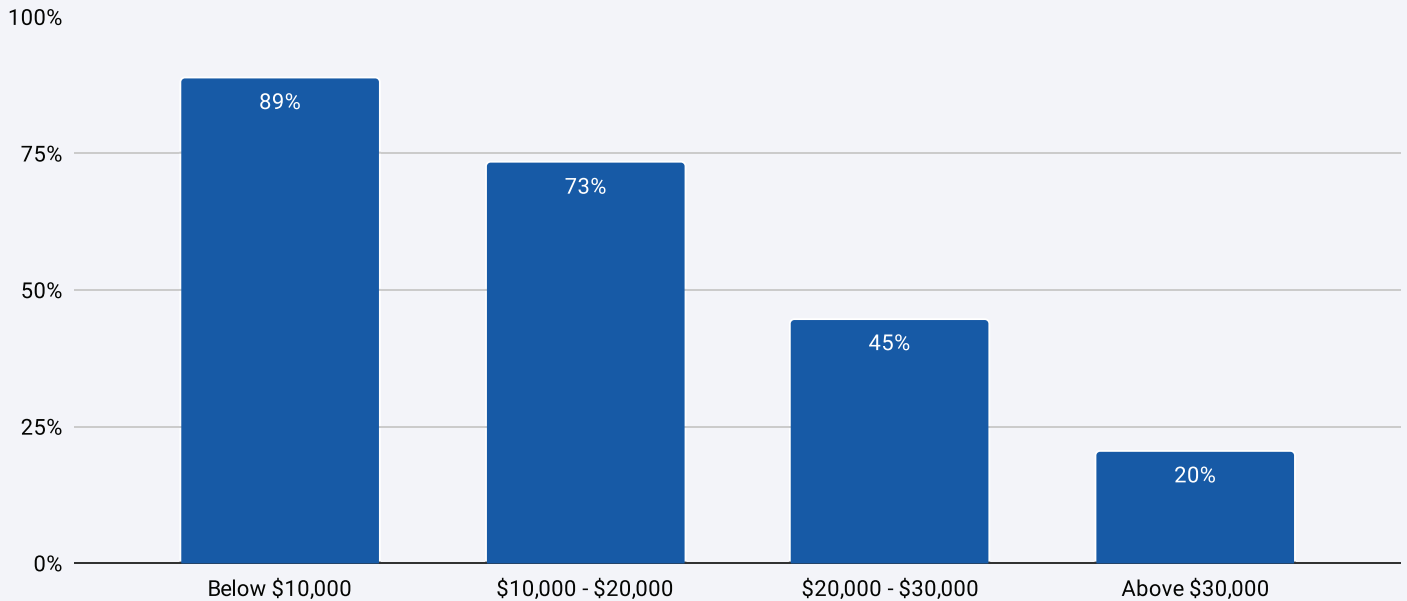
Families less likely to have to pay a large upfront amount at low and middle fee schools

Low and middle fee schools are providing families with more options when it comes to school fee payments. As well as having a much lower average increase, the majority of schools with fees below \$10,000 (89%) provided parents with the option of weekly or fortnightly payments instead of having to make larger upfront payments. Almost three-quarters of schools with fees between \$10,000 and \$20,000 (73%) also offered families weekly or fortnightly payment options.

At the other end, only one in five high fee schools with annual fees above \$30,000 offered more regular payment options. Many of these schools required a lump sum payment annually or at the start of each term, with some schools extending the option to allow parents to pay in ten monthly instalments.

With many households facing cost of living pressures, it is important for schools to offer as much payment flexibility as possible so that families are able to better manage and align school fees with their budget and income cycles.

Schools offering weekly or fortnightly payment terms

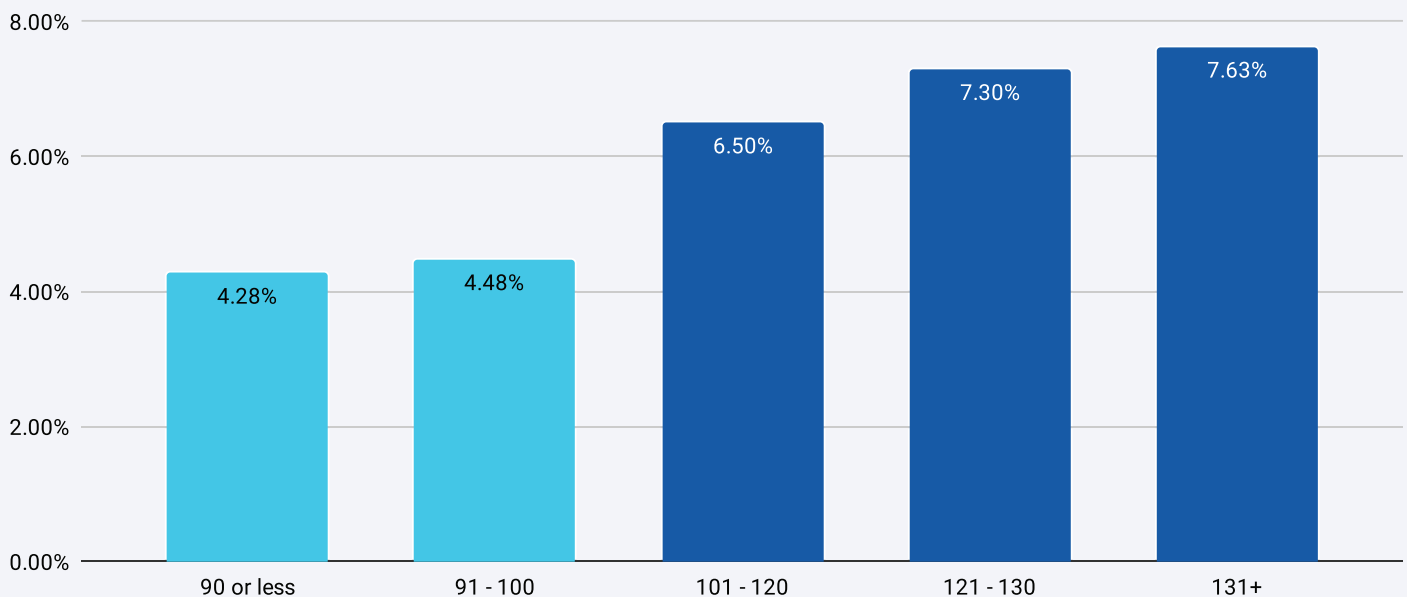


Changes to government funding continue to influence fee changes

The Capacity to Contribute (CTC) score, which determines the amount of base recurrent funding each school receives from the Australian Government by measuring a school community's capacity to contribute to the ongoing costs of running a school, continues to influence school fees.

