



Independent Schooling in Australia Core Messages 2010

Independent schools contribute to Australia's quality schooling provision

- Independent schools play an important role in the provision of high quality school education in Australia. Nearly 15 per cent of Australian school students attend independent schools and enrolments continue to grow steadily.
- Independent schools reflect the diversity of the wider Australian community, covering a range of religious affiliations and educational philosophies or serving the needs of individuals or groups, such as students with disabilities and Indigenous students.
- Parents want choice to ensure their children have the best schooling experience possible. Independent schools help meet this demand for diversity and choice.

How governments can support choice and diversity in Australian schooling

- Government funding arrangements should recognise and encourage the significant financial investment parents make in their children's education at independent schools through the payment of school fees, fundraising and donations.
- All school students should be eligible for a basic grant to support their school education, with additional needs-based funding which recognises the range of educational needs of students.
- Students with disabilities should receive increased funding to ensure their educational needs are met no matter which school they attend.
- Government grants for students in independent schools should be indexed annually to keep pace with the rising costs of schooling.

- All schools should experience stability and predictability in government funding to ensure the ongoing provision of quality schooling.
- No independent school student should be worse off, and no independent school should be disadvantaged if governments change their funding arrangements.
- The Australian Government should acknowledge that grants to independent schools and their students work most efficiently and effectively when there is an ongoing direct funding relationship guaranteed in legislation.

Government support for independent schools is an equitable and efficient use of taxpayer money

- Independent schools support transparency, accountability and proper reporting of any public monies they receive.
- Independent schools are not-for-profit organisations with a proven track record in effective and efficient management of government programs for schools.
- Independent schools contribute significantly to the cost of educating their students: Government grants to independent schools students are on average less than half the government expenditure on students in government schools; some schools receive less than 20 percent. In independent schools families bridge the funding gap through fees and fundraising.
- Independent schools support quality school education in Australia at great savings to the taxpayer: a significant proportion of independent school income comes from families. Any government support for independent schools, including building grants, is an effective way to stretch the value of available public dollars for schooling.