


# THE SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS IN AUSTRALIA



**mccrindle**



**INDEPENDENT  
SCHOOLS  
AUSTRALIA**



Independent Schools Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and recognises the continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay respect to Elders past and present, and commit to the ongoing journey of reconciliation.

**2023**

**Independent Schools Australia**

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

For the purpose of this project, social contribution has been defined as the positive effect an organisation has on its stakeholders and members, and on the broader community. Our Independent schools, parents, students and educators see and experience these positive impacts every day. Independent Schools Australia is pleased therefore, to provide this research and to help better define and articulate the value and contribution of Independent schooling to education and the social good.

The report demonstrates the remarkable diversity of the Independent school sector, with over 1200 schools serving almost 690,000 students across Australia's geographically dispersed, socially mixed, multicultural, and multi-faith community. It highlights too the importance of developing essential values, capacities and skills in young people that go beyond the curriculum.

In 2022, Independent Schools Australia commissioned McCrindle to research the social contribution that Independent schools make to Australian society. Parents and Independent schools across Australia were invited to participate, and to explore how their schools contribute to society and positively impact local, national and global communities.

The response was overwhelming, and was in itself a positive and tangible demonstration of the engagement within our schools and the sector.

Independent school education encourages young people to be life-long learners, to have purpose, meaning and direction in their lives and be a valuable contributor to society.

Our research represented an opportunity to tell the story of how an Independent education provides value to families, equips and enables students to be actively engaged in and contribute to their communities, and how schools serve those communities and society well beyond the education they provide to students.

Thank you to all those who took up this opportunity, and have added to our knowledge and understanding. At a time when there are many challenges facing education, we hope that the insights in this report make a contribution to the important national discussion of education for the future.

## **Graham Catt**

Chief Executive Officer - Independent Schools Australia



Independent Schools Australia is the national peak body for Independent schools in Australia.

# EXPLORING THE WAYS INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS ENGAGE BEYOND THE CURRICULUM

Independent Schools Australia commissioned this report to unpack the social contribution of Independent schools in Australia – that is, the way Independent schools are having a positive effect on their students and families, and on the broader community.

Independent schools played an important role during the COVID pandemic in supporting their local communities and navigating education provision during lockdowns and stringent health measures. In 2023 the world is more polarised than ever; there is great social unrest across the globe; mental health challenges continue to rise; and tens of millions remain hungry and in need.

It is clear from this research, that in the post pandemic world, the contribution that Independent schools make to communities is more important than ever. Independent schools seek to achieve this by raising good people – graduates who are not just taught to get high marks or equipped to get into their preferred university, but to develop people who are kind, who have good character, who are guided by a strong moral compass, who are committed to making a difference to those around them.

This report, commissioned by Independent Schools Australia, captures the breadth in which Independent schools engage beyond their academic curriculum and tells the story of Independent schools who have accepted the responsibility of shaping young leaders and citizens. The report explores the different social initiatives of Independent schools, the volunteering and fundraising efforts, the narratives of students and families, as well as some of the many opportunities provided throughout a student's education.

More impactfully, this report explores the ways in which Independent schools are presently contributing to society – raising up a generation of difference-makers and global citizens that will continue to shape the fabric of Australia in decades to come.

## **Mark McCrindle**

Founder and Principal, McCrindle





# EXPLORING THE SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

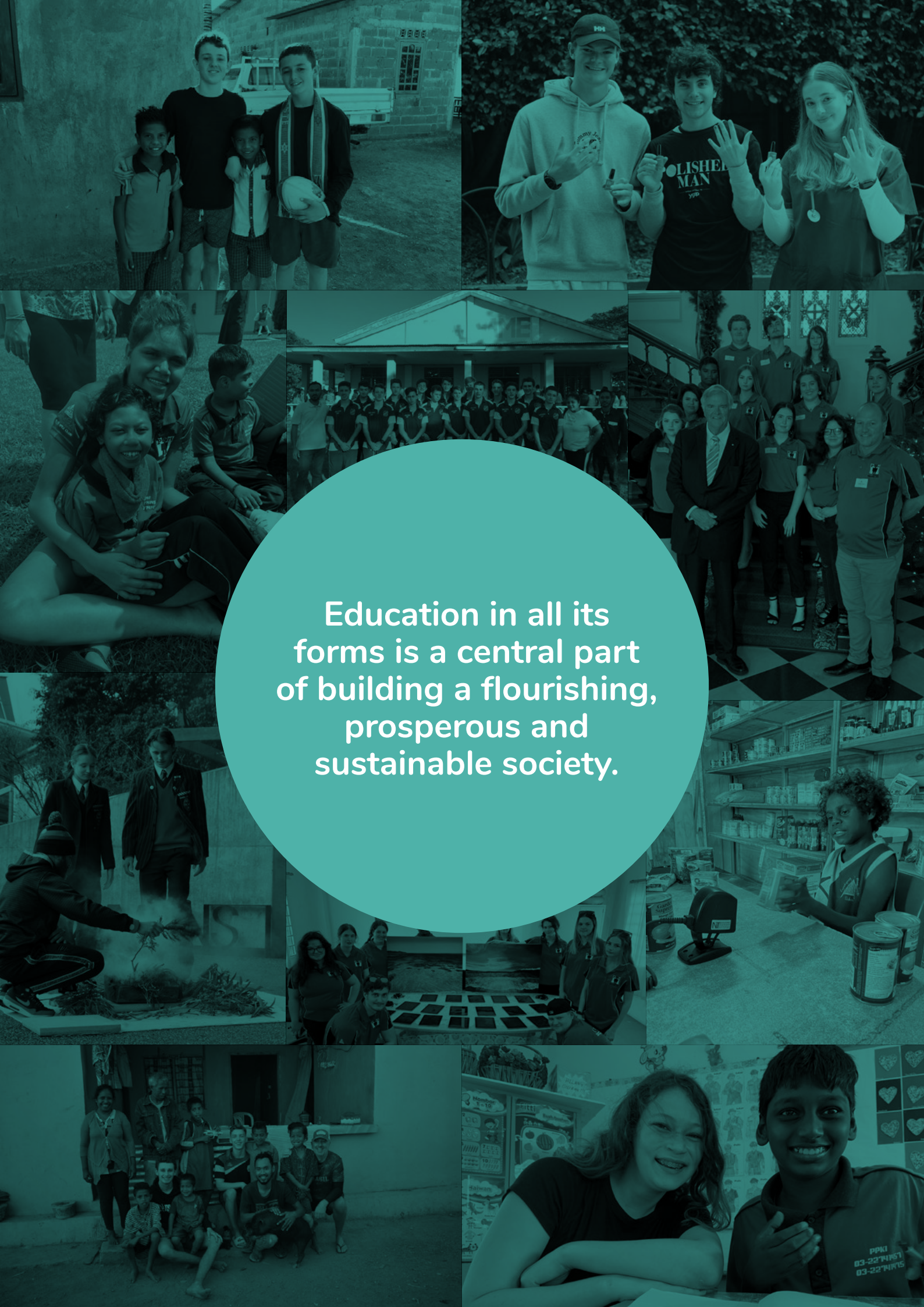
Education in all its forms is a central part of building a flourishing, prosperous and sustainable society. Schools, teachers, education leaders, policy makers, parents and community members across all sectors are invested in making meaningful social contributions through education.

Independent Schools Australia has commissioned this research to measure and articulate the ways in which Independent schools, in their diverse contexts, contribute to the wider community now and into the future. This research seeks to:

- Understand the ways Independent schools serve their local, national and global communities and the social benefit they provide
- Recognise and articulate the positive impact Independent schools have on students, parents and families
- Explore the experiences of Independent school graduates and their contribution to society after their education.

This report is a collation of insights and data from primary research and supplementary sources. The primary research in this project consisted of two parts. The first, a Parents Insights Survey, was an online survey of parents with a child/children attending an Independent school. A second survey, the School Insights Survey, was distributed to Independent schools across Australia through the state and territory Independent school associations. For methodology and sources included throughout this report please see pages 52 and 53.

Beyond the data, however, this report describes the positive impact Independent schools have every day on their students, and communities. This story is key to understanding the role played by Independent schools in their communities.



Education in all its forms is a central part of building a flourishing, prosperous and sustainable society.

# THE IMPACT OF THE INDEPENDENT SECTOR IN AUSTRALIA



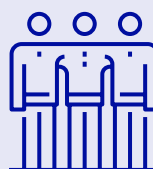
## Graduates leave equipped for a global future

Independent school parents believe their child's school is **extremely or very effective** at:

**62%** - developing a global outlook among its students

**50%** - preparing their students for increased global mobility

**48%** - preparing their child for an uncertain global future



# 74%

74% of Independent school parents believe that their child's school is highly intentional in promoting acceptance, respect and inclusivity.



## Independent schools contribute to education nationally

Independent schools contribute to the education sector by:



Supporting initial teacher education practicums



Sharing school resources (e.g. curriculum, programs)



Conducting interschool staff professional development sessions



Contributing to education curriculum and program development and policy making



More than four in five Independent schools (85%) who participated in the recent School Insights Survey, are providing scholarships or bursaries to students in need.





## Social contribution extends beyond the school and into the broader community



Nine in ten parents (91%) agree their Independent school has a positive impact on their community.



Independent schools actively promote volunteering with **nine in ten Independent schools** encouraging volunteering among students (92%). Over **four in five Independent schools** also promote volunteering among staff members (85%) and **three in four schools** (76%) encourage parents to volunteer through programs and initiatives.



Independent school students continue to serve their community after graduating, with **two in five graduates** (42%) having volunteered in the last 12 months.



**Four in five Independent school parents** (80% strongly/somewhat) agree that their child's school encourages them to become better citizens and contributors to society.



## Parent engagement is fostered and families are supported

Parents find the following ways their Independent schools supports their parenting as **extremely or very valuable**:

**85%** - Being informed of their child's progress

**79%** - Having access to advice from teachers and school leaders

**78%** - Parent-teacher meetings

**77%** - Mental health and wellbeing resources and sessions

**75%** - Bullying information sessions



Nine in ten parents (91%) agree their child's school fosters and promotes parent engagement.



Nine in ten parents (93%) agree their Independent school has had a positive impact on their family.



## The holistic development of each student is highly valued

Independent school parents believe that their child's school is **extremely or very effective** at developing important life skills, such as:



**79%**  
Communication



**72%**  
Innovation



**75%**  
Critical thinking



**72%**  
Self-management



**75%**  
Problem-solving



**72%**  
Adaptability



**64%**

64% of Independent school graduates feel somewhat or very prepared by their school to find purpose, meaning and direction in life.



**71%**  
Life-long learning



# DEVELOPING GLOBAL CITIZENS

Independent schools understand the importance of teaching students to be global citizens who have the ability to make a positive difference to others and to their communities. Independent schools educate young people for a globally connected world, by developing strong moral values, an interest in the world and equipping them with necessary skills to navigate current and future challenges.

