

# Media Statement

27 July 2017



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## Schools should not be singled out for political point scoring

The Independent school sector is increasingly concerned at a growing trend in the public discourse around school funding that focuses on the Independent sector, and more particularly on individual Independent schools, for inappropriate political point scoring.

Singling out individual schools in this way demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of Independent schools and how they are funded. The median fee for Independent schools is below \$5,000 per annum, making an Independent education readily affordable for a large range of families.

Around ten per cent of Independent schools fall into the so called *high fee* category, but it must be remembered that the schools charging the highest fees receive the lowest levels of public funding.

Some high fee schools have received additional funding under the new funding arrangements. ISCA analysis shows that a key driver of these increases is the changed funding arrangements for students with disability, which directs additional funding to students with disability requiring extensive adjustments.

Suggesting these students are undeserving of such funding increases demonstrates either a lack of understanding of the way that needs-based funding follows a student or, worse, a view that the parents of students with disability should not have access to the same choice of schooling as other parents.

Public figures that use Independent schools inappropriately to serve their own political ends forget that a school is not merely a building, it is a community made up of students, parents, teachers and support staff. Independent schools are major employers and make a significant contribution to the social and economic wellbeing of their local communities.

The Independent sector believes that all students, regardless of the sector they attend, should be supported with appropriate public funding and that the work of all schools in educating Australian students, especially those with high needs, should be recognised and applauded.

ENDS

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