Our analysis found this year there was a clear trend whereby schools with lower CTC scores had lower average fee increases compared to those that had higher CTC scores. Schools with a CTC score 100 or less with families on lower median incomes and typically attract more government funding had average increases below 4.5%. While at the other end of the scale, schools with families on higher median incomes with a CTC score above 131 had an average increase of 7.63%.

Average fee increase by CTC score

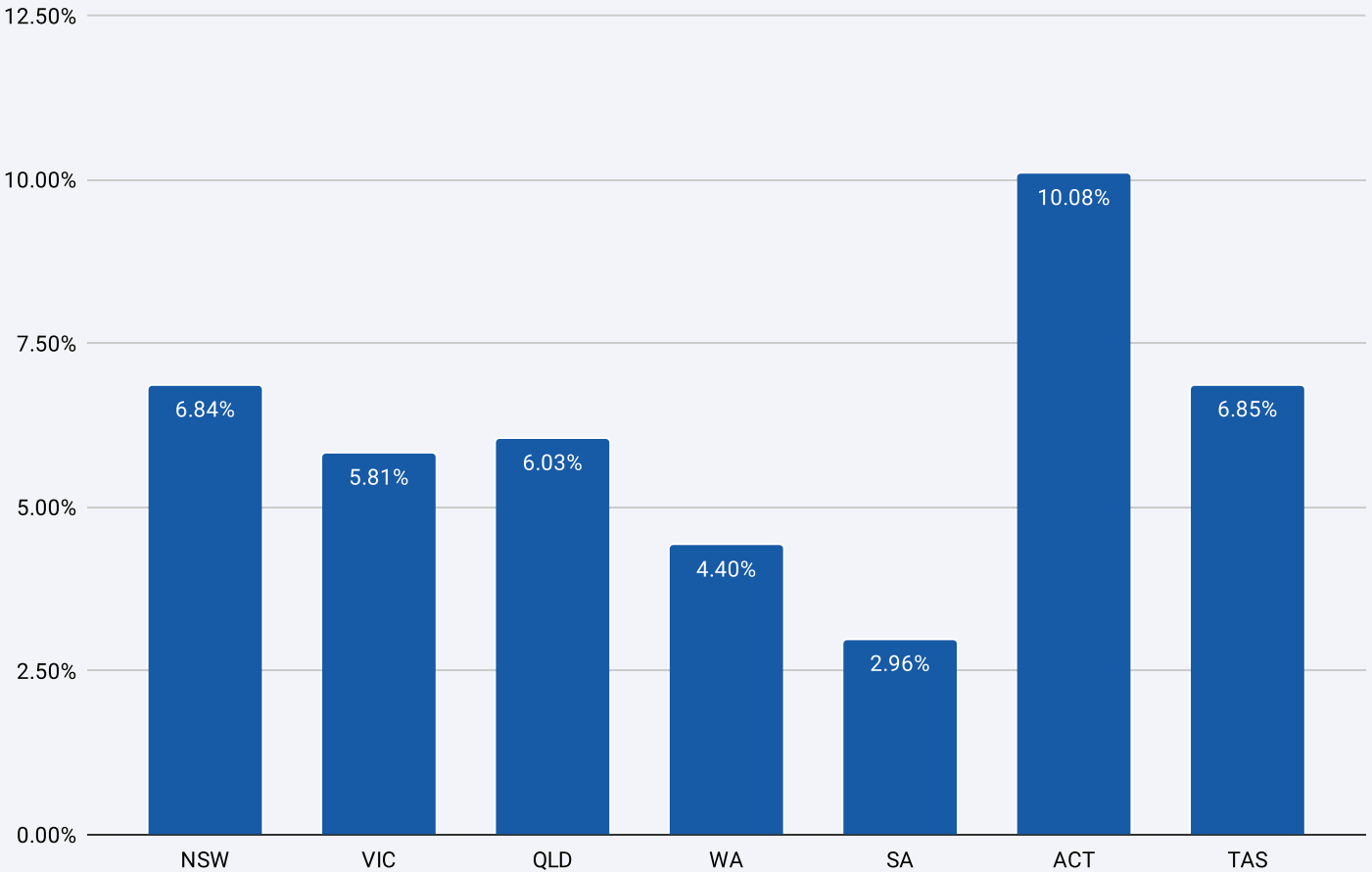


Fee differences between states

The average fee increase varied between state boundaries. Substantially higher than all other states, the ACT saw the greatest average increase to annual fees at 10.08%.

South Australia had the lowest average increase for the third year running at 2.96%, while the increase in Western Australia (4.40%) was below the national average. All other states had increases that were close to the national average.

