



**Submission by
The Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA)
to the
Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group**

INTRODUCTION

About ISCA

The Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA) is the peak national body covering the independent schools sector. It comprises the eight State and Territory Associations of Independent Schools. Through these Associations, ISCA represents a sector with almost 1,080 schools and just over 567,000 students, accounting for over 16 per cent of Australian school enrolments. ISCA's major role is to bring the unique needs of independent schools to the attention of the Commonwealth Government and to represent the sector on national issues.

Independent schools are a diverse group of non-government schools serving a range of different communities. Many independent schools provide a religious or values-based education. Others promote a particular educational philosophy or interpretation of mainstream education. Independent schools include:

- Schools affiliated with larger and smaller Christian denominations for example, Anglican, Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Lutheran, Uniting Church, Seventh Day Adventist and Presbyterian schools
- Non-denominational Christian schools
- Islamic schools
- Jewish schools
- Montessori schools
- Rudolf Steiner schools
- Schools constituted under specific Acts of Parliament, such as grammar schools in some states
- Community schools
- Indigenous community schools
- Schools that specialise in meeting the needs of students with disabilities
- Schools that cater for students at severe educational risk due to a range of social/ emotional/ behavioural and other risk factors.



Independent schools are not-for-profit institutions founded by religious or other groups in the community and are registered with the relevant state or territory education authority. Most independent schools are set up and governed independently on an individual school basis. However, some independent schools with common aims and educational philosophies are governed and administered as systems, for example the Lutheran system. Systemic schools account for 18 per cent of schools in the independent sector.

Independent Catholic schools are a significant part of the sector, accounting for 8 per cent of the independent sector's enrolments. These schools have been included in the figures above.

KEY POINTS

- **Independent schools employ about 16 per cent of all teachers in Australian schools. The enrolment share of students, and therefore the need for teachers, in independent schools is predicted to continue to grow.**
- **Independent schools need to be able to recruit high quality teachers and leaders appropriate to their communities from a range of backgrounds and experiences.**
- **The autonomy of independent schools enables them to respond flexibly, effectively and creatively to meet the teacher workforce needs of their school community.**
- **The independent sector supports a focus on ensuring that the best methods and processes are used to select a broad range of high quality students to undertake initial teacher education.**
- **The independent sector recognizes that a strong and positive professional learning experience component is a key element of training teachers. The crucial role of schools as key partners in providing an effective professional experience must be recognised.**
- **Progression within and graduation from a teacher education course should be dependent on student teachers meeting robust, rigorous, transparent and consistent standards of achievement.**
- **Teacher education providers must: a) ensure that graduate teachers are ready to begin work in the profession and b) work to facilitate support for graduate teachers in their early years in the profession.**

INTRODUCTION

1. The Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA) is pleased to have this opportunity to make a submission in response to the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG). The wide diversity of schools and their supporting communities in the independent sector is reflected in the range of attitudes and emphases relating to issues of teacher education.
2. ISCA supports and is contributing to the work that is currently being undertaken by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) in relation to Initial Teacher Education.
3. This submission addresses a range of issues directly related to those raised in the Advisory Group's Issues Paper, and other issues that are of particular concern to schools in the independent sector.

BACKGROUND

Overview of the teacher workforce in the Independent Sector

1. Independent schools in Australia employ approximately 82,000 staff members in total, of which more than 50,400 are full time or part time teachers. This equates to approximately 43,000 full time equivalent teachers. **Independent schools employ the full time equivalent of over 17,000 primary teachers and around 26,100 secondary teachers.** This equates to over 16 per cent of all teachers in Australian schools.

Table 1: Teachers in the independent sector by gender and level (FTE), 2013

	Primary	%	Secondary	%
Male	3,909	23%	11,599	44%
Female	13,105	77%	14,541	56%
Total	17,015	100%	26,140	100%

Source: ABS *Schools Australia* (Note: Figures exclude independent Catholic schools)

2. **Research conducted by ISCA in 2007 showed that 'good teachers' was resoundingly the most important factor influencing parents' decision-making in choosing an independent school education for their children.** The research confirmed that parents see teachers as pivotal to the development of their children's academic, moral and life skills. **Ensuring that there is a future supply of high quality teachers, whether experienced or newly graduated, is of central importance to independent schools.**
3. The Staff in Australia's Schools Survey (SiAS) was commissioned by the Australian Government in 2006 with the intention of providing detailed information on the teacher workforce at that time in order to assist with future planning. SiAS reports have been published in 2007 and 2010.¹

While not all results in the SiAS reports are disaggregated by sector, those that are indicate that the profile of the independent schools workforce (as measured in the survey) is broadly in alignment with government and Catholic sectors.