In the book, *Generation Alpha: Understanding our children and helping them thrive*, Mark McCrindle and Ashley Fell describe Generation Alpha (children born between 2010 and 2014) as "the most globally minded generation, the most culturally diverse and the most connected [generation]. They are globally invested, connected and influenced."<sup>1</sup>



**“Generation Alpha will be the most globally minded generation, the most culturally diverse and the most connected generation.”**

**MARK McCRINDLE**  
Founder and Principal, McCrindle

## Independent schools reflect a globally connected world.

Independent schools across Australia recognise and encourage the diversity in their school communities through various initiatives and events. This includes engaging in cultural events, celebrating different cultures and lived experiences, partnering with the wider community and promoting cultural awareness as a core value. It is a feature of their success that 84% of parents from Independent schools also value the cultural diversity of their child's school.

### WAYS INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS ARE CELEBRATING AND ENCOURAGING CULTURAL DIVERSITY AMONG THEIR SCHOOL COMMUNITY:



**Engaging in cultural events**



**Celebrating different cultures**



**Partnering with wider community and cultural organisations**



**Promoting cultural awareness as an important value**

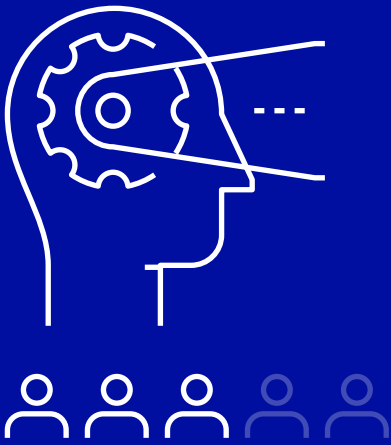


## Independent schools foster acceptance, respect and inclusivity.

Independent schools understand their role in fostering values that promote and celebrate diversity. These efforts are recognised by Independent school parents, with three in four (74%) crediting their school as being extremely or very intentional in creating inclusive school communities. The result is students who are open-minded and accepting of others.



**Three in four Independent school parents (74%) credit their schools as being extremely or very intentional in developing acceptance, respect and inclusivity among their students.**



Three in five Independent school parents (62%) believe their child's school is extremely or very effective at developing a global outlook among its students.

### Independent schools develop globally minded students.

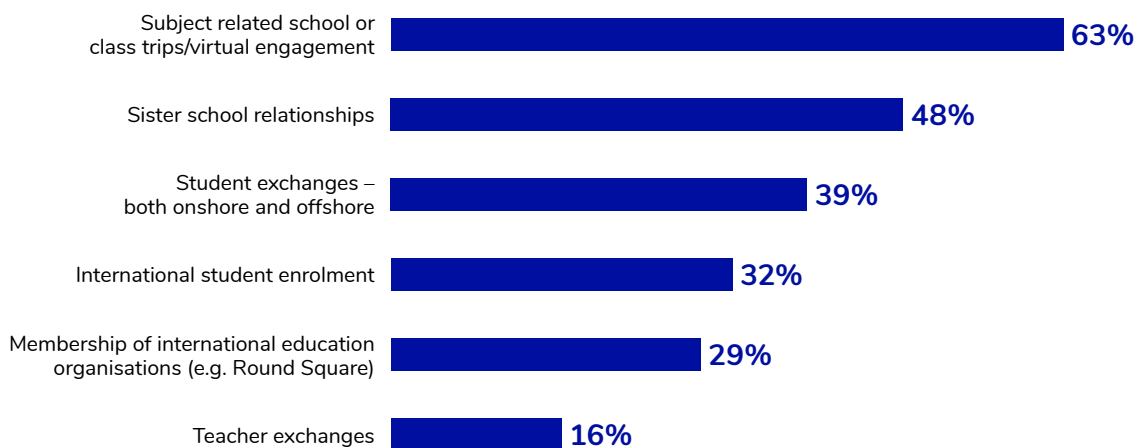
Independent schools play an increasingly critical role of preparing students to thrive in a globally connected world. By going beyond their academic curriculum and developing international partnerships with charities, overseas schools and other organisations, Independent schools equip students to make an extensive social impact beyond the national context.

Seven in ten parents (71%) of children in Independent schools strongly or somewhat agree their child's school develops students with a global perspective and are effective at developing a global outlook among students (62% extremely/very effective).

Three in five Independent schools (62%) encourage students and staff to participate in global action. The most common ways Independent schools foster global engagement are through subject-related school or class trips, in person and/or virtually (63%). Additionally, sister-school relationships are a frequent channel for international engagement, with just under half of Independent schools (47%) having an overseas sister school. Student exchanges (39%) and teacher exchanges (15%) also serve as ways in which schools encourage an international perspective within its community. For close to a third of Independent schools, international student enrolment (31%) and membership of international education organisations (28%) also promote global awareness for their students and staff.

### HOW DOES YOUR SCHOOL ENCOURAGE STUDENTS AND STAFF TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS, INITIATIVES OR OTHER OPPORTUNITIES RELATING TO GLOBAL AWARENESS?

% of Independent schools



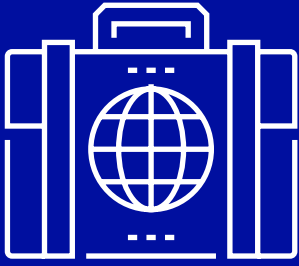


### **Independent schools prepare students for an uncertain global future.**

In an increasingly complex, and at times, uncertain global future, it is perhaps even more crucial that Independent schools develop a sense of global mindedness in their students. Two in five Independent school parents (38%) believe their child will face global uncertainty in the future. Positively, however, 46% of parents also believe their child's school is extremely or very effective at preparing their child for an uncertain global future, with an additional 37% believing their school is somewhat effective in this. Further, half of Independent school parents (50%) believe their child's school is extremely or very effective at preparing their students for increased global mobility (the ability to live and work overseas).



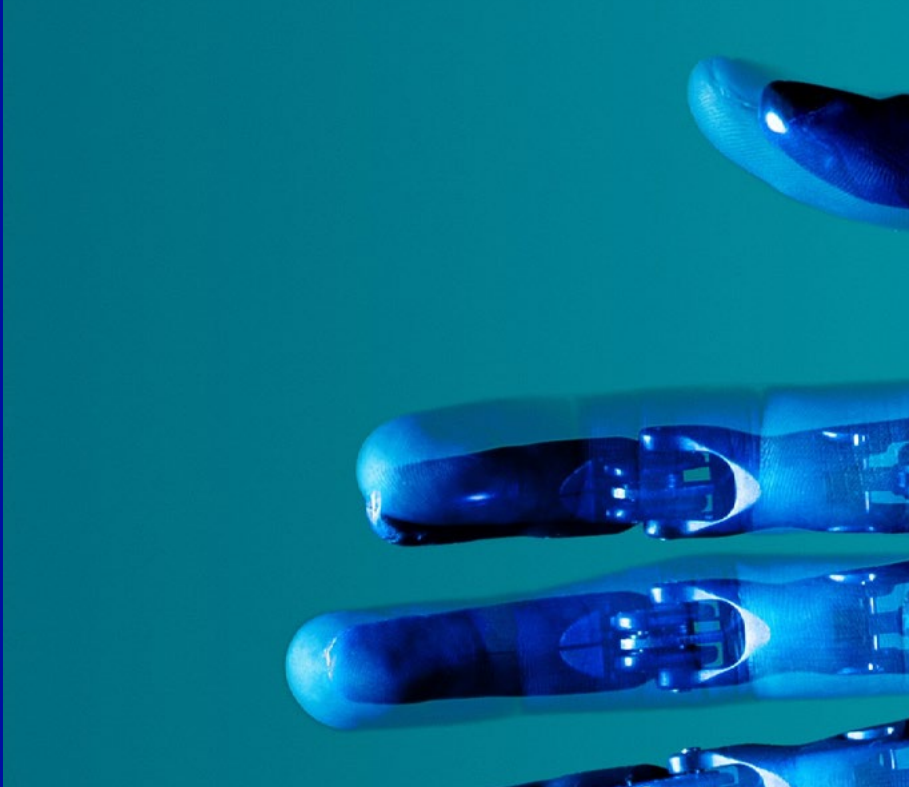
**Almost one in two parents (46%) believe their child's Independent school is extremely or very effective at preparing their students for an uncertain global future.**



Three in five parents (59%) consider Independent schools as being extremely/very effective at preparing their students for an increasingly diverse and global workforce.



Three in five Independent school parents (58%) believe their school is extremely or very effective at preparing their child for a future of increased environmental challenges.



### **Independent school graduates are positioned to navigate challenges and seize opportunities.**

In the midst of global uncertainty, Independent schools endeavour to prepare their students to navigate challenges and seek a range of opportunities post school.

In a multicultural, pluralistic nation like Australia, it is necessary that students are prepared and equipped to thrive in increasingly diverse work environments. To this end, three in five parents (59%) consider Independent schools as being extremely or very effective at preparing their students for an increasingly diverse and global workforce.

Across Australia and the world, natural disasters, environmental challenges and climate change are already and continue to be issues of concern. Equipping students to navigate these complex issues is key for preparing students who can contribute to addressing these issues. Importantly, three in five parents (58%) of children in Independent schools believe their school is extremely or very effective at preparing their child for a future of increased environmental challenges.

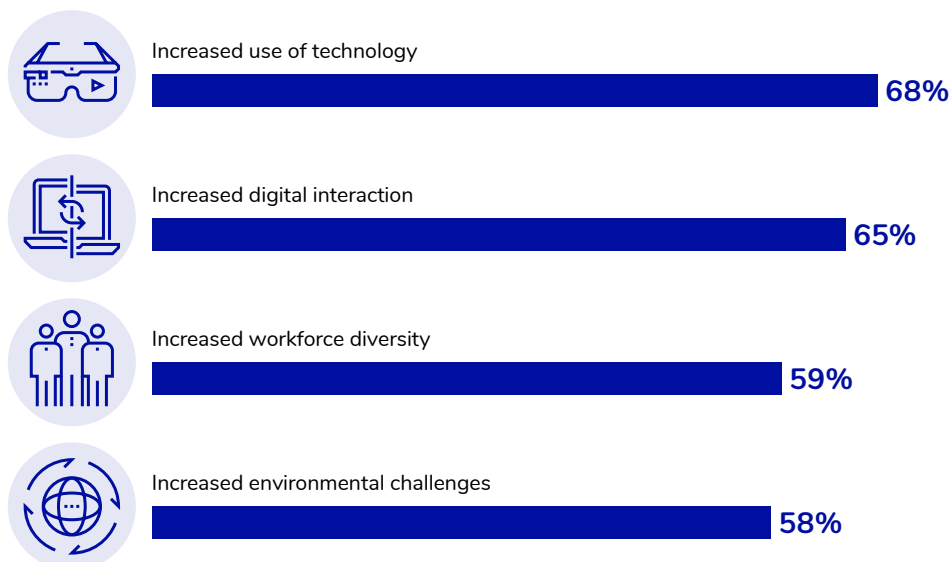


When parents were asked to consider their child's life after school, increased use of technology (45%) was identified as both a key challenge and opportunity they will have to navigate. Positively, nearly seven in ten Independent school parents (68%) say their child's school is extremely or very effective in preparing their child for this potential challenge and opportunity. Similarly, 65% believe their child's school is

extremely or very effective in preparing their child for increased digital interaction. As children are increasingly living in a digital reality, it is essential for schools to take a proactive stance on preparing emerging generations to confidently navigate the ever-changing technological landscape within an ethical and moral framework.

