

# Media Statement

20 February 2012



Independent Schools  
Council of Australia

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Statement by Mr Bill Daniels, Executive Director, Independent Schools Council of Australia

## Funding Uncertainty Continues for Independent Schools

ISCA today cautiously welcomed the release of the Final Report of the Review of Funding for Schooling. The Executive Director of the Independent Schools Council of Australia, Bill Daniels, acknowledged the work of the Review Panel and its Chair, David Gonski AC, and the comprehensive nature of the Panel's recommendations. Mr Daniels expressed the independent sector's appreciation of the readiness of Mr Gonski to consult with the sector and the efforts of the Panel to understand the particular needs and circumstances of independent schools.

ISCA supports the Gonski Review's acknowledgement that the recurrent funding for non-government schools that educate some of Australia's most disadvantaged communities should be fully funded by Government.

The Gonski Review recommendations acknowledge that schools that educate disadvantaged communities deserve special funding arrangements regardless of sector. We are pleased that Mr Gonski has proposed a model which ensures that students with disability and indigenous students are not disadvantaged because of the school they attend.

Further, we welcome the Gonski Review's comprehensive focus on the contribution of the three partners of schools funding; namely parents, who provide nearly sixty percent of the independent schools sector's income, and the Commonwealth and State and Territory Governments.

While the Gonski Report's recommendations are wide-ranging and address some of the long term issues of the sector, it is clear that extensive additional work will be required before the full impact of the recommendations on the operation of individual independent schools and their educational outcomes becomes clear. Mr Daniels said that the Report provides a template for future funding arrangements but much of the hard work remains to be done.

It will be crucial that no independent school loses a dollar in real terms if we are to achieve the schooling outcomes and objectives set out in the Gonski Review. ISCA will be working closely with government to ensure that implementation of the Review achieves this outcome. We caution the Government against establishing an overly bureaucratic process and emphasise the need to ensure that new administrative arrangements do not prove to be a regulatory burden on independent schools.

The majority of independent schools cannot rely on a system authority to guarantee their financial stability. The role of Associations of Independent Schools in contributing expertise and supporting schools with lower resources is essential for the continued achievement of educational outcomes for these schools. Existing support mechanisms for capital programs and other targeted programs, including Block Grant Authorities and Associations of Independent Schools, work efficiently and it would be counter-productive to wind back these arrangements.

The Government is to be commended for its prompt release of the Report, but it is disappointing that the Government has not provided a clearer indication of its thinking around the Report's recommendations. The Gonski Review process has been underway for two years and uncertainty surrounding the outcomes of the Review has caused considerable unease and uncertainty for independent schools. It was hoped that the release of the Report would provide independent schools with an indication of the future direction of school funding arrangements and some certainty and confidence about the future. Unfortunately, despite the release of the Report, individual independent schools are still no wiser regarding their future funding arrangements after 2013.

ISCA looks forward to working closely with the Government to ensure future funding arrangements are based on robust data and meet the sector's criteria for a funding model which are; equity, incentive, flexibility, transparency, simplicity, predictability and consistency.

ENDS

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