¹ McKenzie, P., Kos, J., Walker, M., & Hong, J. *Staff in Australia's Schools 2007*. ACER
McKenzie, P., Rowley, G., Weldon, P., & Murphy, M. *Staff in Australia's Schools 2010*. ACER

Teacher shortages

1. The supply of teachers in independent schools is currently broadly in balance with the demand across Australia; however **teacher shortages across the whole schools sector continue to be an issue in some subject areas and in some geographic locations.**
2. Schools continue to have difficulty recruiting teachers in maths and science, particularly in the higher level courses, and also in higher level English such as the extended classes of Years 11 and 12. These shortages indicate the importance of recruiting teachers who are competent to teach at all levels of the subject within the school.
3. Other subject areas experiencing teacher shortages are economics, special education/inclusive, Languages Other Than English (LOTE), and technology. Higher salaries within the corporate sector are attracting many teachers and staff way from the schooling sector.
4. A shortage of available teachers in particular subject areas or for particular levels of schooling may result in a greater instance of teachers teaching outside of their major area of study than schools would prefer.

Autonomous nature of independent schools

1. There is a wide range of diversity in the independent school sector. Independent schools enrol students from a diverse range of regions, religions and social backgrounds. Independent school diversity encompasses size, geographic location, composition, history and educational focus.
2. Independent schools are located in all areas of Australia including the remotest locations, enrolling students from all backgrounds and catering for the wide range of special educational needs students may require to achieve their education goals.
3. Many independent schools are faith-based schools with the sector encompassing the full spectrum of faiths across the Australian community including Anglican, Uniting Church and Catholic schools, but also Lutheran, Baptist, Seventh Day Adventist, Islamic, Greek Orthodox, Christian and Jewish schools.
4. Some independent schools offer an education that emphasises a particular educational philosophy, such as Steiner or Montessori, or offer a specific curriculum, such as the International Baccalaureate.
5. Unlike other sectors, the majority of independent schools operate autonomously. These schools do not rely on central bureaucracies or bodies, and are separately accountable to their parent and school communities. Most independent schools are set up and governed on an individual school basis. However, some schools with common aims and educational philosophies are governed and administered as recognised systems.

The autonomous governance arrangements of independent schools is the single most important factor that underpins the sector's diversity, and greatly enhances the range of schooling choice for Australian families.

6. Independent school enrolments continue to increase because many parents and community groups find that self-governing schools are more accountable to their immediate communities than is possible for schools that are part of large centralised systems. The steady growth of the

independent sector is evidence of the public confidence in the accountability of independent schools through the mix of contribution to education policies, legislative compliance and self-regulation.

7. **The autonomy of independent schools enables them to respond flexibly, effectively and creatively as professional educational organisations to meet the needs of their school community and to develop, innovate and improve the school to enhance outcomes for students.**

Employment/governance arrangements for teachers in independent schools

1. Neither ISCA nor the state and territory AISs are employing bodies for the teachers who work in independent schools. Teachers are employed directly by individual schools, or in some cases by the central body that owns and operates the schools.
2. Many independent schools have governance and management arrangements which delegate the day to day responsibilities of the school's education program and staffing to the school's management team, and longer term planning and supervision to Boards of governance. These arrangements mean that school governors and educational management teams are accountable directly to their parent and school communities.
3. Given that independent schools report to and are responsible to their community, an emphasis on fostering a sense of belonging, and listening and responding to the community in order to meet the needs of the community is at the very core of independent schools. Independent schools build this social capital within their own communities through the development of networks among families and organizations within the local and international communities, and through the values that underpin the formal curriculum.