### HOW EFFECTIVE IS YOUR INDEPENDENT SCHOOLING IN PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR THESE POTENTIAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES?

% of Independent school parents - extremely/very effective



### Port School provides at-risk and disengaged students opportunities through global partnerships.

Port School, based in suburban Perth, Western Australia is a secular co-educational day school engaging at-risk students, who for various reasons and circumstances have not been able to achieve success in mainstream school settings.<sup>2</sup> Reflective of a commitment to provide education and support to all, Port School also hosts a young parent centre, childcare centre, mobile classrooms, outreach programs, as well as counselling and psychology services to support students with identified and diagnosed mental health issues.

Mike Gilbert, Deputy Principal at Port School participated in an interview to share how their students engage in an international school partnership in Malaysia.

"In 2012, Port School began an international relationship with Klang Special School in Malaysia. This relationship is now in its twelfth year (albeit no travel for three years during the COVID-19 pandemic [2020, 2021 and 2022]) and has seen over 60 students embrace this humanitarian, cultural and educational excursion."

The Klang Special School is a school for students with disability in Klang, Malaysia with approximately 100 students, focused on supporting students with learning difficulties, physical disabilities and mental health challenges. Students range from four to 20 years of age. The school provides early intervention and educates students with special and diverse needs.

In 2023, Port School is taking 18 students on their first trip in three years. Students are engaged in all fundraising activities for this trip, which often include quiz nights, sausage sizzles, art exhibitions and raffles. In preparation for this trip, students are challenged to raise \$600 to help cover their own expenses, as well as additional funds to sponsor orphan students.

During the excursion, Port School students are given the opportunity to work with local children who have learning difficulties and/or disability. Gilbert recognises that students start off "shy and closed off, but as the trip continues, they open up and ask more questions, and get more involved." Gilbert continues, saying, "it's often only when you get fully immersed into a new environment...that it becomes a bit of a reality check."



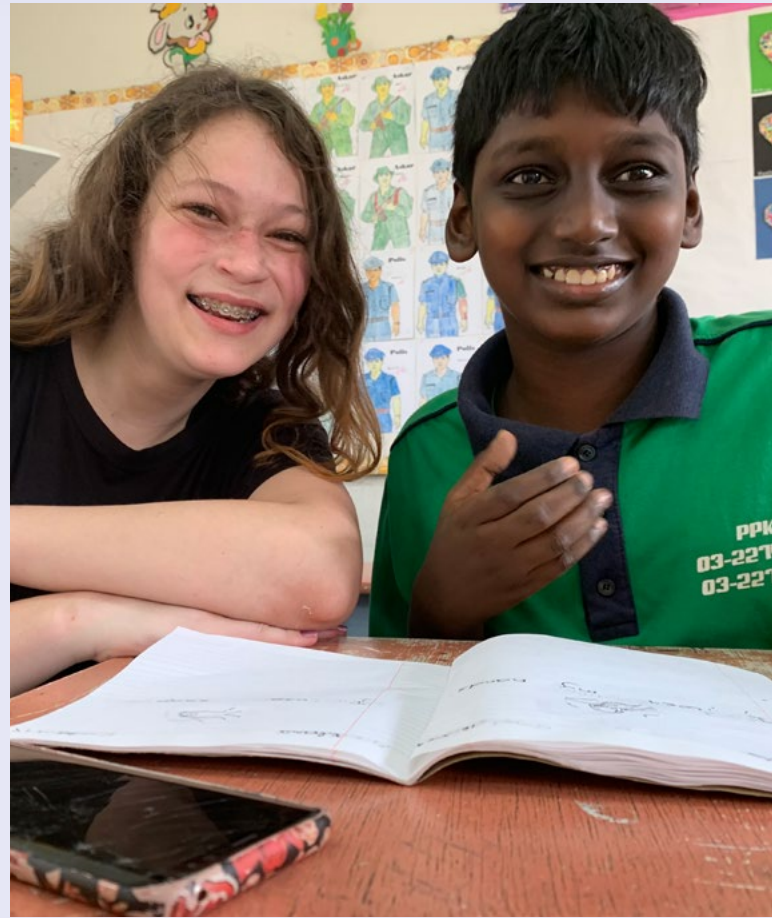


Port School credits the success of this partnership to the engagement of their students, staff, parents and surrounding community. Gilbert acknowledges that “it’s a whole community effort with businesses, staff, students and families coming together to positively impact the communities we interact with in Malaysia.”

Gilbert shared that the “relationship has benefitted students from both countries [Australia and Malaysia]. During the life of this program, Port School has donated over \$170,000 in student sponsorships, as well as resources and equipment including laptops, kitchen and garden equipment, and a state-of-the-art playground.”

In addition to the excursion, Port School has sponsored over 50 orphaned students with disability to attend Klang Special School for a full year. Gilbert says, “these children would not be able to go to school without our financial assistance. We provide the funds necessary to help them attend school, have access to a high quality, engaging education and health services, such as a therapeutic physiotherapist that Port School has assisted in funding.”

Port School has seen how this initiative has a lasting impact on the students. Gilbert reflects, “I know we are making a difference to the lives of students here in Port and I certainly know we are making a difference to the lives of those in Malaysia who don’t have what we have here in Australia.”



**“Port students often do not fit the mainstream schooling model. Many come from difficult family backgrounds and experience a variety of problematic circumstances that have impacted on their learning experiences. It’s amazing to see some of these young people turn their lives around through these leadership experiences.”**

**MIKE GILBERT**

Deputy Principal, Port School



# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS CONTRIBUTE TO EDUCATION NATIONALLY

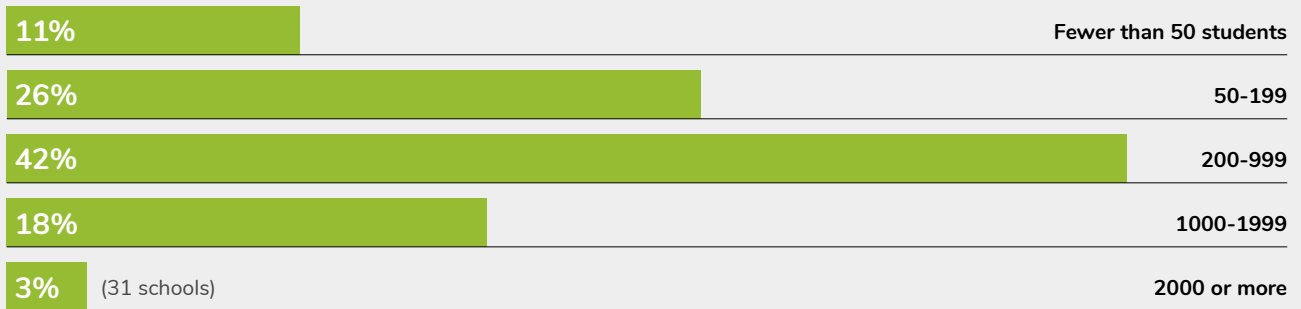
Independent schools make a significant contribution to education nationally. The impact of Independent schools can be clearly seen at the national level, through the provision of education to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, supporting students with additional needs and students from disadvantaged communities and through providing scholarships to students in need. Independent school communities also support and invest in their children's education.

## The majority of Independent schools are small to medium schools.

Contrary to popular belief, the majority of Independent schools are not large schools but cover a broad range of sizes. In fact, most Independent schools are small to medium schools. Four in five Independent schools (79%) have 999 students or less, with one in eight Independent schools having fewer than

50 students. Further dismantling some of the perceptions associated with Independent schools, 11% of Independent schools are in the bottom socio-economic quarter\*, while a further 19% are in the lower middle socio-economic quarter.<sup>3</sup>

### INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS RANGE IN SIZE<sup>4</sup>



### Supporting students with diverse needs.

Many of the small schools in the Independent sector (199 or less students) cater for unique student groups, such as students with disability and at-risk youth, providing a specialised and personalised approach to education. One in four small schools (27%) are either a special assistance school or a special school.<sup>4</sup> Special assistance schools provide an alternative option to mainstream schooling to re-engage young people in education. Special schools cater for students with disability, mostly students requiring significant levels of support and adjustments to access their education program.

Many of these Independent schools provide wrap-around support, small class size sizes and a greater capacity for teachers to provide individualised attention. Specialised support is provided so that a diverse range of educational, social/emotional and personal student needs and wellbeing is supported.

### Independent schools provide education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

The Independent sector has over 40 Independent schools that educate a majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student body. Western Australia has the highest proportion of majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student schools at 37%, followed by the Northern Territory (24%) and Queensland (20%). More than three out of five of these schools (63%) are based in remote areas across Australia.

**“We work with young people who do not flourish in a conventional school setting. Our constitution (and charitable status) is predicated on delivering programs and services that support young people who experienced significant disadvantages. Our ‘Special Assistance School’ status is based on the delivery of education opportunities for young people who have significant social, emotional and behavioural issues that contribute to educational disengagement. As such, our purpose is to increase the agency of disengaged and disadvantaged youth through the provision of transformative learning experiences.”**

**FRED HEIDT**

Executive Principal, Youth Inc., South Australia

\*Socio-Educational Advantage' (SEA) quarters representing a scale of relative disadvantage ('bottom quarter') through to relative advantage ('top quarter'). These quarters are calculated using only the student-level factors of educational advantage. SEA quarters give contextual information about the socio-educational composition of the students in the school.



**Mäpuru Yirralka College in the Northern Territory advocates for and invests in developing young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders for the future, under the authority of community elders.**

Mäpuru Yirralka College, an Independent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander school in Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, was established in 1982 as a Homeland Learning Centre (HLC). Mäpuru Yirralka College is the centre of their community, and it fosters an exceptionally high degree of community engagement across all aspects of its operation.<sup>5</sup>

Dr Debra Bateman, Principal at Mäpuru Yirralka College participated in an interview to share more about their innovative school.

