



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS
COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

Independent Update

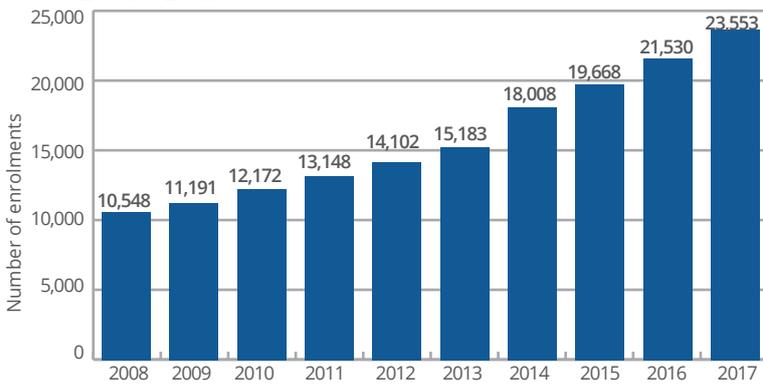
Number 10, 2018

Students with Disability

More and more parents are enrolling their children with disability in Independent schools.

In 2017 there were 23,553 students with disability enrolled in Independent schools, including independent Catholic schools, more than double the number of students with disability enrolled in 2008.

Students with disability in Independent schools, 2008 - 2017



Despite the unsatisfactory level of funding support for high needs students in Independent schools, the number of these student in Independent schools is significant and continues to increase annually.

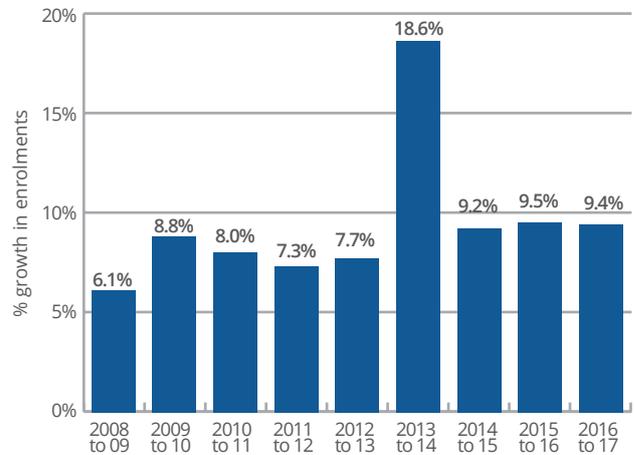
Australia-wide the growth in enrolments of students with disability has been greatest in mainstream Independent schools, which now account for some 81 per cent of students with disability in Independent schools, including those with high to very high support needs.

There is no shortage of students with disability seeking to attend Independent schools and no lack of will on the part of Independent schools to enrol them.

There has also been significant growth in the number of students enrolled in Independent special schools due to the number of such schools opening in the last 20

years. Sixty two new Independent special schools or campuses of existing schools opened during this time.

Growth in enrolment of students with disabilities in Independent schools, 2008-2017



Students with disability in Independent schools, 2017

Students with disability	23,553
Special schools	111

Funding for students with disability

Students with disability enrolled in Independent schools do not receive the same level of additional funding as their counterparts in government schools.

In 2017 the loading for students with disability was changed from a flat loading to a differentiated loading based on the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) data collection. The loading settings for students with disability from 2018 are now significantly different to the settings used between 2014 to 2017.

Comparison between SWD loadings

2014 to 2017 loadings	Loading to be used from 2018
186 per cent for students with a disability attending a mainstream school	Primary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplementary 42 per cent • Substantial 146 per cent • Extensive 312 per cent
223 per cent for students with a disability attending a special school	Secondary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplementary 33 per cent • Substantial 116 per cent • Extensive 248 per cent

The primary percentages are higher than the secondary to bring the total amounts into alignment when multiplied by the primary and secondary SRS amounts i.e. the loading amounts will be similar regardless of whether the student is a primary student or a secondary student.

The NCCD data collection is a relatively new collection and has not previously been used for funding. From 2018 the Australian Government has incorporated the NCCD data collection for non-government schools into the Non-Government Schools Census and the NCCD will be subject to the same audit processes.

Under the Schooling Resource Standard (SRS) funding model implemented in 2014, and amended in 2017, not all students at the same level of adjustment will initially attract the same funding as the funding model is being transitioned in over time

While the transition is in place across all sectors, in the government and Catholic sectors, systemic allocative mechanisms mean that funding can be targeted at students anywhere in the system. This is not the case in Independent schools where government funding is provided directly to the individual school. This inequity is of considerable concern to the Independent school sector.

Governments should provide adequate funding to meet the educational needs of all students with disability, no matter which school they attend.

Social and legal responsibility

The obligations on schools to enrol and educate students with disability are governed by the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and its' associated Education Standards, in addition to state and territory-based legislation.

Parents have the right to select a school of their choice. Schools must enrol students regardless of the level of supplementary assistance that may be available, unless they can categorically prove undue hardship due to the enrolment of a student with a disability.

As autonomous entities, most Independent schools cannot rely on support from a systemic school authority to provide additional resources to meet the needs of increasing numbers of students with special needs. Independent schools educate many students with disability, as well as students with social, behavioural or emotional issues or other educationally disadvantaged students and students who need special support.

Where Independent schools are not adequately resourced by governments to meet their legislated obligations, the cost of meeting the special education needs of students with disability largely falls to individual families and school communities. The funding differential is greater for students with high-level support needs who may require, for example, a full-time aide or Auslan interpreter. Students with disability in Independent schools may also be denied access to a range of essential government services and resources such as physiotherapy, speech therapy, transport and Braille texts that are available to students in government schools.

Addressing educational disadvantage

The Independent sector makes a large contribution to addressing educational disadvantage through its special schools and Special Assistance Schools which provide alternative education settings for students with high-level needs. Parents should be able to choose a non-mainstream educational environment if they consider it is the best option for their child.

Independent Special Assistance Schools which cater for students with severe social, emotional and behavioural issues make a significant contribution to schooling in Australia. These schools serve young people who are disengaged from education and whose needs are not met by mainstream education. They are often referred from community services, juvenile justice and other schools both government and non-government. Special Assistance Schools have developed specially adapted programs and structures designed to re-engage students in education and prepare them for further training and employment.

Students with disability require additional support because of the nature of their disability, not because of the school they attend.