Growth of enrolments in the independent sector

1. The enrolment share of students in non-government schools has been growing steadily over the last thirty years and as a result of this growth a greater proportion of the schools' workforce is employed in non-government schools. Indications are that this trend is likely to continue in the foreseeable future.
2. Over the period 1985 to 2013 enrolments in Australian schools grew by around 618,500 students. Of these enrolments, 318,597 or over 50 per cent were in independent schools.
3. ABS data indicates that much of the growth in the independent sector has been met through increasing the size of existing independent schools, with existing schools increasing the number of year levels offered, and the size of enrolment intakes across year levels. This is a reflection of the considerable lead time and outlay required to establish a new independent school. There is evidence of unmet demand in many areas of the independent sector with independent schools in many areas having waiting lists.
4. However, for the independent sector it is important not just to look at the historical trends in school enrolments, but also to examine projected enrolment change. Table 2 shows projected enrolment change across all sectors by primary and secondary level for the period 2013 – 2020. The estimates in this table are sourced from Department of Education enrolment projections

and ABS Schools Australia current 2013 data. These projections show the historical trend of the independent sector's increasing share of enrolments continuing.

Table 2: Projected enrolment change in all schools, 2013 - 2020

	2013	2020	Change (no.)**	Equivalent no. of new schools*
Government Schools				
Primary	1,462,201	1,663,847	201,646	570
Secondary	893,514	1,022,515	129,001	365
Total	2,355,715	2,686,363	330,648	935
Catholic Schools				
Primary	409,669	455,789	46,120	106
Secondary	338,910	397,879	58,969	135
Total	748,579	853,669	105,090	241
Independent Schools				
Primary	250,166	277,069	26,903	52
Secondary	270,145	340,461	70,316	137
Total	520,311	617,530	97,219	190
All Schools				
Primary	2,122,036	2,396,706	274,670	712
Secondary	1,502,569	1,760,856	258,287	669
Total	3,624,605	4,157,561	532,956	1,381

Source: DoE Projections and ABS *Schools Australia* 2013 (FT student enrolments)

*ISCA analysis based on average school size by sector for 2013 derived from ABS schools data.

** Note: Projections beyond 2015 impacted by shift of Year 7 from Primary to Secondary in WA & QLD

Enrolment growth implications

1. Based on Department of Education projections, by 2020 Australian schools will need to accommodate more than 533,000 additional enrolments. This is the equivalent of approximately 1,400 new schools.
2. Enrolment growth in independent schools is projected to continue to outpace government and Catholic school growth over the next ten years. These projections indicate that independent schools will need to accommodate an additional 97,000 students which equates to an additional 190 schools in the sector.
3. These projected enrolment figures have significant implications for the Australian Government and state and territory governments, education systems and providers. Not only will there be significant recurrent costs in educating this increase in enrolments, there will also need to be significant investment in capital infrastructure and human resources.

Student/teacher ratios

1. Generally, student to teaching staff ratios have decreased across all states and territories, school levels and sectors in the last four decades.

2. Several factors contributed to an increasing demand for teachers. These included expanded curriculum offerings, commitments to achieving smaller class sizes, especially in primary schools, and raising the minimum leaving age by state and territory governments, and the trend for greater numbers of students to participate in school education beyond the minimum leaving age.
3. In the independent sector student/teacher ratios have been reduced from 17.3 for primary students and 13.3 for secondary students in 1980 to 14.7 for primary students and 10.4 for secondary students in 2013. That ratios remain lower in the independent sector than in either the government or Catholic sector reflects on the diversity of school communities and the characteristics of the independent sector.
4. Historically for independent schools, employing teachers and maintaining reasonable student to teaching staff ratios has been a key component of a school's expenditure. In recent decades the costs of schooling have increased at a much greater rate than for many other services in the community as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or Average Weekly Earnings (AWE).
5. Government funding to independent schools represents only a proportion of income for most independent schools. For the majority of independent schools, the bulk of their income is raised from fees and other private sources.

It is, and will continue to be, a significant challenge for independent schools to ensure affordability of fees for the school community while also taking these upward cost pressures into account.

6. While the number of school teachers relative to students increased in recent times across all sectors, an ageing teaching workforce with many teachers nearing retirement has implications for how effectively the demand for school teachers can be met in the future.

Credentials of teachers in the sector

1. **Teachers within the independent schools sector are required to meet the same level of credentials as teachers in the Catholic and government sectors**, with certain requirements to be met before they can teach. The arrangements vary between states and territories but these requirements include appropriate qualifications, registration with the relevant authority, agreeing to abide by a Code of Ethics, and proficiency in the English language.
2. States and territories conduct criminal background checks before registering a teacher and have, or are developing, professional standards which all teachers working within the jurisdiction will need to meet.
3. Most states and territories have some provision allowing schools to employ teachers without formal teaching qualifications under certain circumstances such as specialist music tuition and other extracurricular activities.
4. **Beyond meeting these requirements, the sector seeks to facilitate and maintain high levels of teacher quality. The quality of teaching within a school affects student learning and results, and the school's reputation.**