Bateman shares that the school is the only infrastructure in the community and is central to providing access to important services such as, internet, emergency healthcare, water and power. Bateman explains, “in essence our school is the community centre, Centrelink office, marketplace and supply depot.” Bateman continues, saying, “the school is central for building relationships between the community and service providers, government groups and other organisations. In many ways, we often act as an intermediary. We also apply our leadership in advocacy to ensure our community members are looked after, sometimes this is about holding service providers to account.”

Through Mäpuru Yirralka College’s deep connections with the broader community, their students have gone on to make important contributions of their own. Bateman celebrates the ways her students have engaged in their community post-school. “We are really proud of the kids we are developing,” Bateman says, “they are young people who honour those who have gone before them, and they are the best example of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture – they are deeply connected to their land, people and traditions – they are not lost and disconnected. They are grounded, sensitive, respectful and decent modern young men and women”.



More than three out of five of majority Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student schools (63%) are in remote areas across Australia.



Many Mäpuru Yirralka College students have gone on to support the defence forces in the Northern Territory, health providers and ranger programs. Not to be understated, Bateman speaks to the significance of the running of the shop at the school, saying, “without our kids running the shop and providing important food security, there would be real challenges to the community.”

Bateman also notes that many of their students are sought after in their community to participate in and in some cases lead important ceremonial and cultural practices. To this point, Bateman explains, “many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are experiencing a disconnect from their language, culture, traditions and country. We want to help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people find their voice through action and education. The reality is they are growing up in two worlds, their traditional world, and that of wider Australia. The point of our advocacy and education is to empower young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders to live self-determined futures.”

At a local level, Mäpuru Yirralka College’s innovative approach to in-country and bilingual learning works to support efforts in preserving and strengthening the local Aboriginal culture and language. Bateman says, “everything we do is done side-by-side, the entire curriculum is delivered bilingually, our non-Indigenous teachers teach in English to build competency for life outside their community.

The Aboriginal assistant teachers, under the cultural authority of the elders guide and assess learning experiences in Yolŋu language, culture, concepts and place. This requires sophisticated planning, deep cultural understandings and negotiations of meaning.”

Mäpuru Yirralka College has recently extended their applied learning program. Many young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in their mid to late teens struggle with a traditional curriculum. Bateman expands, saying, “we have developed an adult learning precinct that utilises community leaders, experts and specialists, such as, metalsmiths, carpenters, mechanics, and the like, to teach our students skills in order to give them a role in developing the community. Through this initiative, we have made beds for the community, undertaken building and furniture manufacturing projects. Our next project is redeveloping the Mäpuru airport and airstrip.”

Beyond the significant ways Mäpuru Yirralka College is contributing to the local community and broader Arnhem Land context, they are having important national impacts through advocacy. Bateman explains that Mäpuru Yirralka College has been a sought-after case study and is often approached for input into policies and discussions around policies. Bateman says, “people throughout Arnhem Land look to and have confidence in the role Mäpuru Yirralka College plays in advocating for on-country living and learning.” Bateman continues, “...we want to graduate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders who go on and become advocates and inspire others to action.”

**“We are really proud of the kids we are developing; they are young people who honour those who have gone before them, and they are the best example of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture – they are deeply connected to their land, people and traditions – they are not lost and disconnected. They are grounded, sensitive, respectful and decent modern young men and women”.**

**DR DEBRA BATEMAN**  
Principal at Mäpuru Yirralka College





### **Independent schools make positive contributions to the education sector.**

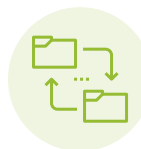
Independent schools recognise the importance of participating in and contributing to the broader education sector. Independent schools are able to respond to the complex and ever-changing landscape of education through autonomous leadership, prioritising the needs of their school community and engaging with key stakeholders.

Close to nine in ten Independent schools (87%) support initial teacher education practicums. This is a tangible act of service with no monetary or sector-specific benefit, which provides an opportunity for teachers in training to learn, be mentored and practise their profession. Independent schools are also active in sharing school resources (80%), such as curriculum materials and programs, and conducting interschool staff professional development sessions (76%). Seven in ten Independent schools (71%) also contribute to broader education curriculum and program development, as well as contributing to policy development.

### **WAYS INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS ARE CONTRIBUTING TO THE BROADER EDUCATION SECTOR:**



**Supporting initial teacher education practicums**



**Sharing school resources (e.g. curriculum, programs)**



**Conducting interschool staff professional development sessions**



**Contributing to education curriculum and program development and policy making**

## Independent school communities support their children's education.

Overall, Independent school parents and communities contribute 52% of the sector's recurrent and capital income.<sup>4</sup>

Nationally, Independent school families and communities contribute an estimated \$8 billion to the cost of educating young Australians. In addition, through fees and donations, parents and donors nationally provide 87% of capital funding for Independent school buildings, grounds and equipment.<sup>4</sup>

These are important contributions to the broader education framework across Australia. This financial investment goes on to support, provide for and resource the efforts Independent schools are making in terms of their social contribution.

## Independent schools provide scholarships and bursaries to students in need.

Independent schools also provide important financial support for students and families in need through the provision of scholarships and bursaries. More than four in five Independent schools (85%) who participated in the recent School Insights Survey, provide scholarships or bursaries to students in need.

This financial support is generally directed towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from low-socioeconomic backgrounds and families facing financial hardship.



**\$8 billion p.a.**

Nationally, Independent school families and communities contribute an estimated \$8 billion to the cost of educating young Australians.



More than four in five Independent schools (85%) who participated in the recent School Insights Survey, provide scholarships or bursaries to students in need, many of whom are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds and families facing financial hardship.



# SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

While the global and national contribution of Independent schools and the Independent sector are important, perhaps the most significant impact they make is in their own backyard. The Independent school sector represents 1,209 schools and over 688,638 students, with each of these connected to a specific local community. Among these students, 202,451 have a language background other than English\*, an estimated 143,500 are students with disability, 16,662 are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and 4,541 are international students, further reflecting the diversity of local communities in Australia.<sup>4</sup>

\* Language background other than English (LBOTE) does not imply disadvantage or poor English proficiency, simply that they can speak another language other than English.

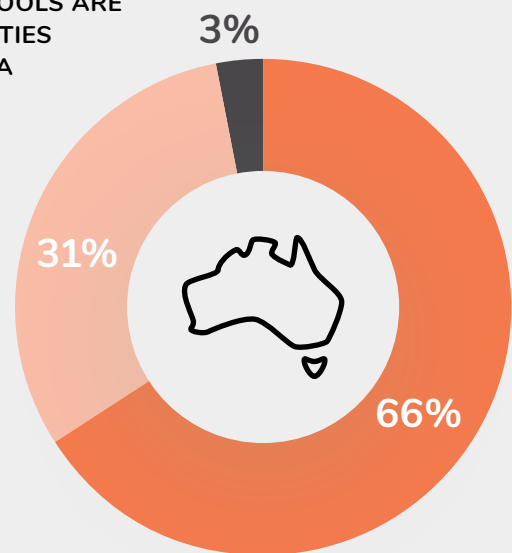




Independent schools range in size and location. Australians primarily live in major cities (72%), while one in four (25%) live in a regional area and 3% live in a remote area. Reflective of the Australian population, while the majority of Independent schools are in major cities (66%)<sup>6</sup> the sector also has a strong presence in regional and remote communities. One in three Independent schools are based in regional cities (31%) and 3% provide education to students in remote regions.<sup>4</sup>

#### INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS ARE SERVING COMMUNITIES ACROSS AUSTRALIA

- major cities
- regional cities
- remote regions



**“The entire concept of learning on-country in partnership with the local Aboriginal community is innovative in Australian education. [Our] students remain connected to their family and culture while being offered a world class, innovative delivery of curriculum. This has resulted in exponential growth of enrolments and attendance rates never before seen in the Northern Territory. It is a shining example of how education can be successful for First Nations students.”**

**ANNELISE PEARCE**

Operations Manager, Dhupuma Barker, NT



Two in five Independent school graduates (42%) report having volunteered in the last 12 months.

### Independent schools encourage volunteering.

Independent schools are active in their communities, giving back through volunteering, and practically supporting efforts to make a positive impact in their local context. These endeavours do not go unnoticed, with nine in ten parents (91% strongly/somewhat/slightly) agreeing that their Independent school has had a positive impact on their community.

Independent schools are active in encouraging their students (92%), staff members (85%) and parents (76%) to volunteer through programs and initiatives. Importantly, for many students at Independent schools, volunteering is not just a momentary experience or obligatory-driven participation, but a value and activity that continues post-graduation. In a recent report, Australian schools and the common good,<sup>7</sup> 42% of Independent school graduates report having volunteered in 12 months prior, compared with 34% of graduates from Catholic schools and 28% from Government schools.

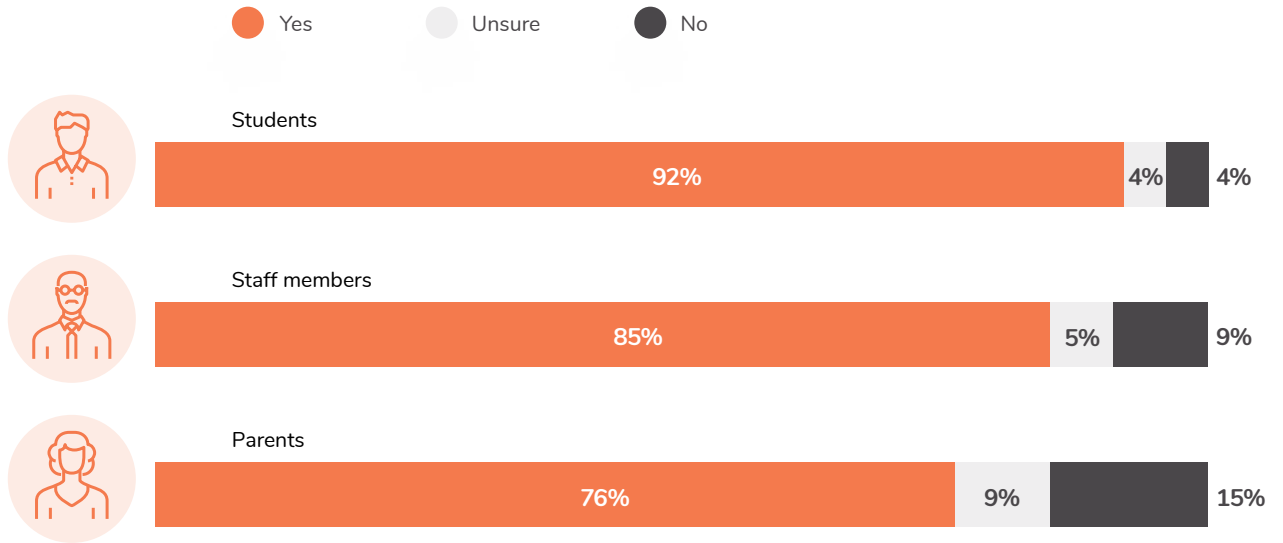
**“Kairos Community College is one of the unsung heroes in our community, changing the direction of the lives of young people, their families and the wider community. The staff are certainly deserving of this recognition of their efforts.”**

#### **ANDREW WALLACE MP**

Federal Member of Parliament at the Fisher Community Awards Night 2022, in which Kairos Community College was recognised as the winner of the Educator of the Year Award<sup>8</sup>

**DOES YOUR SCHOOL ENCOURAGE THE FOLLOWING STAKEHOLDERS TO VOLUNTEER THROUGH ANY PROGRAMS OR INITIATIVES?**

% of Independent schools



Graduates from Independent schools continue to make positive contributions to society throughout their lives, with seven in ten (70%) having donated money or goods to a non-profit, charitable organisation in the past 12 months.<sup>8</sup>



Seven in ten Independent school graduates (70%) have donated money or goods to a non-profit, charitable organisation in the past 12 months.

