

## **State kids get more class**

### **Wes Hosking and Jamie First**

A typical private school student has a year's less class time than public counterparts over the life of their education.

An education expert has questioned whether private-paying parents are getting value. But the independent schools' body says students have longer days and extra-curricular activities at weekends.

A Herald Sun analysis, based on term dates for a typical government and private school, shows privately educated students would have 200 fewer school days over 13 years.

Monash University education senior lecturer Dr David Zyngier said parents paying as much as \$30,000 in fees could question if they were getting a good return.

"If a child is actually not getting one whole year's of education and yet the parents are assuming they are paying for it - there is no value for money," he said.

"Not only does it add up to a whole school year's difference but there is the inconvenience factor. When children are at home longer parents need to organise some kind of care for younger children and that usually costs additional money."

The analysis factored in a shorter academic year in years 10, 11 and 12. A typical private student had 178 school days annually to year 9, and a public pupil 195 days.

The total school days across an entire school life was 2268 for private and 2468 for public.

Independent Schools Victoria spokesman Brian Peck said the time non-government students spent doing sport and music before and after school and on weekends needed to be considered. Such extra-curricular activities were often compulsory in years 7-10.

"It's somewhat simplistic to relate time sitting behind a desk or in a classroom with educational and cultural and social results," he said.

"It's not about the time spent, but the quality of the experience."

Parents wouldn't be paying private fees if they didn't think it was a good deal, he said.

Jodie Meadow, whose daughter, Amber, attends state-run Glen Eira College, hadn't thought about days spent at school, but said it would not have influenced her.

Mrs Meadow's said she chose to put her 14-year-old into a public school because she felt there were more opportunities.

“You develop better as a student because you are given a greater chance to experience the outside world. It’s not as sheltered,” she said.

“If I had put her into a private school, it would annoy me because you’re paying so much more in fees and they aren’t doing as much.”