A diverse sector requires teachers from a broad range of backgrounds

1. **Independent schools serve a broad range of students, reflecting the diversity of Australian society.** Independent school enrolments include students from a variety of regions, religions, social backgrounds and socio-economic circumstances. This includes students experiencing a range of educational disadvantage including students with disabilities, rural and remote students, indigenous students, students from a language background other than English and students with social, emotional and behavioural issues. Independent schools are also the major providers of boarding schools in Australia.
2. The inherent diversity of the independent sector is reflected in the attitudes schools have in relation to teacher employment issues. **Schools need to recruit teachers appropriate to their communities from a range of backgrounds and experiences** in order to meet the needs of their existing and growing enrolments.
3. **It is significant that, unlike other sectors, the responsibility for the selection and employment conditions of teaching staff in independent schools rests with the school itself.**
4. Teachers employed in an independent community school for Indigenous students in remote areas, or a special school for students with disabilities, or a school providing boarding facilities to rural and remote students, or a school committed to alternative learning environments all require a particular set of skills and knowledge in order to assist students to meet their educational goals.
5. In support of providing a rounded education, teachers in independent schools often have responsibilities that extend beyond delivery of the school's classroom curriculum to also include participation and supervision of extra-curricular activities. The expectation is that teachers will not only concentrate on teaching their subject but also on the development of individual students by contributing to the broader life of the school. Extra-curricular responsibilities, which may include pastoral care programmes, sporting commitments, tutor groups, cultural activities, outdoor education and other activities, often take place outside of 'normal school hours'; such as before and after school, evenings, on weekends, and during school holidays.
6. However, the vast majority of schools in the sector meet their teaching staff requirements by employing existing teachers from other schools and beginning teachers who have studied in and graduated from public universities alongside teachers who work in the Catholic and government sectors.
7. A significant proportion (65 percent) of independent schools are combined primary/secondary schools. **Many independent schools have structures that are different from the traditional primary/secondary divide**, such as schools offering early childhood education and middle school provision, and those following educational philosophies such as Montessori and Steiner schools.

A number of universities offer a range of teacher education courses based on the identification of a comprehensive list of areas of specialisations, including Early Childhood or Junior Primary, Middle School, Primary and Secondary as well as Special Needs and Vocational Education. However, many teacher education institutions continue to structure their programs around a

split between primary and secondary education training which goes back many decades. There is a case to review the appropriateness of this traditional divide in the light of educational developments over recent years. This may mean that schools will need to use a variety of structures to differentiate and make adjustments to address student learning needs and all students in a class may not be taught at the same level.

ISSUES

Selecting the right students for teacher education courses

1. A first step to strengthen and build on the quality, professionalism and respect for the teaching profession in Australia is to **focus on the methods and processes of selecting students to undertake initial teacher education courses**.
2. The independent sector believes that it is important that students from a range of diverse backgrounds and experiences are attracted to and retained in teacher education courses.
3. Currently a significant number of students entering undergraduate teacher education courses are recruited using their Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank (ATAR) as the main selection tool. Recent reports indicate it is evident that the number of students entering the profession with a low ATAR is rising and those with a high ATAR is falling².

While the ATAR is a relatively straight-forward and inexpensive way for universities to select students into teacher education courses, it may not be the best method to ensure the most appropriate, high quality and well prepared entrants.

4. Teaching is a profession that requires a broad range of skills, habits and attributes. In addition to learning ability and study skills, teachers must be able to develop good relationships with students and must have the capacity to adjust what occurs in the classroom to meet the needs of her or his students. An ATAR score alone does not provide an appropriate measure of these qualities.
5. It is well known that university admission to other highly skilled professions that require both a high degree of demonstrated learning ability in addition to intra- and inter-personal skills, such as medicine and related health sciences, often involves a process that is designed to complement the student's academic results.
6. It is likely that **prospective students applying for entry to an initial teacher education course would benefit from undertaking a far more flexible and broad ranging assessment of their skills, attributes and abilities** than a particular focus on their ATAR score. This process may involve an individual or group interview or perhaps an aptitude test that assesses the capabilities of students in terms of relationship building, problem solving, flexibility and ability to work with a range of cultures and ethnic backgrounds. There are a number of higher education providers of initial teacher education who are exploring or have already implemented this form of process.