**“Children at The Launceston Preparatory School are constantly provided with opportunities for the practice of good citizenship not just the theory. This is achieved through immersion in community activities, such as, visiting homes for the elderly, assisting organisations in their charity work, sponsoring a child in Malawi and many other real-life experiences in our local community.”**

**LEONIE MCNAIR & HARRIET THYNE**  
Co-Principals at The Launceston Preparatory School.



**Graduating global, contributing citizens is central to St Michael's Grammar School's strategic direction.**

St Michael's Grammar School, a coeducational Independent school in Melbourne, has defined its vision and strategic direction as it looks towards 2030. At the core of this strategic direction are the students that call St Michael's home.

Ros Casey, Director of Enrolments, Engagement, Communications and Advancement at St Michael's Grammar School participated in an interview to share more about this important strategic plan.

Casey shares that St Michael's "Strategic Direction: Towards 2030" explicitly states that our students will learn From, With and For the World. This approach shapes the curriculum and all aspects of the School. Our students are encouraged to think beyond the classroom and examine issues that impact on the local, national and global community." Casey expresses a shared sentiment among St Michael's leadership, that at the heart of this strategy is a desire to be authentic to their espoused values of dignity, respect, care and compassion. "This document is not just for the bookshelf," Casey reinforces, "'From, With and For the World', is a philosophy that runs right through all the things we do. A distinctive goal we have at St Michael's is to graduate contributing global citizens. We encourage our students to take an interest in the world around them from an early age."

The strategic direction focuses on learning 'From the World'. Casey explains that this means students "are learning from industry leaders, experts in their fields and having real world experiences. An important goal here is to develop partnerships with community organisations."

Learning 'With the World' is about learning side-by-side, alongside their peers, teachers, parents and the wider community. Casey says, "we want to nurture students who are not just passive recipients of knowledge but see themselves as partners in their learning journey."

St Michael's educates students who are 'For the World'. "We want to see students who go on to benefit the world and its future," Casey explains. Continuing, Casey says, "we foster these values in our students through the curriculum and through various initiatives such as our 'Merry Month of May', our Reconciliation Action Plan Committee, the Equality Club and our Sustainability Club. We want to transform knowledge and learning into our students making a real difference in the world."

Casey encapsulates that the point of the strategic direction is to foster a sense of agency in the student body at St Michael's, "we want to encourage students to understand and speak up about issues that are important to them, and then equip and empower them to act on it."

**"The strategic direction focuses on learning 'From the World', meaning, students are learning from industry leaders, experts in their fields and having real world experiences. An important goal here is to develop partnerships with community organisations."**

**ROS CASEY**

Director of Enrolments, Engagement, Communications and Advancement at St Michael's Grammar School





## **Independent schools actively support important local, national and international causes.**

Many organisations receive philanthropic benefit and value from Independent schools directing their volunteering and fundraising efforts to various causes. The five most supported causes by Independent schools are community service charities (73%), faith-based programs (66%), overseas charities (60%), international aid organisations (60%), environmental groups (57%) and local community organisations (56%).

### **PARTNERING WITH COMMUNITY SERVICE CHARITIES HAS A PROFOUND IMPACT.**

“I would like to sincerely thank the Northern Christian School students and teachers for their help...Our Dining with Friends program enables us to create a shared space within the community in which we can all come together and share a meal, meet new people and catch up with family and friends alike. This program is run solely by volunteers, and often relies on donations from the community alongside the support from the Brighton Council...Your students not only brought [a] wonderful energy that created a fun and festive atmosphere for our guests, but also a willingness to help and jump into any task – which helped us greatly to make the event a success. I had many guests comment to me about how polite your students were, how wonderful their singing was and how much they appreciated their hard work.”

#### **ELLE BATE**

Youth Engagement Officer,  
South St Vincent de Paul Society, Tasmania

### **STUDENT-LED ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION GIVES BACK TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.**

“A couple of years ago our student sustainability group, the ‘Susteinerbles’, proposed we get enough solar panels to take the school off grid to save the planet. Teachers considered their idea, discussed it with the school’s Executive and School Council. We decided to support their idea, encouraging further research of the best way forward. Long story short... we secured an environmental loan to install 301 solar panels, providing more electricity than the school uses each year. We now supply energy to much of the local community during the summer when we are on holidays. The loan was offered by a crowd funding organisation, which pegged repayments to our power savings. The loan is now totally repaid, and we are saving \$20,000 per year [as well as] offering the community renewable power.”

#### **MATTHEW BALE**

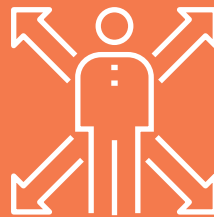
Principal Tarremah Steiner School, Tasmania

## WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DOES YOUR SCHOOL ACTIVELY SUPPORT THROUGH VOLUNTEERING AND/OR FUNDRAISING?

% of Independent schools - Top 5



As Independent schools foster philanthropy and volunteering activities, local and global communities are the beneficiaries. Independent school parents recognise these efforts, with four in five (80% strongly/somewhat) agreeing their child's school encourages them to become more active citizens and contributors to society.



Four in five (80% strongly/somewhat) Independent school parents agree their child's school encourages them to become more active citizens and contributors to society.

### Student driven action at St Euphemia College contributes to the flood ravaged community of Lismore.

St Euphemia, an Independent school in Bankstown, Sydney, was established in 1992 to provide a Christian Orthodox education for those in the surrounding community. St Euphemia College is recognised for its inclusivity and has students from over 35 cultural backgrounds.<sup>10</sup>

Matthew Panayotopoulos, Director of Learning at St Euphemia College participated in an interview to share more about their recent initiative, the 'Changemakers Project' to support the Lismore community after the devastating floods in 2022.

Panayotopoulos says the "intention behind the Changemakers Project, as an Orthodox Christian school, is to look at problems in the world with love, empathy and action. We knew we wanted to create a club for students to get involved to put their minds together and do something about a problem. Rather than just seeing all these problems on the news, we asked our students, 'What could we do about it?'"

This initiative has had positive impacts on the community, with students at St Euphemia College feeling compelled to do something about the devastating impact of the 2022 floods in Lismore, northern NSW. This flood destroyed the library at Lismore South Public School. Panayotopoulos says, "Over nine months, our students transformed a shipping container into a 'Library for Lismore'. They designed and built this library with the support of their teachers and experts from within the community."

Panayotopoulos shares that many businesses and organisations donated their resources and services, however, others also "offered to teach students marketing and social media and how to develop these skills. It was great to see experts partnering with students for the benefit of society."





Federal Minister for Education, Jason Clare, also gave his support and recognition for this project. “When Lismore South Public School’s library was destroyed in the floods, students at St Euphemia College [in] Bankstown decided to raise funds to send them a shipping container converted into ‘A Library of Resources’. It was great to catch up with these fantastic students in Parliament House today.”<sup>11</sup>

Panayotopoulos says their school leadership wanted to help students “understand that even though [they are] part of a low socioeconomic area in Bankstown, [they are] still more privileged because they have a roof over [their] heads.”

Beyond the positive impact for the Lismore community, this initiative is significant due to its student led nature. “When something is student led,” Panayotopoulos says, “there is a sense of ownership and responsibility. When students take ownership of their learning, they’re going to pour their heart and soul into it. We want to empower them to know that they can be the change – and we want to teach them that from a young age. These opportunities are character building, they’re character defining, and they know that collectively they can make a change. These projects also develop their literacy and writing skills. It develops their collaboration and public speaking skills. It’s a horizontal perspective of leadership.”



**“When something is student led, there is a sense of ownership and responsibility. When students take ownership of their learning, they’re going to pour their heart and soul into it. We want to empower them to know that they can be the change – and we want to teach them that from a young age.”**

**MATTHEW PANAYOTOPOULOS**

Director of Learning at St Euphemia College



## A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL AND FAMILY

Independent schools value parent and family engagement and partner to create strong, socially cohesive school communities, promote a sense of belonging and well-being in their students and improve student outcomes. These characteristics are highly valued by families when choosing Independent schools.

Over the past five years (2018-2022), 48% of the additional students in schools were in the Independent sector, with Government schools accounting for 32% and Catholic schools accounting for 20%. This trend towards Independent education can also be seen when looking at enrolment growth over the past ten years. Independent school enrolments have grown by 21% from 2013 to 2022. In the same ten years, Government schools have grown by 10%, while the Catholic sector has grown by 6%.<sup>12</sup>



**Nearly half of the additional enrolments in schools since 2018 have been in Independent schools (48%).**

## The diversity of Independent schools provides parents with choice in their child's education.

Perhaps one of the more significant factors drawing parents to the sector is that it allows them to choose a school that aligns with their own values and beliefs.<sup>13</sup> The Independent sector is diverse, encompassing a range of philosophical and religious beliefs and provides an opportunity for these diverse worldviews to find expression in a local Australian context. It is evident, the freedom to choose a school that reflects the values, beliefs and worldview of their family is an important social value. It is within this context, cohesive partnerships between the school and the family can be fostered.

Australia continues to be a religiously diverse country. According to the most recent census, 44% of Australians identify as Christian, followed by 40% identifying with no religion, 3% identifying with Islam, 2.7% identifying with Hinduism and 2.4% with Buddhism.<sup>14</sup>

Given the broad range of religious beliefs among the Australian population, Independent schools are uniquely placed to provide an opportunity for parents to choose a school reflecting their own beliefs and values. Over four in five Independent schools (83%) have a religious affiliation, such as Anglican, non-denominational, Christian, Islamic and Jewish.

Independent schools also include those with a particular philosophical approach such as Steiner or Montessori. In addition, there are schools catering to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, community schools and international schools. The diversity in the Independent sector provides choice for families.

