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

Curriculum Certainty Important for Independent Schools

The completion of the Review of the Australian Curriculum is welcomed by the Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA), which now looks forward to working with the Australian Government and national education authorities to determine which of these recommendations will be implemented and how this will occur.

The Australian Curriculum needs to be practical and achievable in every school environment. It needs to support excellent educational outcomes for all students, including those students with disability and/or additional needs. A balanced curriculum with enough flexibility to focus on student learning needs is an important goal.

Independent schools, parents and their teachers are vitally interested in school curriculum issues and it is clear that the reviewers have carefully considered the views of the sector.

ISCA supports in principle the five themes highlighted by Minister Pyne in developing further enhancements to the curriculum. These themes are:

(i) resolving the overcrowded curriculum,
(ii) improving parental engagement around the curriculum,
(iii) improving accessibility for all students
(iv) rebalancing the curriculum and
(v) reviewing the governance of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA).

Independent schools are a diverse group of schools with a variety of educational approaches and having flexibility in the manner in which curriculum is sequenced and delivered is important. Additionally, parental engagement in teaching has always been a major focus of independent schools and further support for this concept is strongly encouraged.

Any curriculum changes will need to be implemented in a structured way with enough certainty and time for schools and teachers to make adjustments in the classroom. ISCA supports further discussions on these recommendations with the Commonwealth and State/Territory Governments and would welcome the opportunity to engage the independent sector in developing practical enhancements to the curriculum.

ENDS
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