² Ferrari, J. *Universities set a low bar on teaching*, 25 June 2014. www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/in-depth/universities-set-a-low-bar-on-teaching/story-fnd17met-1226965712060

7. While the cost of this more comprehensive and rigorous process may be higher than many current practices, **the long term to cost to the student, university, governments and society is even greater when poor selection and placements are made.**

Demand for increasing numbers of teachers

1. As outlined in the Background section above, school enrolment projections indicate that there will be continued growth in the independent sector.

These projected student enrolments over the coming decade provide a rough estimate of projected teacher demand requirements in the independent sector by levels of schooling.

2. The extra teachers required in the independent sector, at both primary and secondary level, in order to accommodate the projected extra enrolments is around 8,600 in total. This will increase the number of full time equivalent teachers in independent schools from over 43,000 currently to approximately 51,500 in 2020.

Flexibility is required to meet future staffing needs

1. **A degree of flexibility in attracting, sourcing and preparing teachers is required to enable schools to meet their future staffing needs.** Flexibility may be required to enable schools to fill gaps in their workforce due to the ageing workforce and retirements. This may involve the development and use of innovative programs that are appropriate to the diverse backgrounds and needs of students, schools and prospective teachers.
2. **It is important to ensure that appropriate pathways are offered to attract high quality and high achieving students into teacher training courses,** at both undergraduate and graduate levels. High quality students must include those with a depth of subject knowledge that has been gained in a first degree other than education.
3. **The independent sector welcomes government initiatives to attract talented, skilled and committed people from other professions to the teaching profession–** for example from industry, business, arts and music fields. These people bring with them a variety of career and life experiences that can enrich student learning and contribute to excellence in education.

Teacher Accreditation and Standards

3. ISCA is supportive of the ongoing work to embed a national system for the accreditation of pre-service teacher education programs and other work of seeking national consistency in teacher registration and professional standards.
4. ISCA is supportive of the general approach taken to introduce both the *Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures* and the *Australian Professional Standards for Teachers*. In particular, ISCA is supportive of the high level of expectations in these Standards for selection criteria and entry requirements for pre-service teacher education programs, and at each career stage for qualified teachers.
5. Given the challenges presented by the ageing of the overall teacher workforce, and the specific challenges to independent schools of significant enrolment growth, ISCA welcomes these initiatives to attract, develop and maintain a high quality future supply of teachers to meet the projected demand.

The professional experience

1. **A strong and positive professional learning experience component is a key element of training teachers. As student teachers apply their knowledge they begin to understand the classroom and if this is the profession for them.** Many of the integral elements of pre-service teacher education are not those that can be fully taught in a university lecture theatre; they need to be developed, over time, through on-the-job experience.
2. **The professional experience makes clear just how important are the broad range of skills, habits and attributes that teachers require.** Arguably this is the most critical aspect of teacher education. Professional experiences can be a resounding success for a student teacher or an abject failure. To some the professional experience is just rather bland and never really ignites the passion for teaching in the student teacher.
3. Teacher education providers have a responsibility to promote in all of their students an awareness of the diversity of school environments and to ensure that students have professional experience in as wide a range of school environments as possible. It can be an advantage for students to undertake their professional experience in a school setting that they will be employed in so that they can better understand the needs of their students and community.
4. Many schools in the independent sector have positive and long standing relationships with particular teacher education providers.

Several of the groups within the sector, including the Lutheran Education Australia (LEA), Christian Schools Australia (CSA), The Australian Association of Christian Schools (AACCS) and Adventist Schools Australia, as well as schools providing a particular curriculum or educational philosophy such as Montessori, Steiner, and the International Baccalaureate, have well established relationships with tertiary education institutions, to qualify existing or pre-service teachers to meet the group's particular needs.

5. However, it is also the case that schools may experience difficulties with the process of facilitating and supporting student professional experiences. **The crucial role of schools as key partners in providing an effective professional experience must be recognised.**
6. Issues can include:
 - student teachers who have been left to individually organise their own professional experience without university support
 - schools being asked to take on more students than they can reasonably be expected to adequately supervise and resource
 - student teachers who are ill-prepared for professional experience, such as lacking basic skills in a range of communication styles, classroom management, working with parents, understanding of school communities and cultures, personal presentation and subject content
 - poor support of student teachers and lack of oversight or personal visits by teacher education providers during the professional experience.