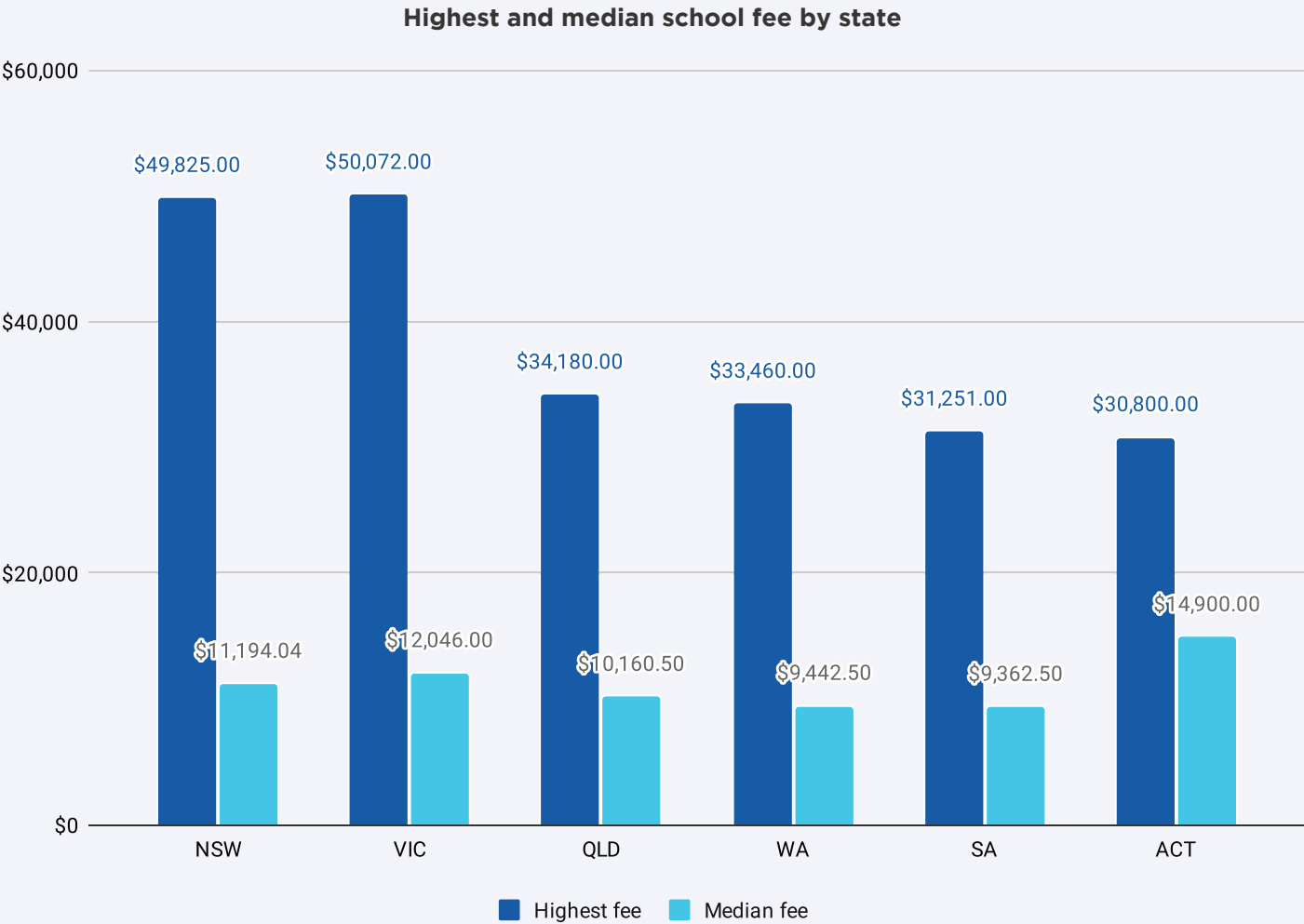
Average fee increase by state



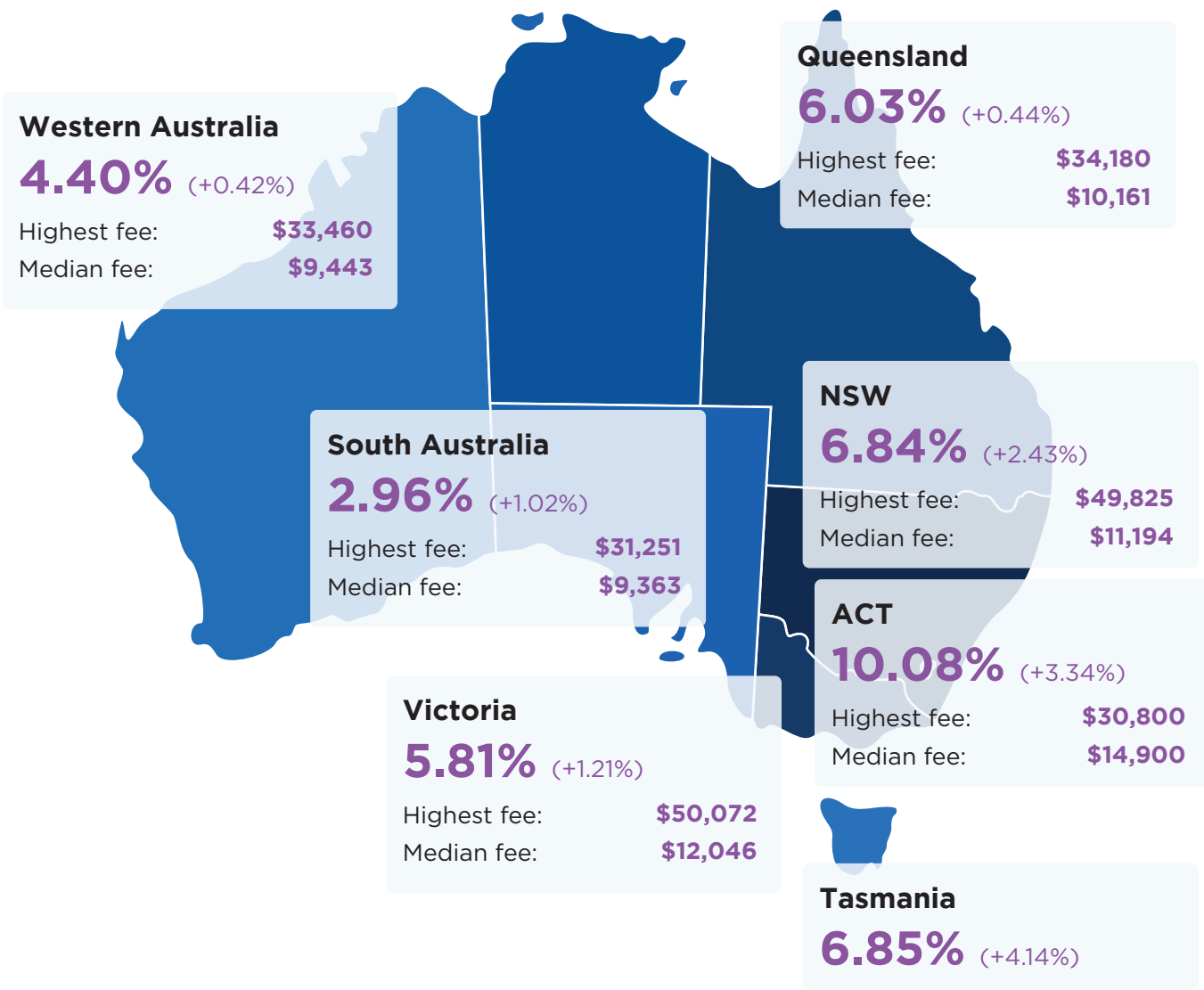
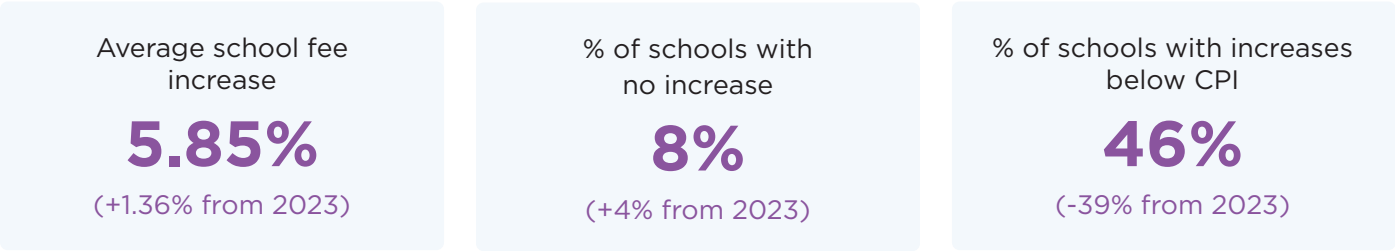
Victoria once again had the highest fee school in the nation, crossing the \$50,000 mark for the first time for any school in Australia. NSW was not far behind, with its highest fee school for a Year 12 student at \$49,825 and the top ten most expensive schools in the state all above \$44,000 per year.

