

Media Release

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Independent schools funded according to need

The Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA) today responded to the Auditor-General ANAO report *Monitoring the Impact of Australian Government School Funding*, which makes it clear that Independent schools are meeting the Government's needs-based funding requirements.

ISCA Executive Director Colette Colman today said that, "When considering the findings of the report and its recommendations it is critical to note that the vast majority, 82 per cent, of Independent schools are not systemic, but stand-alone schools. These schools receive their funding directly from the Australian Government and there is no scope for reallocating that money. Schools receive their base funding and loadings to address educational disadvantage precisely in accordance with the needs-based funding formula."

A key focus of the audit report is school systems. A small proportion of Independent schools, 18 per cent or 196 in total, belong to Independent school systems. Catholic systems in Australia represent 1,689 schools.

The report highlights that the Department of Education and Training lacks processes to ensure appropriate transparency and monitoring of Australian Government funding for school systems. The ANAO also notes that the Department's requirements for Independent system authorities are not the same as their requirements for Catholic system authorities.

Ms Colman said that, "All Independent systems provided the Department of Education and Training with details of their needs-based funding arrangements or advised the Department that they did not undertake any redistribution. The report notes that 'on this basis, the department was satisfied that the independent system authorities had in place a needs-based funding arrangement that complied with the Act'".

While on average the majority of funding for Independent schools comes from parents, the Australian Government is the major public funder of Independent schools. Australian Government funding makes an important and valued contribution to the ongoing affordability and financial viability of Independent schools, particularly for low and medium fee schools which make up the majority of the sector. The ANAO report makes it clear that the government funding directed to Independent schools is allocated according to need.

Ms Colman went on to say that, "Given the significant levels of government funding for schools across all sectors, government, Catholic and Independent, there must be transparency and accountability for this funding for all schools".

ENDS

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