7. **Initial teacher education providers have a responsibility to work in cooperation with schools to adequately organise, structure and supervise the student teacher's professional experience.**
8. **A good professional experience needs an excellent and experienced teacher to supervise and mentor the student teacher.** Ideally the supervising teacher will be trained to supervise and assist the student teacher with preparation and take time to reflect on each lesson. Ideally schools would identify staff members who are best qualified to supervise student teachers and the university would train these staff. Where schools and a particular university have worked together over many years this often happens either intentionally or unintentionally as the school/university relationship has developed.
9. Greater integration is needed between teacher education providers and schools in order to address and overcome many of these issues. **Schools must be seen, and worked with inclusively, as partners in providing the professional experience.**
10. **Many schools have on-going and increasing concerns about the growing costs to their communities of facilitating and supporting teacher education professional experiences.** Specific funding, which may or may not be provided to schools for this purpose, rarely covers the cost of supervising students. The autonomous nature of independent schools means that each individual school community bears the extra costs that in other sectors may be provided by a central system authority.
11. It may be that **governments need to better recognise the financial and other material resources required by schools in order to facilitate appropriate, high quality professional experience components of initial teacher education.**

Progression through and graduation from teacher education courses

1. Anecdotally, **there is a perception** among many school communities **that once a student is enrolled in a teacher education course providers are reluctant to fail students** or require them to complete further work in order to demonstrate that they have reached the necessary standard of knowledge and skills. This perception relates to both the more knowledge based subject content and theoretical components of teacher education as well as the professional experience.
2. **Progression within and graduation from a teacher education course should be dependent on student teachers meeting robust and rigorous standards of achievement.**
3. The sector would welcome measures to ensure that teacher education providers focus on the learning outcomes of student teachers to ensure that graduate teachers have the required range of skills, habits and attributes to successfully begin work as teachers, and continue to develop and be retained in the profession.

Ongoing professional learning

1. **As an employing authority, independent schools have a strong interest in choosing wisely and looking after their staff.** Initial teacher education courses are really only the beginning of developing and nurturing teachers.

2. Ongoing professional learning is vital for teachers to be able to maintain their currency of information about teaching and learning as well as to improve levels of performance and student learning outcomes.
3. The teaching environment continues to grow in complexity with the increased use of information and communications technologies (ICT) within schools, the introduction of national and state based curriculum changes and requirements, provision of more co-curricular activities, responding to students with special needs, increasingly complex reporting requirements, heightened measures to ensure the safety of students, responding to students' and families' social and emotional needs, and many other activities and initiatives.
4. In such an environment, it is important that proactive measures are undertaken to support teachers in responding effectively to these changes. **Independent schools are aware that provision of ongoing professional learning enables their school community to attract, support and retain quality teachers.**
5. **Schools and Associations of Independent Schools place strong emphasis on the value of induction programmes for new teachers and ongoing professional learning. Schools invest considerable time and resources in providing and releasing teachers for ongoing professional learning to ensure a quality education for students.**

AISs provide support for schools and teachers by organising professional learning programs across a variety of issues. Many AISs have established dedicated centres for teacher quality and excellence in order to run these programs.

6. The support and mentoring provided to graduate teachers in their first years of teaching can be a key factor in their success and continuation in the profession. **Teacher education institutions can play an important role in supporting teachers in these early years in the profession.** The independent sector welcomes initiatives by teacher education providers that seek to support schools in guiding and mentoring early career teachers.

CONCLUSION

1. School communities in the independent sector place great value on their teachers. It is primarily through their classroom, specialist and support teachers that independent schools are able to provide opportunities for students to meet their and their family's educational goals.
2. The strong learning outcomes achieved in independent schools, including those operating at lower resource levels, rely on quality teaching, strong engagement of family and the school community in education, extra-curricular activities, a high value placed on education, and the autonomy of the school.
3. The independent sector supports consideration being given to policy settings that focus on:
 - ensuring initial teacher education providers enrol a broad range of high quality students through appropriate processes,
 - ensuring that those students have high quality university based theoretical learning and professional experiences,
 - ensuring that students have met rigorous, robust and transparent achievement standards in order to progress and graduate as teachers
 - ensuring that graduate teachers are ready to begin work in the profession.
4. The independent sector believes that well designed and implemented policy settings of this kind will help to strengthen and build on the quality, professionalism and respect for the teaching profession in Australia.
5. Schools in the independent sector seek to work with governments, educational bodies and school communities to address these challenges.

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11 July 2014