

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
05 April 2017



Independent schools funded at half the rate of government schools

The Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA) has today responded to recent analysis regarding the growth of Independent school funding. The latest government figures show that on average government schools are publicly funded at around twice the amount of Independent schools.

ISCA Executive Director Colette Colman said that, “Students attending Independent schools receive significantly less funding than government school students, with the majority of funding for Independent school students coming from after-tax private contributions by parents and school communities.”

The most recently available government data (2014-15) shows the average government recurrent funding per student to government schools to be \$16,670, while the average government funding to Independent schools is around half that at \$8,450 per student.

Ms Colman also said that, “Independent schools have seen a growth in government funding over the last decade. This is a reflection of the changing demographics in the Independent sector. The bulk of enrolment growth in Independent schools has been in low-fee schools serving less advantaged communities, and enrolments of students with special needs has been growing at four times the rate of overall enrolment growth. Increases in government funding to Independent schools is therefore a clear demonstration of needs based funding at work.”

Independent schools reflect the social and economic diversity of Australia. 90 per cent of Australian Independent schools are low to medium fee establishments, with the median fee of an Independent school in 2015 being less than \$4,900.

Independent schools also cater to specific groups of disadvantaged students including: high needs students with disability attending special schools; Indigenous students attending remote 100 per cent Indigenous schools; and highly disadvantaged youth who have been excluded from both government and non-government schools attending Independent special assistance schools.

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