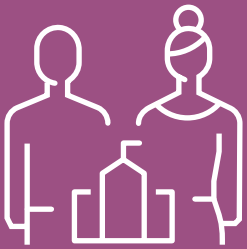
## INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS PROVIDE PARENTS WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO EDUCATE THEIR CHILDREN ALIGNED TO THEIR VARIOUS RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL BELIEFS.<sup>4</sup>

Types of Independent schools include:

- Christian
- Anglican
- Non-denominational
- Islamic
- Jewish
- International
- Montessori
- Steiner
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- Community
- Special schools and special assistance schools



For nearly nine in ten Independent school parents (85%), the value of Independent schooling is that their child's school aligns with their own values and beliefs.



**Nine in ten Independent school parents (91%) agree their child's school fosters and promotes parent engagement.**

### **Independent schools foster parent engagement.**

Parent engagement in their child's school can have many benefits, such as developing a strong positive school community, which in turn leads to enhanced sense of belonging and improved student outcomes. Nine in ten Independent school parents (91%) agree their child's school fosters and promotes parent engagement through offering opportunities for engagement.

Schools offer a range of opportunities for parents to become involved in their child's school community. The most common ways are attending social events (41%), engaging in their child's classroom (34%) and volunteering at school events (33%). Only 12% of Independent school parents say they are not actively involved and participating in their child's school.

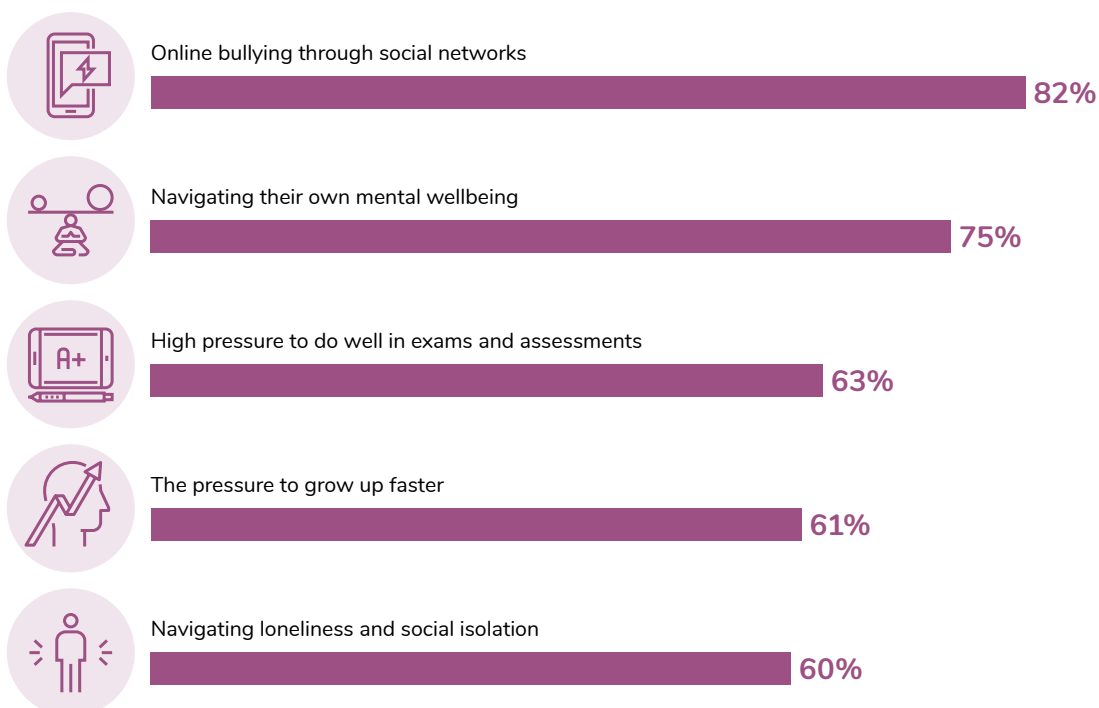
### **Students today face significant challenges.**

Students thrive when school leadership, staff and parents work together in supporting them to develop the necessary skills to navigate current and future challenges.

Teachers in all sectors across Australia identify the five most pressing challenges for today's students as: online bullying through social networks (82% extremely/very challenging for students), navigating their own mental wellbeing (75%), high pressure to do well in exams and assessments (63%), the pressure to grow up faster (61%) and navigating loneliness and social isolation (60%).<sup>15</sup>

## **HOW CHALLENGING DO YOU PERCEIVE THE FOLLOWING TO BE FOR TODAY'S STUDENTS?\***

*% of teachers from all sectors - extremely/very challenging*



## A partnership approach to education.

Positive student outcomes are evident when parents and schools are aligned and working together as a team. Together, parents and teachers play different, but equally important roles in the development of the children in their care. This integrated approach, provides the foundation for children to realise positive outcomes and be positioned to make their own meaningful contributions.

Parents appreciate this partnership approach to education. Almost nine in ten Independent school parents (85%) find it extremely or very valuable that their school informs them of their child's progress. Parents also find it extremely or very valuable having access to advice from teachers and school leaders (79%) and having parent-teacher meetings (78%). In response to the key challenges facing students today, more than three in four parents (77%) see the mental health and wellbeing resources/sessions and bullying information sessions (75%) provided by their Independent school as extremely or very valuable.

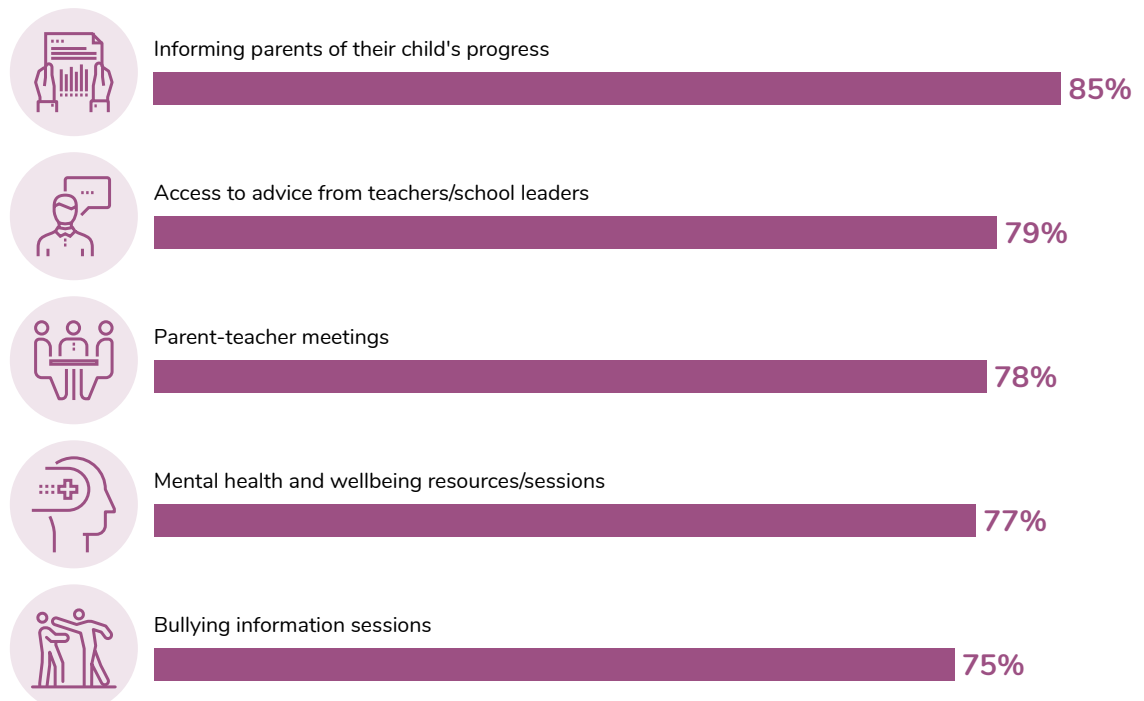


**“Schools play a critical role in sustaining our shared way of life and wellbeing. This important task is not just the responsibility of school education alone but requires a partnership with the home and wider community to shape the lives of young people.”<sup>8</sup>**

**ALBERT CHENG & DARREN ISELIN**  
*Australian Schools and the Common Good*

## HOW VALUABLE HAVE THE FOLLOWING EVENTS, PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES ORGANISED BY THE SCHOOL BEEN IN SUPPORTING YOU AS A PARENT?

Top 5 - extremely/very valuable





**Nine in ten Independent school parents (93%) agree their school has had a positive impact on their family.**

**Independent schools have a positive impact on the family.**

Many Independent school parents, see their school having an active role in shaping their child's development in key areas, such as, foundational knowledge (82% extremely/very active), interpersonal skills (78%), character (77%) and preparedness for the future (73%).

Independent school families benefit from the collective efforts made by their child's school, with 93% of Independent school parents agreeing that their child's school has had a positive impact on their family.





**“I have learnt so much as a parent as a result of [the school's] approach! I've learnt so much about my child, and I've taken that knowledge into the rest of [my] life.”**

**PARENT**

Montessori East Primary and Pre School, NSW



# THE HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS

Independent schools endeavour to provide a well-rounded education, one that nurtures the growth of the whole person, developing intellectual, social, emotional, physical and spiritual capacities. Schools go beyond the academic curriculum to provide enriched experiences that develop character, values and a sense of purpose.

**“Through education, young people are prepared and shaped into the kinds of people who can enrich and benefit their neighbours and the community...This task requires a commitment to not only focus on academic learning, but also on shaping citizens and their character development.”<sup>8</sup>**

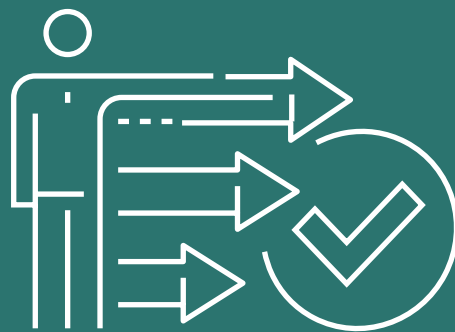
**ALBERT CHENG & DARREN ISELIN**

*Australian Schools and the Common Good*





Holistic education is not just an aspirational sentiment among educators but is very much a reality among those who have benefited from Independent schooling. Nearly two in three graduates of Independent schools (64%) feel prepared by their school for finding purpose, meaning and direction in life (cf. 59% Catholic, 51% Government).<sup>8</sup>