While other states all saw significant increases to fees, their highest fees were all much lower than Victoria and NSW. Queensland was the state with the next highest school fee at \$34,180, still over \$15,000 lower than Victoria and NSW. The highest fee school in Western Australia was \$33,460 and the highest fees in South Australia and the ACT crossed the \$30,000 mark for the first time at \$31,251 and \$30,800 respectively. Tasmania’s highest fee school was much lower at \$23,560.

Median school fees were substantially lower than the headline grabbing highest fees. For all jurisdictions, the median fees were between \$9,363 and \$14,900, reflecting that the majority of students attend low and middle fee schools across the country.



National trend



By location	
Location	Average increase
Metro	+6.09%
Regional	+5.08%

By sector

Sector	Average increase
Independent	+6.09%
Catholic (Systemic)	+5.51%

By fee tier

Annual fees - Year 12 student	Average increase
Less than \$10,000	+4.83%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	+6.71%
\$20,000 to \$29,999	+6.37%
\$30,000+	+7.03%

By Capacity to Contribute score¹

CTC Score	Average increase
90 or below	+4.28%
91 to 100	+4.48%
101 to 120	+6.38%
121 to 130	+7.30%
131 or above	+7.63%

By school type

Type	Average increase
Co-Ed	+5.27%
Girls	+7.08%
Boys	+7.58%

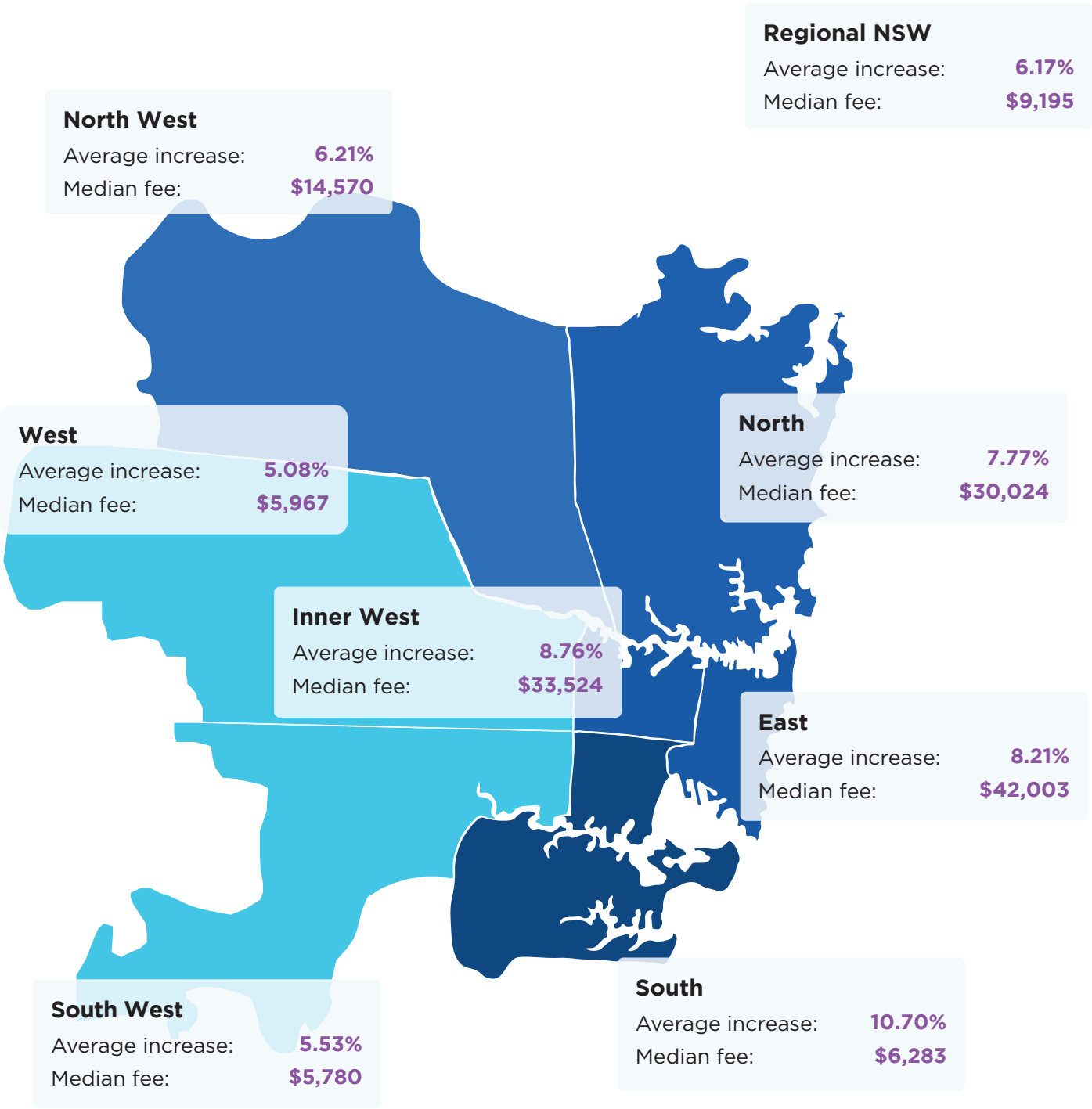
¹ The Capacity to Contribute (CTC) score measures a school community's capacity to contribute to the ongoing costs of running the school and is based on the median income of parents or guardians of students at a non-government school. The CTC score is a key factor in determining the amount of base recurrent funding each school attracts from the Australian Government, with schools with a score below 100 typically attracting more funding and vice versa for schools above 100.

NSW

There was a clear geographical divide across Greater Sydney in average school fee increases between the eastern and western parts of the city. When combining the areas east of Homebush (North, East, Inner West and South regions), the average fee increase was much higher at 8.86% compared with the areas west of Homebush (North West, West and South West regions) which had an average increase of 5.60%.

Further to this NSW saw a large increase on last year's average fee increase, at 2.43% higher. Rising operating costs and upward pressure on wages as private schools matched or exceeded the state's largest pay rise for public school teachers in decades at 8% to 12% would have contributed to this higher increase.

