



Reflecting Community Needs

Independent schools are established and developed through community groups to meet particular local schooling needs.

The *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* provides an overarching framework for schooling to ensure the education of young Australians is in the national interest. It is a framework that allows individual needs and aspirations to be recognised and accommodated within wider societal purposes.

Independent schools reflect the diversity of the wider Australian community, covering a range of religious affiliations and educational philosophies and serving the needs of individuals or groups such as students with disabilities and Indigenous students.

All schools, government, Catholic and Independent, contribute to the common good by providing school education to Australian students.

Schools provide a benefit to individuals by equipping students with skills and knowledge to prepare them for life and employment, and a benefit to society by providing students with skills and knowledge to contribute to the social and economic development of the nation.

Diverse needs - diverse schools

Diversity of schooling options recognises the responsibility of parents to educate their children, and their right to an active role in determining the kind of education their children receive.

Australian parents also strongly believe that education is important to the development of their children. They expect schools to encourage their children's talents to flourish, and to help their children acquire the skills and attitudes that will equip them for a happy and prosperous future.

If young Australians are to achieve to the best of their ability then we need diversity in schooling options.

Independent Schools Sector Diversity 2015

Indigenous Students	12,003
Independent schools with 50%+ of Indigenous enrolment	39
Students with disabilities	19,668
Special schools	80
Overseas students	6,305
Boarding students	16,055
Boarding schools	146
Schools with less than 200 students	38%
Schools with 200 -1,000 students	43%
Schools with 1,000—2,000 students	17

Independent schools serve a diverse range of students across all socio-economic and socio-educational backgrounds. They offer choice for young Australians to be educated in schools with a diversity of cultural, religious and educational philosophies.

Some Independent schools are large, multi-campus schools that have been established for many years and over time have built up excellent facilities.

Some Independent schools are very small schools in remote areas serving Indigenous communities where education is seen as an important part of the right to be self-determining and a means to overcome severe disadvantage.

Independent schools add to the education choices available to Australian children, while sharing common national goals and values with other schools.

Diversity in schools reflects Australia's social and cultural diversity

Independent schools offer the choice for young Australians to be educated in schools that express the cultural and religious plurality of our society or espouse specific educational philosophies.

Most Independent schools are affiliated with Christian denominations. There are also Jewish and Islamic schools, schools that promote a particular philosophy of education such as the Montessori and Steiner schools, and schools that serve particular community groups, such as Indigenous community schools.

Most schools are co-educational - 88 per cent; some are single sex, 7 per cent are girls schools and 5 per cent are boys schools.

Eighty are classified as special schools serving students with special learning needs.

Affiliation of Independent schools 2015

Affiliation	Schools	Student FTE	%
Anglican	155	147,388	25.1%
Non-Denominational	194	80,082	13.6%
Christian Schools	140	62,728	10.7%
Uniting Church in Australia	45	50,861	8.7%
Catholic	55	43,538	7.4%
Lutheran	86	40,225	6.9%
Islamic	40	29,917	5.1%
Baptist	40	20,460	3.5%
Inter-Denominational	26	19,607	3.3%
Seventh Day Adventist	46	12,521	2.1%
Presbyterian	14	10,391	1.8%
Jewish	18	9,029	1.5%
Steiner School	44	8,273	1.4%
Pentecostal	15	7,716	1.3%
Assemblies of God	11	6,130	1.0%
Brethren	9	4,803	0.8%
Montessori School	36	4,546	0.8%
Greek Orthodox	8	3,780	0.6%
Other Catholic	8	3,463	0.6%
Other Orthodox	5	1,959	0.3%
Other Religious Affiliation*	12	5,811	1.0%
Other**	85	13,622	2.3%

*Other Religious Affiliation includes Churches of Christ, Ananda Marga, Hare Krishna and Society of Friends

**Other includes special schools, international schools, Indigenous schools, and community schools.

My School data shows that government, Catholic and Independent schools educate a broad range of students from all socio-economic backgrounds.

Eighty-two per cent of the more than 19,600 students with disabilities in Independent schools are enrolled in mainstream schools. Enrolments of students with disabilities have more than doubled in the last decade.

Independent schools service communities in diverse locations across Australia - 69 per cent are in metropolitan areas, 28 per cent are in provincial areas and 3 per cent are in remote locations.

In a number of locations, Independent schools are the sole providers of education to remote communities.

Over 12,000 Indigenous students are enrolled in 805 Independent schools; this represents more than seventy percent of the Independent schools in Australia.

There are 146 schools that have boarding facilities to cater for students from regional and remote areas.

Australian Council for Educational Research has shown that non-government schools have a greater share of students with a Language Background Other Than English in 6 out of the 8 states and territories.

My School data shows that Independent schools do not educate students from specific sections of society, rather Independent schools draw their enrolments from the full spectrum of socio-economic status. The majority of Independent schools are located in middle to low SES scores and have a socio-educational profile similar to schools in other educational sectors.

Contribution to educational funding

The decision by parents to educate their child in the Independent sector makes a significant contribution to their children's schooling. It represents a partnership between non-government schools and parents which provides a major contribution to the funding effort for Australian schools.

Parental and community investment in schooling is estimated to be 20 per cent of total expenditure on schooling in Australia.