



MEDIA RELEASE

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TAX CHANGE WOULD GROUND STUDENT BUILDINGS

Independent Schools Australia (ISA) has warned students would suffer if the Government took away the ability for parents and communities to help build their classrooms and canteens.

The Productivity Commission's recommendation in its draft report *Future Foundations for giving*, has created a huge amount of concern for Independent schools, which educate one in six Australian students.

"Families, alumni and communities currently contribute 86 per cent of the funding used for capital works nationally," ISA Chief Executive Officer Graham Catt said.

"Removing DGR status for school building funds in non-government schools will shift more of the financial burden to these families, who are already trying to deal with a cost-of-living pressures."

Two-thirds of Independent schools receive no government funding for capital expenditure and for many of them, 100 per cent of capital funding is sourced from parents or communities.

"If you make it harder for families and communities to contribute to building schools' classrooms, this will directly impact students – and this would be in the nation's fastestgrowing sector," Mr Catt said.

Enrolments at Australia's Independent schools grew to 17.1 per cent of total enrolments in 2022 from 4.1 per cent in 1970. Government school enrolments have declined in the same period from 78.1 per cent to 64.4 per cent.

Thirty-four per cent of independent schools are in rural and remote Australia and 97 per cent have less than 2,000 students - 11 per cent with fewer than 50.

The number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students at Independent schools has grown 5.8 per cent per year in the past decade, faster than the overall Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population increase of 3.8 per cent. Students with disability represent 22 per cent of the Independent school population.

"One size does not fit all Australian schools – it is more important that every student achieve the best possible outcome in their education."

ISA is the national peak body representing 1,209 Independent schools with 688,638 enrolled students (full time equivalent), accounting for approximately 17 per cent of Australian school enrolments and a workforce of 115,090 people.

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