

Media Release

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Independent schools express concerns about SES review

The Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA) has expressed serious concern about recent media reports that prematurely speculate about the potential recommendations of the *Review of the socio-economic status (SES) score methodology* being undertaken by the National Schools Resourcing Board (NSRB).

ISCA Executive Director Colette Colman today said that, "If changes to the current SES methodology are recommended by the Review, a major priority for the Independent sector will be seeing a compelling evidence-based argument as to why the current methodology is inadequate."

Ms Colman added that, "ISCA would be keen to understand how the Board considered or assessed the 'strengths and limitations' of the current SES methodology, particularly against the Board's own guiding principles that any new methodology be fit-for-purpose, transparent and reliable. The Independent sector would expect that any proposed alternative would be demonstrably better against all these principles than the current methodology."

While strongly supporting the current SES methodology, the Independent sector put forward in its submissions to the Review options for possible refinements or alternatives. The [ISCA submission](#) noted that "this Review may be an opportune time to revisit the settings of the SES methodology, including the income levels used in the calculation, to see if the settings are still relevant and/or could be further refined to produce more accurate SES scores."

ISCA also highlighted that any proposed alternative options will need to be subject to testing, piloting and validation, as well as contain appropriate safeguards for the protection and use of personal data of families.

Ms Colman said that, "Any alternative options proposed by the Review will require significant additional work over an extensive period of time to ensure their validity for and applicability to all non-government schools, and to undertake detailed modelling as to how any recommendations of the review may impact individual schools."

Until this work is completed, all recommendations in respect to options put forward would involve the provision of such significant caveats, that commitment to a particular option would be difficult for any government.

"This Review is an extremely high stakes issue for the sector," added Ms Colman, "Particularly given that the vast majority of Independent schools will be impacted at the individual school level without any possibility of mitigation by systemic redistribution."

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