

Media Release

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Independent Schools
Council of Australia

Certainty of funding a critical issue for Independent schools as election nears

As the federal election campaign draws to a close, the Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA) has reiterated its commitment to continue to work with whichever party forms Government, to ensure certainty of funding for the Independent school sector.

ISCA Executive Director Colette Colman today said that, “stable and predictable funding is particularly critical for Independent schools. We have 900 schools in Australia that are not part of any system. These are the only schools in the country that receive their Commonwealth Government funding directly, according to the Commonwealth’s funding model, other school sectors all have the capacity to reallocate their funds across schools. For these 900 Independent schools, effective financial and operational planning depends on funding certainty.”

The Independent sector is the third largest provider of school education in Australia and the largest provider of secondary education. Over 580,000 students attend Independent schools in Australia, with enrolments continuing to grow steadily. Independent schools provide choice in schooling to diverse communities with the median fee of an Australian Independent school in 2015 being less than \$4,800. Many provide a religious or values-based education, while others promote a particular educational philosophy or interpretation of mainstream education. Independent schools provide for students of all abilities, including growing numbers of students with special needs, and serve a wide range of communities from remote and disadvantaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to socially, culturally and ethnically diverse communities in capital cities.

Ms Colman went on to say that “other important issues for Commonwealth school funding beyond 2017 are that funding will need to continue to address the real costs of school education; that educational disadvantage is adequately addressed, particularly students with disability; ensuring state and territory Independent school associations are funded to continue to support the sector; and the provision of adequate capital funding support to Independent schools.”

With schools funding being a key election issue, the Independent school sector has written to the major parties with a series of questions relating to school funding to give them the opportunity to expand on some of the details released in their respective policy documents. ISCA has published its analysis of major party positions on its website: <http://isca.edu.au/federal-election-2016/>

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