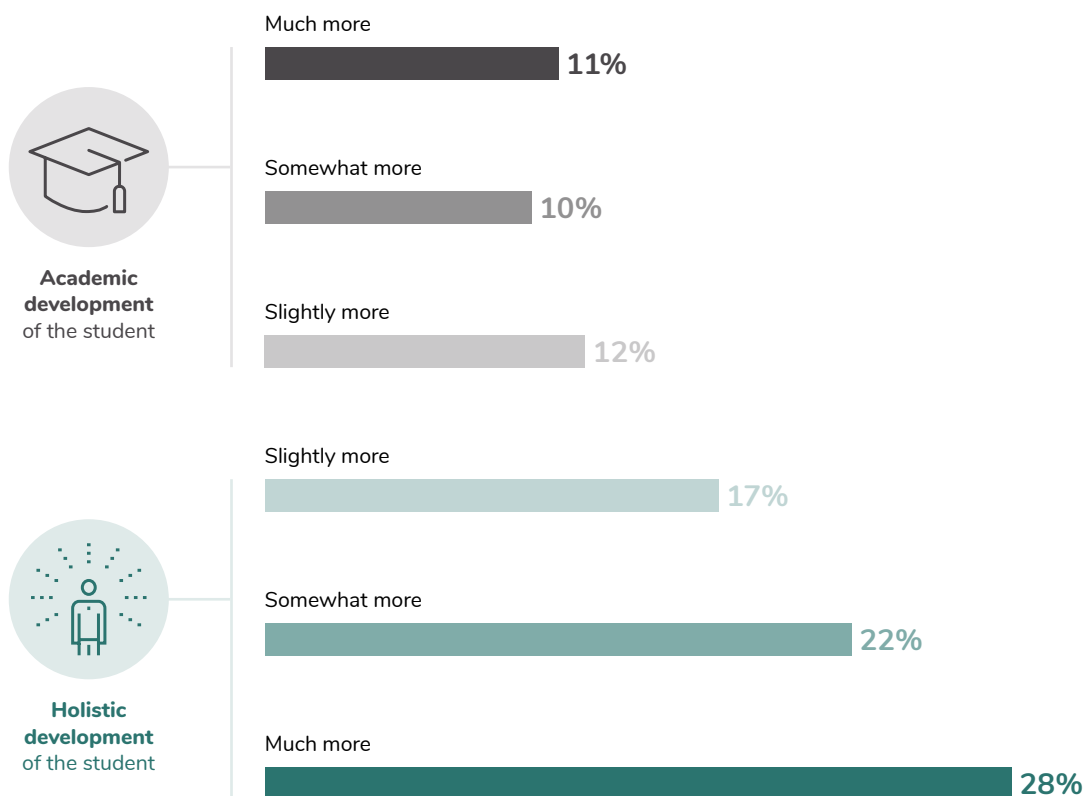
Nearly two in three graduates of Independent schools (64%) feel very or somewhat prepared by their school for finding purpose, meaning and direction in life.

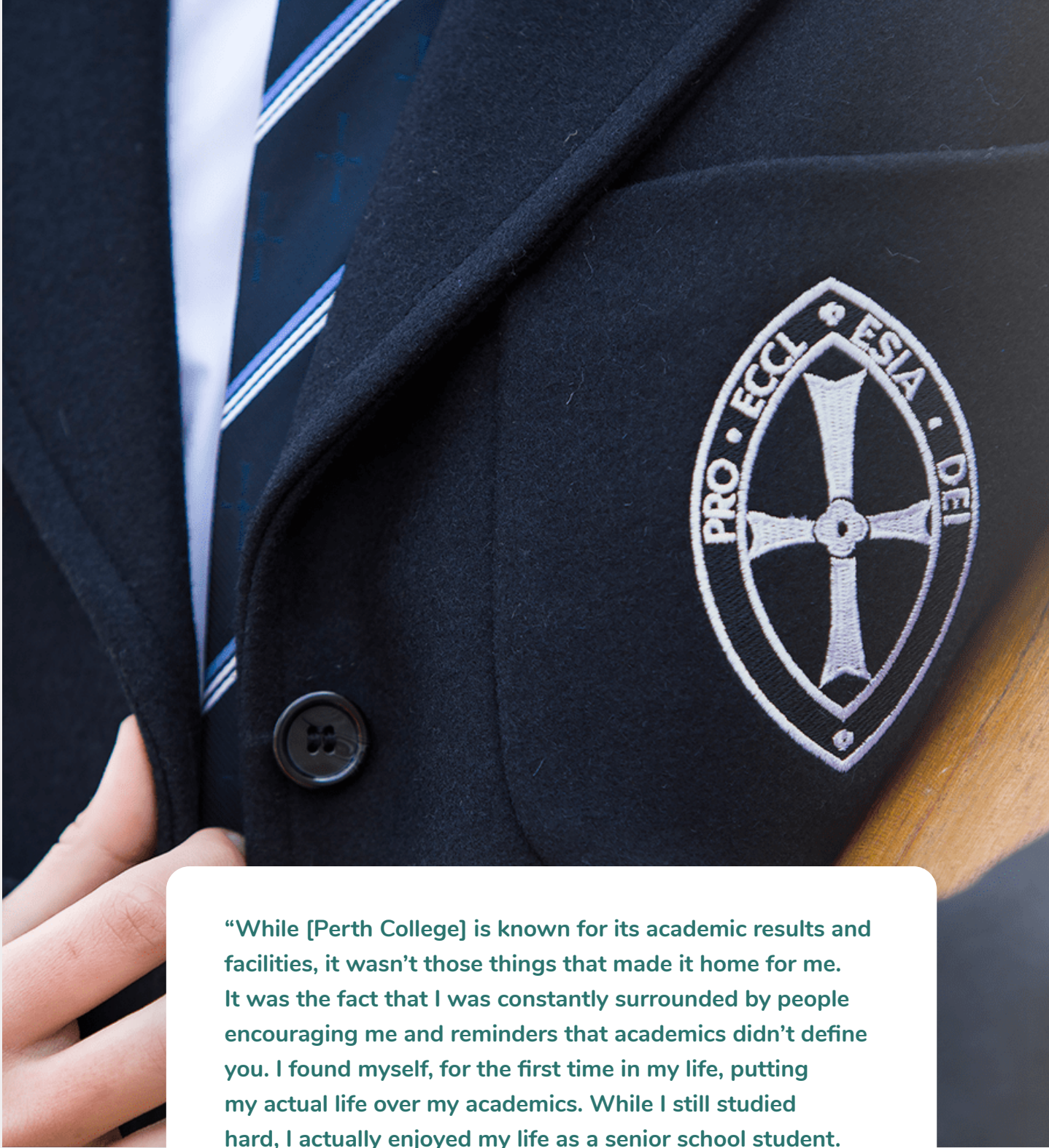


Schools educate young people for the future, to be positive contributors to society. The holistic development of students is an essential part of education to create responsible, ethical citizens and is valued by all sectors. In fact, two thirds (67%) of Australian teachers believe it is more important to teach for the holistic development of a student, than it is to teach solely for their academic development (33%)<sup>15</sup>. Schools that embed a holistic pedagogical approach prepare their students for positive and meaningful social contributions, now and into the future.

### DO YOU BELIEVE IT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO TEACH FOR THE ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT OR THE HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDENT?\*

% of teachers from all sectors





“While [Perth College] is known for its academic results and facilities, it wasn’t those things that made it home for me. It was the fact that I was constantly surrounded by people encouraging me and reminders that academics didn’t define you. I found myself, for the first time in my life, putting my actual life over my academics. While I still studied hard, I actually enjoyed my life as a senior school student. I was going to shows, having social nights with friends, volunteering with charities and spending my time on things that fulfilled me as a person – not just as a student: A difficult thing for someone who spent the last 4 years of her life being a perfectionist to achieve academic validation.”

**2022 GRADUATE OF PERTH COLLEGE**

### Huntingtower inspires their students to know their 'true selves'.

Established in 1927, Huntingtower has a proud history of providing Independent education to students in the Melbourne suburb of Mount Waverley.

Andrew Houghton, Principal of Huntingtower participated in an interview to share how they develop well-rounded, values-driven students.

Houghton shared in the School Insights Survey undertaken as part of this research that "one of the most important measures of success is what our students do after they leave Huntingtower. I believe our graduates head into the community and contribute to the public good. They are good people with strong values and a desire to make a positive difference in the world."



**"One of the most important measures of success is what our students do after they leave Huntingtower. I believe our graduates head into the community and contribute to the public good. They are good people with strong values and a desire to make a positive difference in the world."**

**ANDREW HOUGHTON**

Principal of Huntingtower

Houghton shared that the school motto 'Nosce te Ipsum' is Latin for 'Know thy true self'. Houghton says, "...we are not producing cookie cutter kids, we want our young people to know themselves and be true to themselves. This is part of discovering who they are."

Consistent with the findings of this report, while Huntingtower values academic accomplishment, the school is also driven by a desire to develop important values such as kindness, respect and excellence in students. Houghton says, "yes, we are in the top 10 of academic performing schools in Victoria, but in fact, the measure of our success is the students we develop - are they kind, are they positive contributors, do they make a positive difference in the world?"

"Power of belief is so important to us," Houghton continues, "we begin with belief, and this is a collective belief, that we can achieve the highest possible goals. Belief influences attitudes to become positive and hopeful. As attitudes become positive, this flows onto behaviours, which ultimately leads to results. Often schools focus on results and miss the core issue; instead we focus on instilling belief in our students."

Houghton shared that a key theme for the year is valuing connection and that every week he speaks to this theme and the broader values and demonstrates how values translate into action. Houghton says, "every event, every assembly, all of our communication, intentionally tries to reinforce our values and themes. After each event we reflect and examine if the event actually lived out our core values." Houghton says he like to call it the "'art of the nudge', we keep on nudging and reflecting back onto our mission, values and vision. Whether I am speaking to staff, students or parents, this is core. We have to continually make sure these are not just words on a poster."

Huntingtower recognises the importance of contributing to the public good, that is collectively as an organisation and through the staff, parents and students individually. Houghton believes, "Independent schools sometimes come from a privileged opportunity, and we must use this privilege to give back and in turn contribute to the public good. As a school we've been given much and want to give much back."





**Four in five Independent school parents (78%) strongly or somewhat agree that Independent schools are having a positive impact on their child.**

### **Independent schools foster honesty, integrity and responsibility.**

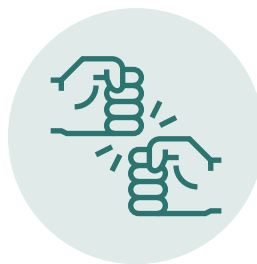
Parents value this 'whole of life' approach to their child's education, with almost four in five parents (78%) strongly or somewhat agreeing that their Independent school is having a positive impact on their child. It stands to reason that students who are positively impacted, will continue to make positive impacts of their own.

Independent schools are deliberate in instilling important values among their student body. Independent school parents believe their school is extremely or very intentional in developing positive characteristics and values such as, honesty and integrity (82%), responsibility (82%), respect (80%) and kindness and compassion (79%).

### **PARENTS BELIEVE THEIR CHILD'S SCHOOL IS EXTREMELY/VERY INTENTIONAL IN DEVELOPING POSITIVE CHARACTERISTICS AND VALUES**



**82%**  
**Honesty and integrity**



**80%**  
**Respect**



**82%**  
**Responsibility**



**79%**  
**Kindness and compassion**

**Independent schools are effective at developing life skills.**

Equally important as values and good character, is being equipped with the necessary skills for future study and work, relationships, leadership and being a positive contributor to society.