School fees by region



Average school fee increase

6.84%

(+2.43% from 2023)

Highest school fee

\$49,825

(+\$3,525 from 2023)

Median school fee

\$11,194

By sector

Sector	Average increase
Independent	+6.96%
Catholic (Systemic)	+6.71%

By fee tier

Annual fees - Year 12 student	Average increase
Less than \$10,000	+4.70%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	+6.71%
\$20,000 to \$29,999	+6.37%
\$30,000+	+7.03%

By Capacity to Contribute score

CTC Score	Average increase
100 or below	+5.52%
Above 100	+7.42%

By school type

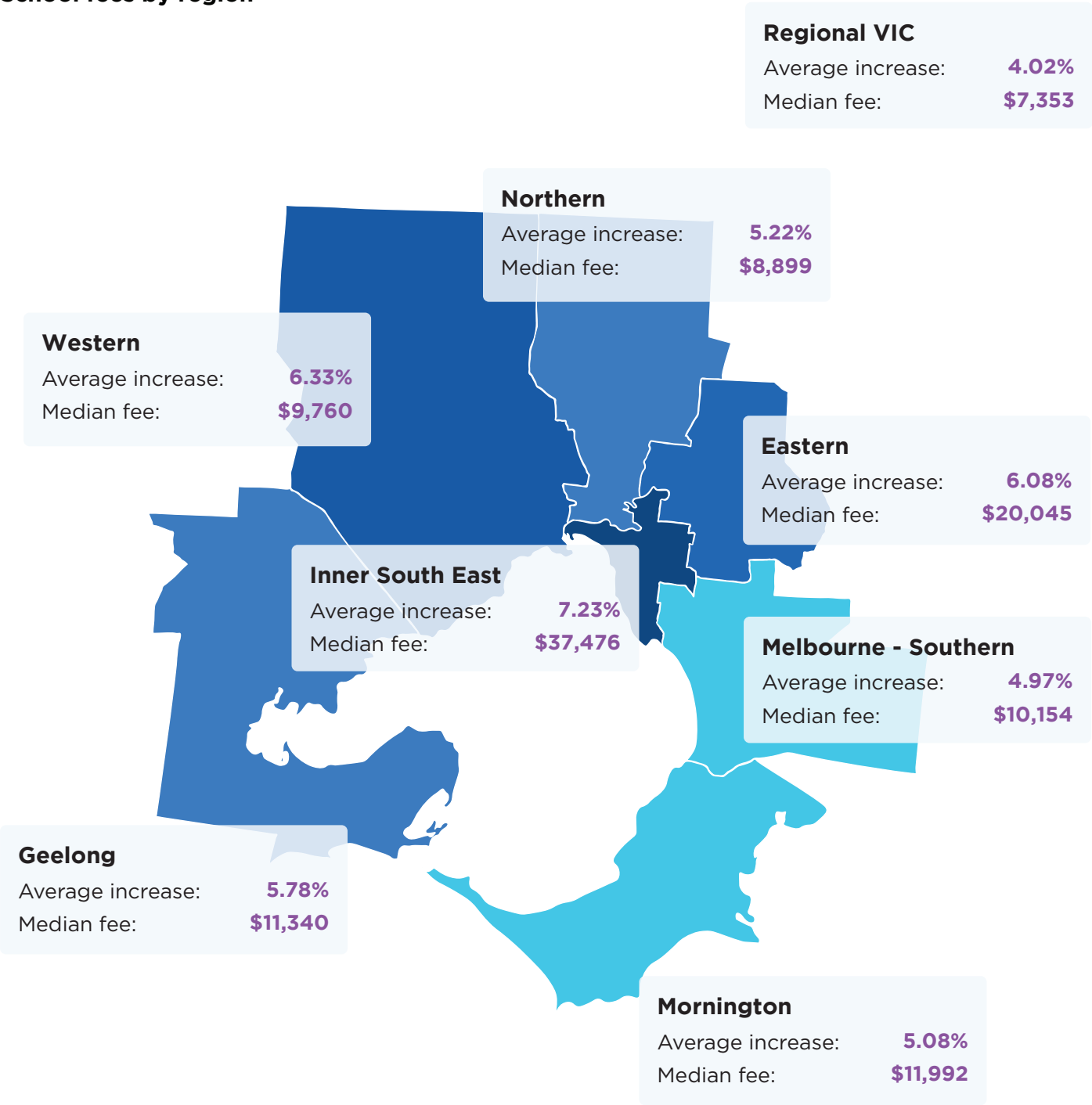
Type	Average increase
Co-Ed	+6.39%
Girls	+7.75%
Boys	+7.95%

Victoria

Victoria saw a statewide average fee increase of 5.81%, an extra 1.21% from last year. Across Greater Melbourne, the highest average increase was seen in the Inner South East at 7.23% with the lowest average increase towards the Mornington Peninsula around 5%. The state recorded the highest annual fee in the country once again, with Geelong Grammar School crossing the \$50,000 per year mark at \$50,072, the first time for a school in Australia.

The announcement that a number of Victorian schools would be subject to payroll tax from July this year has already had an effect on the average fee increase in the state. Schools with fees above \$15,000 affected by the change saw an average increase in fees of 6.44%, compared with an average of 5.35% for schools exempt from the change.

School fees by region



Average school fee increase

5.81%

(+1.21% from 2023)

Highest school fee

\$50,072

(+\$3,728 from 2023)

Median school fee

\$12,046

By sector

Sector	Average increase
Independent	+5.85%
Catholic (Systemic)	+5.82%

By fee tier

Annual fees - Year 12 student	Average increase
Less than \$10,000	+5.06%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	+5.73%
\$20,000 to \$29,999	+6.80%
\$30,000+	+6.67%

