

Philip Grutzner National Forum Opening Address

Good morning everyone,

Before we begin today's proceedings, I would like to acknowledge the Ngunnawal people, who are the traditional custodians of the land in this Canberra area, and pay respect to their elders, past and present, and to all of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

My name is Philip Grutzner. I am the Principal of Carey Grammar, Melbourne and have the pleasure of serving on the Boards of the Independent Schools Council of Australia and Independent Schools Victoria.

At short notice I am standing in for the Chair of ISCA, Steven Bowers. Regrettably Steven had an emergency eye procedure yesterday and is unable to be here.

I am pleased to report that Steven has informed me his eye is going to be fine and he asked me to pass his best wishes onto all of you.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you and open the 2018 ISCA & AHISA National Education Forum.

I would like to acknowledge the Secretary of

the Australian Department of Education and Training, Dr Michele Bruniges;

ISCA and AHISA Board members;

AHISA's National Chair, Dr Mark Merry,

AHISA Chief Executive Officer Beth Blackwood;

ISCA Executive Director Colette Colman;

representatives of Associations of Independent Schools;

representatives of State and National education organisations;

and representatives from an extensive range of Independent schools across Australia.

This is the fourth National Education Forum ISCA and AHISA have presented together.

Our respective organisations have a successful tradition of collaboration and partnership...

of playing different, yet complementary roles in advocating for Independent schooling in a coherent and consistent manner,

of promoting and enabling quality educational outcomes,

and being positive partners in matters such as the quality of teaching and learning programs and the quality of teachers, as examples of a wide range of shared national schooling issues.

Since the National Council of Independent Schools, the NCIS, was established in 1970, Australia's educational landscape has undergone significant change.

The NCIS is now called ISCA, and the expanded role of the Commonwealth government in school education, along with the sustained growth of the Independent sector, are major developments which have influenced the nature of schooling and education outcomes for children in Australia.

Forty-eight years ago, the Independent sector consisted of 400 schools and 114,000 students; four per cent of total school enrolments.

Today, the Independent sector has over 1,100 schools and well over 600,000 students, representing 15.2 per cent of total school enrolments.

And today our students are considerably more diverse... the sector provides for students of all abilities, including students with special needs, and serves a wide range of communities from remote and disadvantaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, through to socially, culturally and ethnically diverse communities.

The Independent school sector is today a major contributor not only to education in Australia, but to the nation's overall economic and social well-being. For example, our sector each year:

- Saves governments \$4.6 billion through parental and school community contributions to the cost of education in Independent schools

- We directly employ 91,000 staff

- We contribute wages and salaries of \$6.5 billion

and

- We produce \$1.4 billion in PAYG tax

The Independent sector is an integral part of the Australian schooling landscape... and ISCA plays a major role in the development of national education policy objectives.

We approach this in a collaborative and considered way through our secretariat in Canberra and through member Associations of Independent Schools in every State and Territory.

It is our objective that all future Governments continue to recognize the economic and educational diversity of our schools and the role of Independent schools in offering choice to parents and the delivery of quality education to a wide and diverse range of students.

The theme of this year's Forum is "*A National Perspective.*" And, in the two years since our last forum, there have been many shifts in that perspective.

The last election in July 2016 saw the Federal Government returned with just a one-seat majority. This has had an impact on the dynamics of the government, political discourse and the political environment generally.

There have been significant structural changes to school funding following last year's amendments to the Australian Education Act.

The intention of these changes was that all non-government schools would move over time to a consistent Commonwealth share of funding of 80 per cent of a school's SRS and at least 20 per cent of a school's SRS of state or territory funding.

The Independent sector has supported changes to funding arrangements which move towards the consistent treatment of all schools in the non-government sector.

A further significant change this year is the move to differentiated loadings for students with disability utilising the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on Students with Disability.

This is based on teacher judgement to assess the adjustments students receive in the classroom. It is bringing the NCCD, and consideration of the needs of students with disability at all levels, into everyday school practice.

More recently we have seen the recommendations from the National School Resourcing Board's Report on its Review of the SES.

It is still too early to accurately assess the impact of the report, there are many unanswered questions and issues to be resolved.

But ISCA will be actively engaged in continuing to examine the recommendations.

We will work with the Government on ensuring their appropriateness, validity and applicability to Independent schools prior to any implementation.

Another Federal election is approaching. In the lead up to this election ISCA and AHISA will continue to represent the interests of our schools. We will work for fair, equitable, and consistent funding for all schools across the non-government sector.

Today, we have an impressive program of speakers.

We are pleased to welcome many respected political leaders.

- The Minister for Education and Training, Senator the Honourable Simon Birmingham;
- The Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Bill Shorten MP,
- the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Education and Training, the Honourable Tanya Plibersek MP;
- Unfortunately the Australian Greens' Spokesperson for Education, Senator Sarah Hanson-Young has withdrawn at short notice and is unable to be here.

We will also hear from the esteemed David Gonski AC who will share with us some of his expertise on governance and how it might apply to the schooling context in the future.

We welcome Lisa Rogers from AISTL. Lisa will discuss building and sustaining effective teaching and leadership across all education systems;

This afternoon the Public Relations specialist, Trevor Young, will explore the impact and influence of social media on school communications,

We will then moderate a panel discussion with school leaders on some real world experiences; and,

tonight after dinner, we will hear from world-renowned British leader, innovator and former Principal, Richard Gerver.

Richard will share his thought provoking insights into change, leadership and education.

I look forward to some insightful and robust discussion today as well as to catching up with colleagues from the many areas of our diverse sector.

It's a pleasure to see so many of you here, thank you for coming.

I welcome you all on behalf of ISCA and AHISA... and trust that you will find this Forum provocative, enjoyable and stimulating.

To introduce our various speakers throughout the day and guide you through some of the practicalities of this Forum, our Master of Ceremonies is Richard Morecroft.

Richard is perhaps best known for his twenty years as the presenter of the ABC's nightly TV news in Sydney— and more recently as the host of SBS's popular quiz show, *Letters and Numbers*.

We're delighted that Richard is joining us today, so please join me in welcoming him.