Parents believe Independent schools are very effective in developing key skills such as communication (79% extremely/very effective), critical thinking (75%) and problem-solving (75%). Parents also recognise the ability of Independent schools to foster creativity and innovation (72%), self-management (72%), adaptability (72%) and life-long learning (71%).

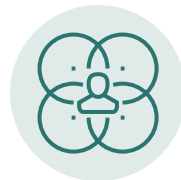


**HOW EFFECTIVE DO YOU BELIEVE YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL IS AT DEVELOPING THE FOLLOWING SKILLS IN THEIR STUDENTS?**

% of Independent school parents - extremely/very effective



**79%**  
**Communication**  
The ability to exchange information by speaking, writing, or through other means



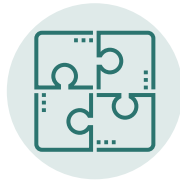
**72%**  
**Self-management**  
Taking responsibility for one's own life, aspirations and well-being



**75%**  
**Critical thinking**  
The ability to think objectively in forming one's judgment



**72%**  
**Adaptability**  
The ability to adjust to new conditions and environments



**75%**  
**Problem solving**  
The ability to find solutions, alternatives or possibilities



**71%**  
**Lifelong learning**  
The ongoing, voluntary and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge



**72%**  
**Creativity and innovation**  
The ability to use one's imagination to produce something new



**69%**  
**Leadership**  
The ability to empower and serve others



**Seven in ten Independent school parents (69%) see their school as being extremely or very effective at developing leadership skills in their child.**

### **Independent school students are equipped to lead through empowering and serving others**

While there are many definitions of leadership, the ability to inspire, influence, empower and serve others are qualities highly valued by society. Seven in ten Independent school parents (69%) see their school as being extremely or very effective at developing leadership skills in their child.

Independent schools proactively provide opportunities for students to develop leadership skills, both in school and in the wider community. Common ways Independent schools support student leadership include providing leadership opportunities at school (94%), providing peer support and/or mentoring programs (80%), providing leadership opportunities in the community (75%), offering specialised leadership camps/ programs/experiences (70%) and conducting leadership programs/training provided in partnership with external providers (58%).

For many Independent school graduates, their leadership involvement continued after they completed their schooling. Over a third of Independent school graduates (35%) “tended to enter highly technical, scientific or professional job fields but also committed to associations that sustained these vocations and enhanced professional practice.”<sup>7</sup>

Through providing a variety of leadership activities and programs, as well as developing strong values and ethics, Independent schools prepare their students to serve communities, give back and empower others.







**DOES YOUR SCHOOL SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOL AND IN THE WIDER COMMUNITY THROUGH ANY OF THE FOLLOWING?**

*% of Independent school parents*

Leadership opportunities at school



Peer support and/or mentoring programs



Leadership opportunities/experiences in the community



Specialised leadership camps/programs/experiences



Leadership programs/training provided in partnership with external providers



### Waverley College students establish an international charity, Educating the Future.

Waverley College, an Independent Catholic school in Sydney, established in 1903, delights in the significant contributions its graduates have made in all areas of social, economic, political, cultural and spiritual life in Australia.<sup>16</sup>

Gabrielle Smith, Deputy Principal, participated in an interview to share more about their Timor-Leste Immersion program and its ongoing impact. Every year, Waverley College takes a group of students to Timor-Leste on an immersion program.

In 2014, two students who participated in the trip, recognised how fortunate they were and determined to return to Timor-Leste and continue making positive contributions in education. They recognised the significant need for pre-school infrastructure development and set out to raise funds to build

pre-schools throughout the developing nation through founding Educating the Future.<sup>17</sup> While these students have since graduated and Educating the Future is a distinct organisation, a close relationship with Waverley College continues, with Educating the Future leaders often speaking to Waverley College students.

This same immersion program continues to be a core part of Waverley College's social contribution at a global level. Today's students participate in activities focused on building relationships with schools, supporting Timorese students, building projects and providing on-going support (financial and physical) for Educating the Future schools.





As Smith reflects on how Waverley College has fostered a culture that provides a foundation for their students to go on and make their own significant impacts, she explained that it is their ethos of servant leadership. "I really believe," Smith says, "that when our students live out servant leadership, they are positioned well for a life of meaning. Servant leadership is about asking ourselves; how can we serve others? How can we support other communities around us?" Smith continues by saying, "our values, liberating education, gospel spirituality, inclusive community and justice solidarity, are so important in developing students who are able to walk in the footsteps of others."

Smith shares that she is motivated to equip Waverley College students with "...skills for the future, an understanding for social justice and a desire to make a difference. This is what is truly important and what we want to leave our students with as they finish school. We recognise that many of our students are fortunate in many ways, but we also see how they look out for and act on behalf of people in need."

**"I really believe, that when our students live out servant leadership, they are positioned well for a life of meaning. Servant leadership is about asking ourselves; how can we serve others? How can we support other communities around us?"**

**GABRIELLE SMITH**

Deputy Principal at Waverley College



# METHODOLOGY

This report is the collation of quantitative data, qualitative data and additional data sourced through Independent Schools Australia, McCrindle and Cardus Education Survey Australia. Please see page 53 for a full list of references.

Two surveys were conducted as part of this research. The first, the Parents Insights Survey, was an online survey of parents with a child/children attending an Independent school. This survey was in-field from 28 November to 9 December 2022 and was completed by 1,047 parents.

A second survey, the School Insights Survey, was distributed to Independent schools across Australia through the state and territory Independent school associations. This survey was in-field from 27 February to 24 March 2023 and was completed by a representative from 233 schools to provide further data on the school's activities.

McCrindle and Independent Schools Australia would like to acknowledge and thank the state and territory Associations of Independent Schools (AISs), AISACT, AISNSW, AISNT, ISQ, AISSA, IST, ISV and AISWA, for their contributions throughout this study.

Additional data was gathered from Independent Schools Australia resources and data. Refer to page 53 for references and other sources used throughout the report.

In-depth interviews were also conducted following the completion of the School Insights Survey. These interviews were conducted as a follow-up to the qualitative data already provided by schools in the School Insights Survey, to further explore the ways in which specific Independent schools are making positive social contributions. These have formed case studies throughout the report. Six in-depth interviews were conducted with the following school leaders:

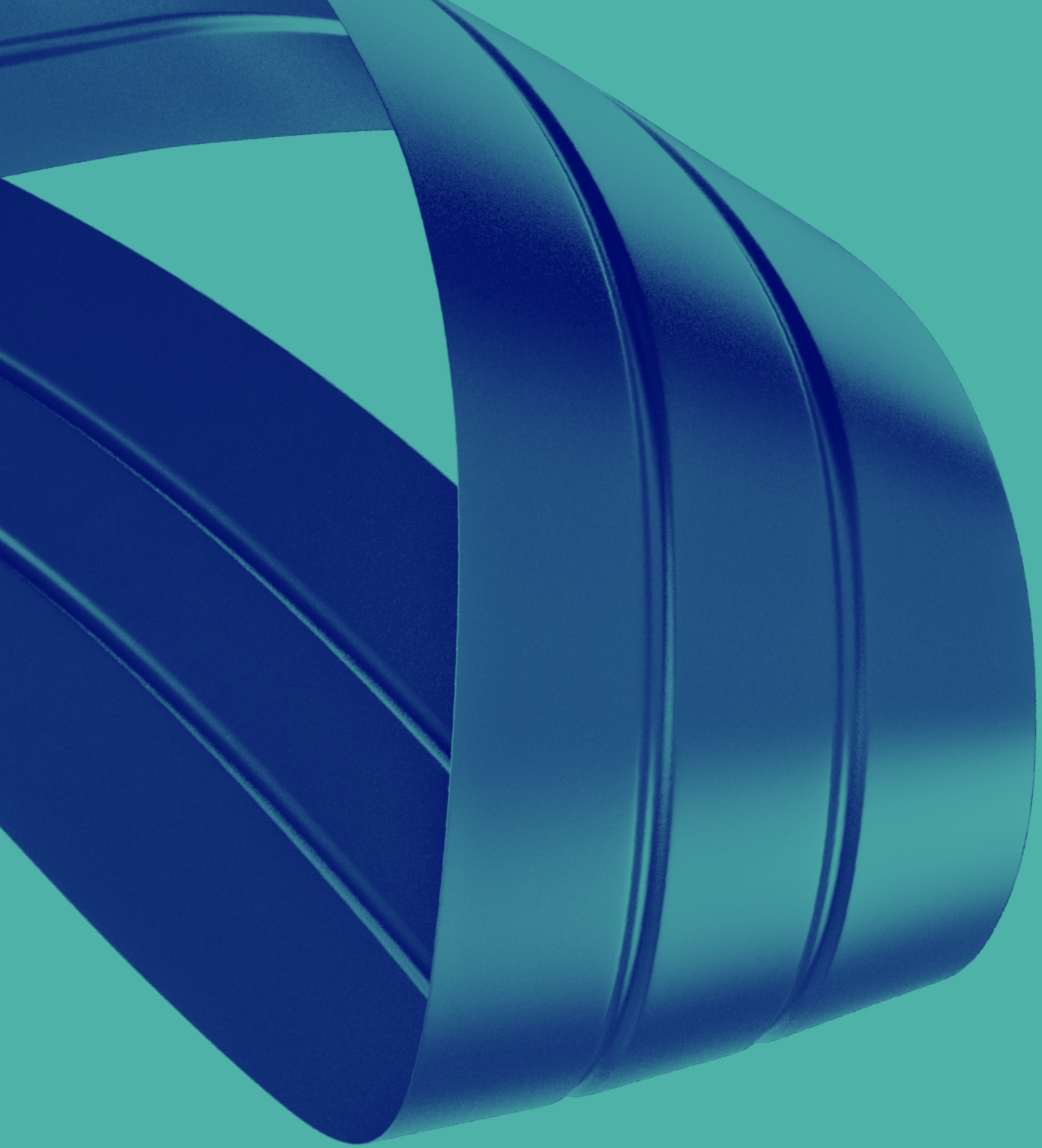
- Michael Gilbert, Deputy Principal, Port School, WA.
- Matthew Panayotopoulos, Director of Learning, St Euphemia College, NSW.
- Andrew Houghton, Principal, Huntingtower, VIC.
- Gabrielle Smith, Acting Principal, Waverley College, NSW.
- Dr Debra Bateman, Principal, Mäpuru Yirralka College, NT.
- Ros Casey, Director of Enrolments, Engagement, Communications and Advancement, St Michael's Grammar School, VIC.

## Graphs and rounding

Data labels on the graphs in this report have been rounded to the nearest whole number and may, therefore, sum to 99% or 101%. Any calculations where two data points have been added are based on raw data (not the rounded data labels on the graph) and have then been rounded to the nearest whole number once combined.

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