By Capacity to Contribute score

CTC Score	Average increase
100 or below	+5.35%
Above 100	+6.44%

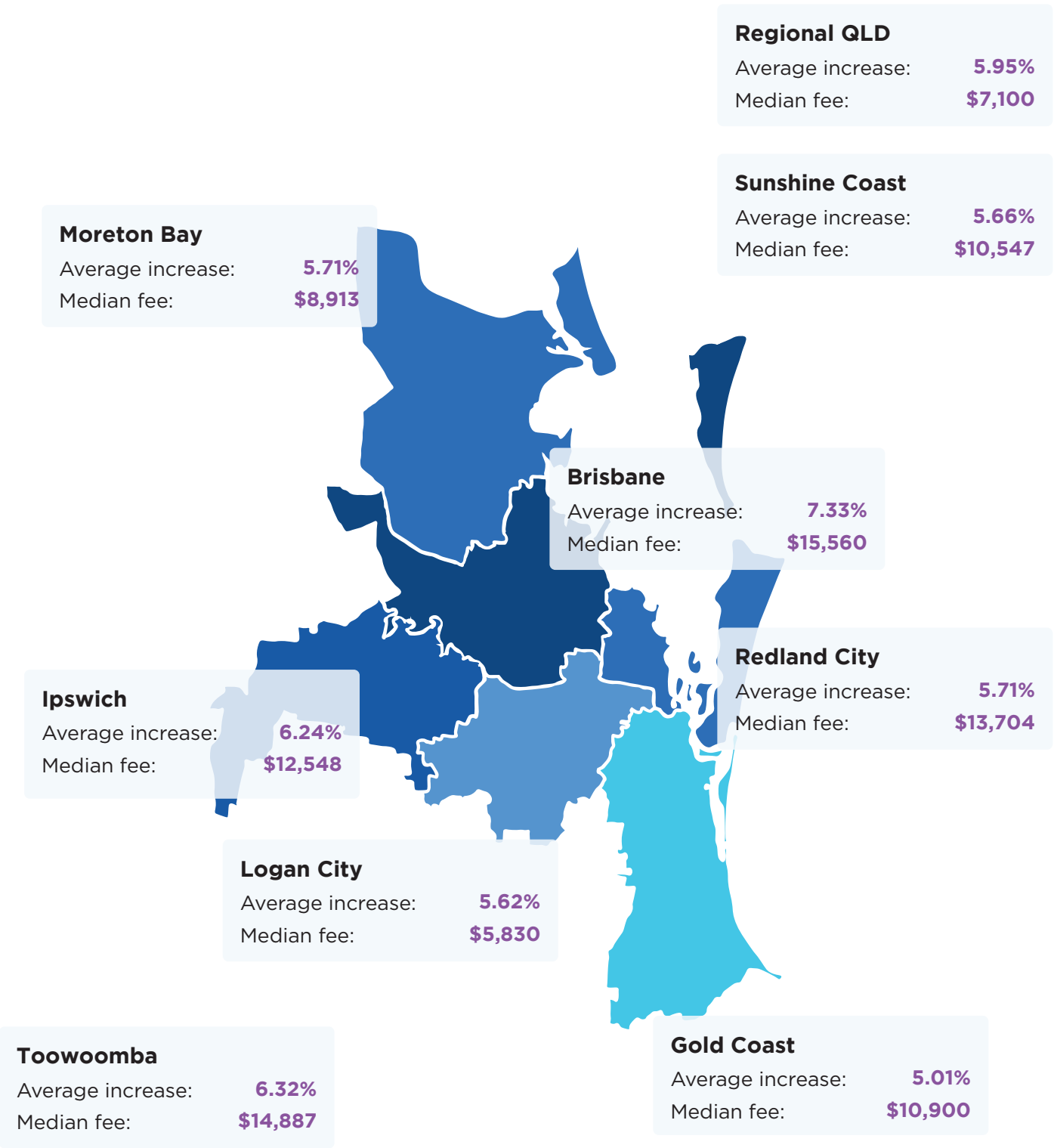
By school type

Type	Average increase
Co-Ed	+5.21%
Girls	+6.78%
Boys	+8.01%

Queensland

Queensland saw an average school fee increase of 6.03%, slightly above the national average and 0.44% higher than 2023. When looking at South-East Queensland, most regions saw fee increases close to the state average, with the highest average increase in Brisbane City at 7.33% and lowest average increase in the Gold Coast at 5.01%.

School fees by region



Average school fee increase

6.03%

(+0.44% from 2023)

Highest school fee

\$34,180

(+\$2,550 from 2023)

Median school fee

\$10,161

By sector

Sector	Average increase
Independent	+6.44%
Catholic (Systemic)	+5.47%

By fee tier

Annual fees - Year 12 student	Average increase
Less than \$10,000	+5.05%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	+7.03%
\$20,000 to \$29,999	+6.91%
\$30,000+	+7.14%

By Capacity to Contribute score

CTC Score	Average increase
100 or below	+5.07%
Above 100	+6.75%

By school type

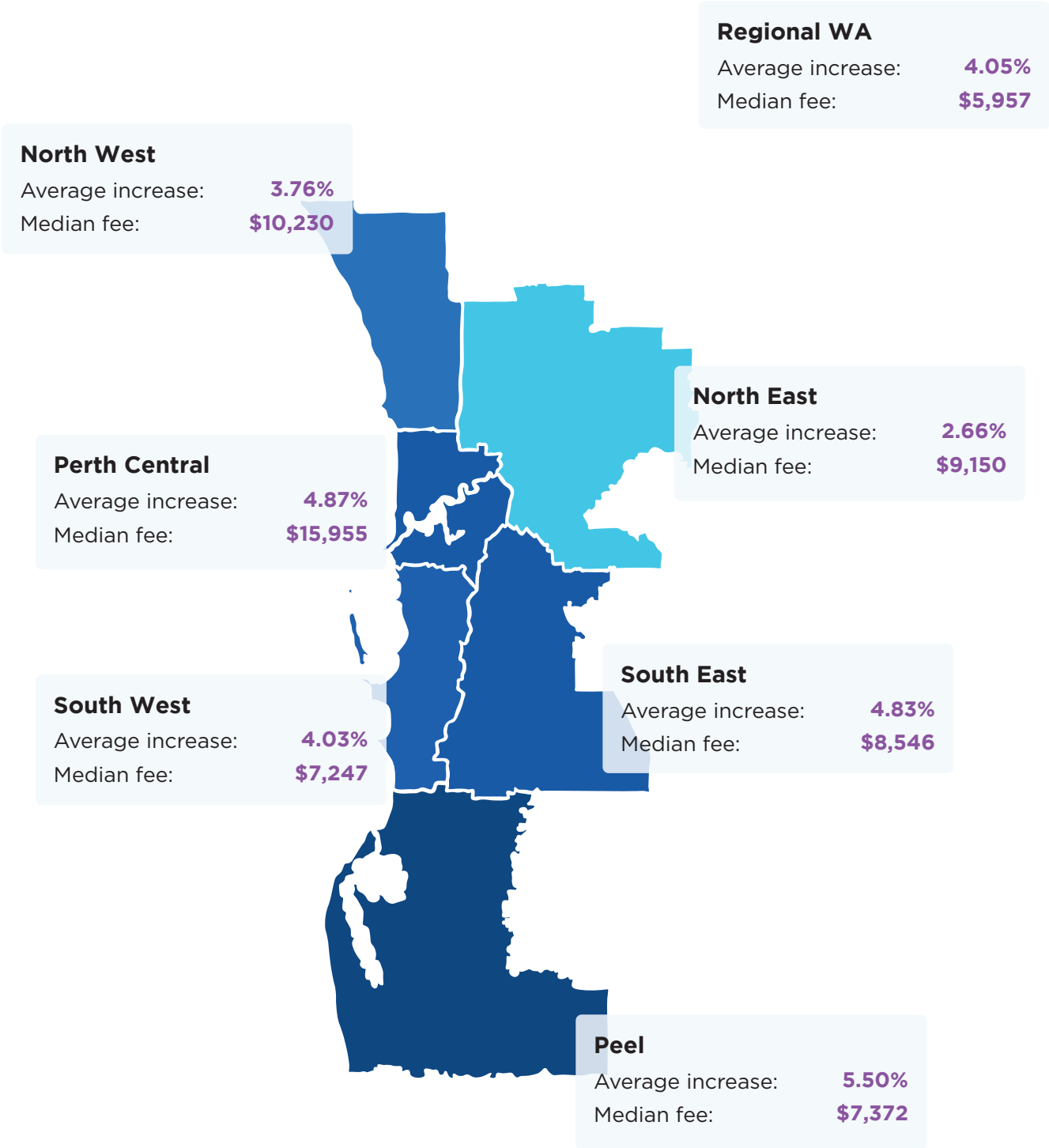
Type	Average increase
Co-Ed	+5.58%
Girls	+6.76%
Boys	+7.51%

