

Media Release

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Independent Schools
Council of Australia

NCOA Attempts to Re-define Schooling Responsibility

The National Commission of Audit (NCOA) recommendation to hand total responsibility for all school funding management to state and territory governments would be a retrograde step, according to Independent Schools Council of Australia Executive Director, Mr Bill Daniels.

“Independent school funding is a complex mix of responsibilities between the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments and parents and having a range of funding models individually decided by states and territories would be a challenge to the independent school sector. This proposal is unwieldy and creates even greater uncertainty than the current unsatisfactory funding arrangements”, Mr Daniels said.

“It needs to be recognised that state and territory governments are not only providers of public schools but they also regulate and compete with non-government schools. There needs to be a clear separation between the allocation of Commonwealth funds and state government responsibilities”, he said.

“We understand the desire of the Commission to minimise duplication and clarify the responsibilities for school education, including for school performance and outcomes. However stability and certainty about the levels of public funding are essential for the effective and efficient operation of independent schools, as is transparency”, Mr Daniels said.

“The independent sector has always strongly valued its direct funding relationship with the Australian Government and has done so for more than 40 years”, he said.

“ISCA is pleased that the NCOA has recognised that school funding needs to be maintained and indexed each year, however school cost drivers may not be adequately addressed by a simple weighted average of consumer price and wage price indexation arrangements as suggested”, Mr Daniels said.

“We will work closely with the Australian Government in the coming months to explore the feasibility of an alternative funding arrangement for independent schools that is nationally consistent, rather than to have each of the states and territories determine funding allocations for individual independent schools”, he said.

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