Western Australia

The average fee increase in Western Australia was 4.40%, a 0.42% rise from last year but still below the national average. Many regions of Perth stayed relatively consistent with this increase, however the North East saw a significantly lower increase at 2.66% while the Peel region had the highest average fee increase of 5.50%.

These numbers represent the highest average fee increase in Western Australia in at least seven years, however the rate of increase during this time has consistently been below the national average.

School fees by region



Average school fee increase

4.40%

(+0.42% from 2023)

Highest school fee

\$33,460

(+\$1,828 from 2023)

Median school fee

\$9,443

By sector

Sector	Average increase
Independent	+4.81%
Catholic (Systemic)	+3.70%

By fee tier

Annual fees - Year 12 student	Average increase
Less than \$10,000	+3.53%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	+5.35%
\$20,000 to \$29,999	+5.22%
\$30,000+	+5.66%

By Capacity to Contribute score

CTC Score	Average increase
100 or below	+2.59%
Above 100	+5.20%

By school type

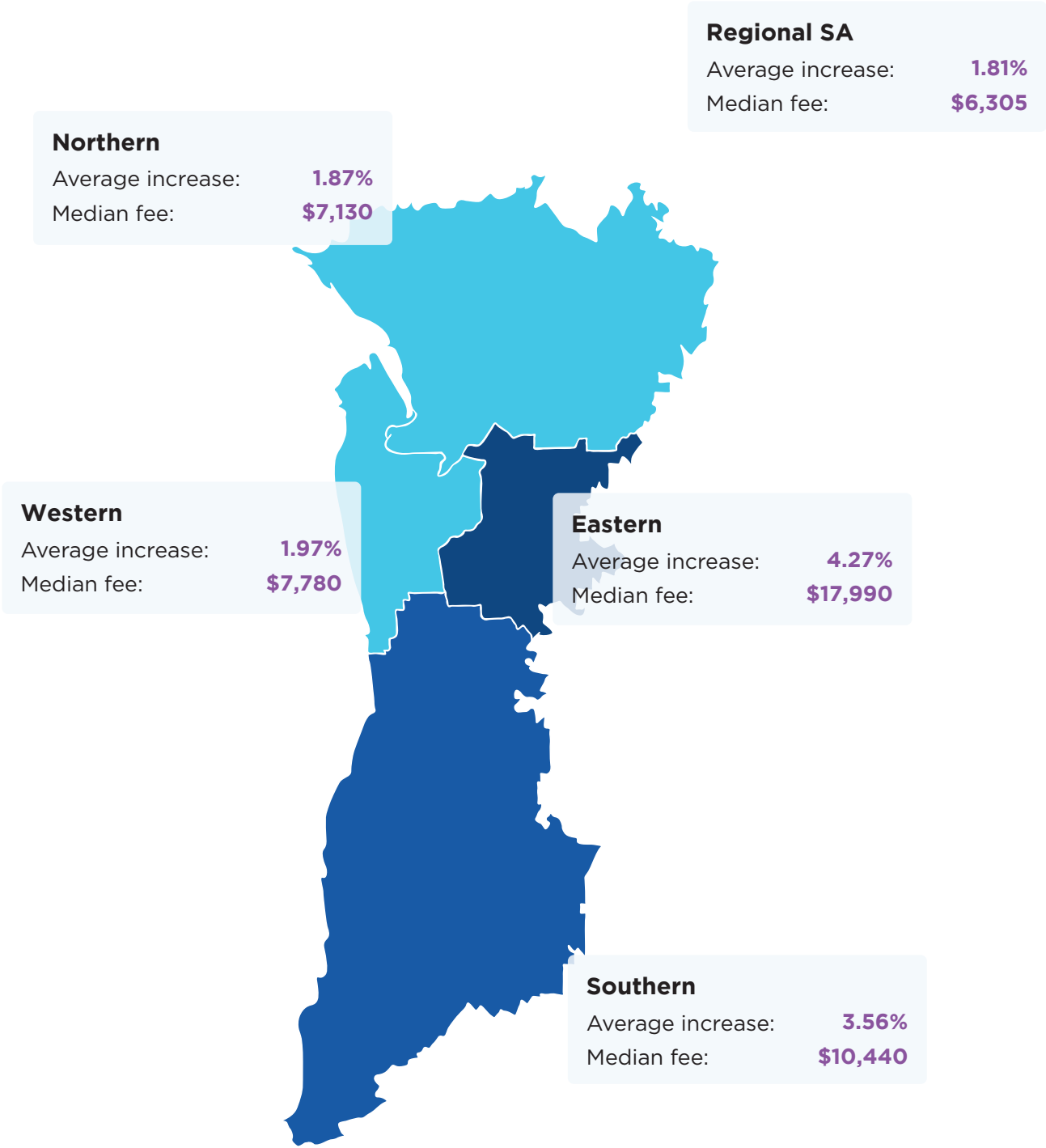
Type	Average increase
Co-Ed	+3.92%
Girls	+6.07%
Boys	+6.63%

South Australia

South Australia had the lowest average increase for the third year running at 2.96%. There is a clear divide across Adelaide with the average increases in East and South significantly higher than schools in the North and West. The median school fees were also inline with this trend, with schools in the East and South much higher than North and West.

The lower average increases in the state is likely to be driven by the decision by South Australian Catholic Schools to keep their fee increases to a minimum over the last three years.

School fees by region



Average school fee increase

2.96%

(+1.02% from 2023)

Highest school fee

\$31,251

(+\$1,801 from 2023)

Median school fee

\$9,363

By sector

Sector	Average increase
Independent	+3.72%
Catholic (Systemic)	+1.66%

By fee tier

Annual fees - Year 12 student	Average increase
Less than \$10,000	+1.65%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	+5.15%
\$20,000+	+4.49%

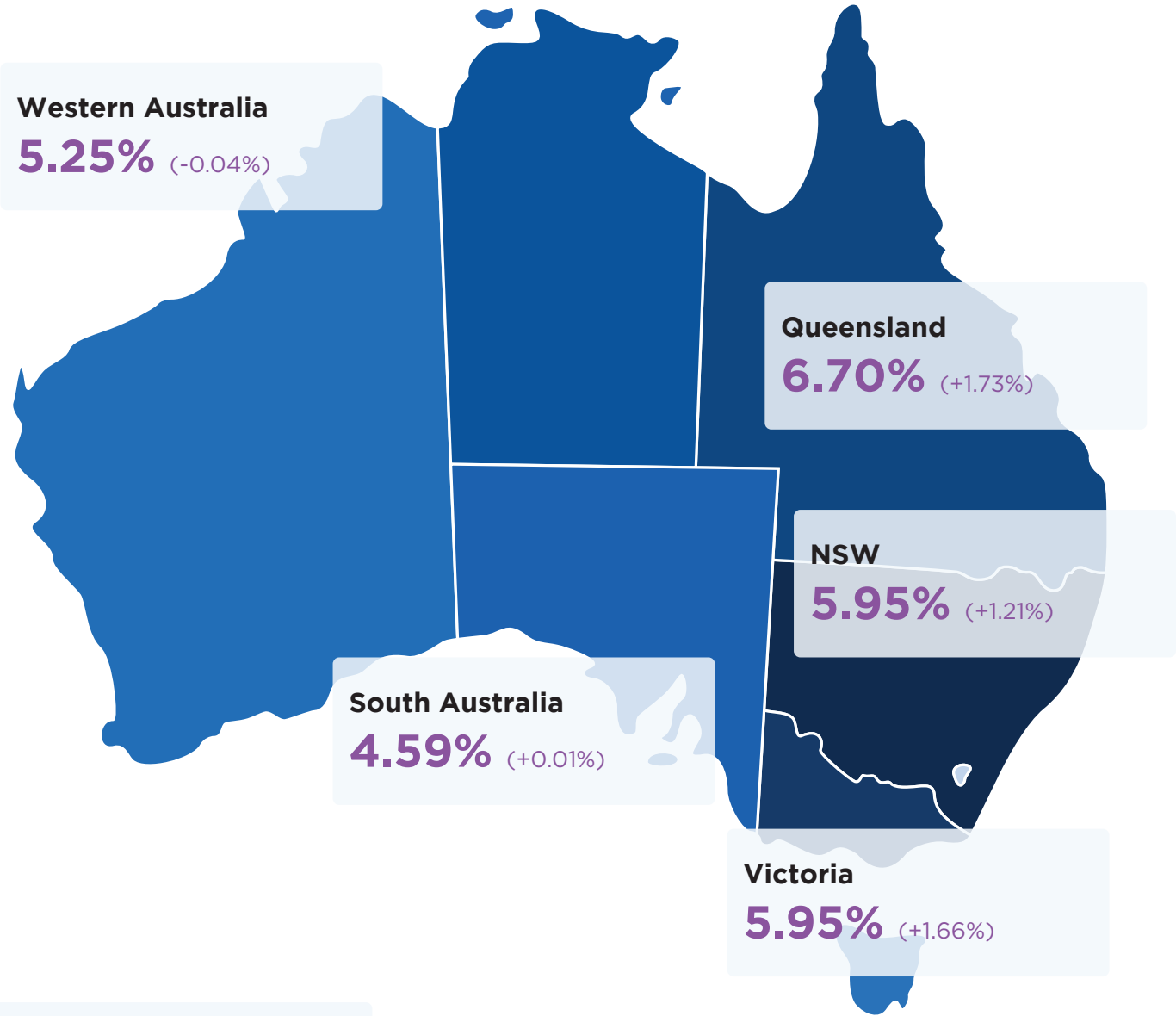
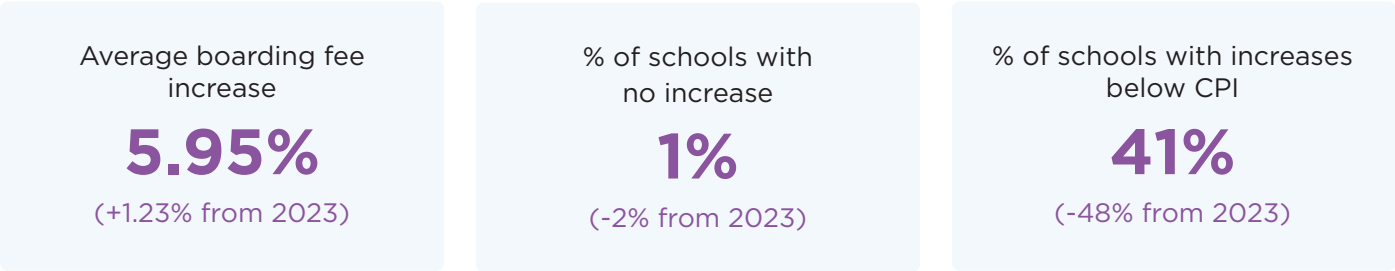
By Capacity to Contribute score

CTC Score	Average increase
100 or below	+2.03%
Above 100	+4.58%

By school type

Type	Average increase
Co-Ed	+2.58%
Girls	+3.84%
Boys	+5.13%

Boarding



Average increase by location	
Metro	5.99%
Regional	5.87%


About Edstart

Edstart is a leading technology and financial services company providing payment services for education.

We offer fee management solutions to schools to help improve the payment and collection experience, and flexible payment plans for parents to help align school fees with their budget.

Our goal is to help make education costs sustainable, flexible and easier to manage for schools, families and students.

To find out more about our offering to schools and parents, visit edstart.com.au

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 edstart.com.au

The Edstart School Fees Report is based on an analysis of 703 non-Government schools in Australia. Schools that haven't made their fee schedule available to the general public as at 22 January 2024 have not been included. Inflation data is based on the consumer price index (CPI) sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). Whilst all the information and statements have been prepared with all reasonable care, no responsibility or liability is accepted by any member of Edstart for any errors or omissions or misstatements however caused or arising.

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