



MEDIA RELEASE

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NATIONAL CONVERSATION NEEDED ON CAPITAL WORKS TO ENSURE STUDENT OUTCOMES AND SAFETY

Independent Schools Australia (ISA) has called for a national conversation on increased funding and support for capital works in all schools to improve student outcomes and to provide a safe environment.

Independent school parents and communities contribute 86% of their capital works budgets nationally, while six per cent comes from the Commonwealth Government and eight per cent from State and Territory Governments. Two-thirds of Independent schools, which educate one in six Australian students, receive no government funding for capital expenditure.

Independent schools have median fees around \$5,300 and have experienced the largest growth in students, mainly from low to middle income families. While student numbers at Independent schools grew 3.9% for 2023 - highest in low to middle fee schools - numbers grew across all three sectors – placing more pressure on Australia’s classrooms.

“There is growing pressure on school infrastructure, and that requires guaranteed funding into the future to ensure we can deliver the best outcomes for every student,” ISA Chief Executive Officer Graham Catt said.

“While we support the recommendations made today for a capital funding injection for schools, the report unfortunately fails to acknowledge the incredible contribution from Independent school communities and parents to capital projects for future generations.” Mr Catt said.

“It is a challenge for schools in all sectors to meet growing demand, and we need to work together through a national conversation, not encourage division.

“This is a signal for the Federal and State Governments to contribute more and to ensure communities and parents can continue to contribute to build classrooms.

“The Productivity Commission’s draft recommendation to remove deductible gift recipient status (DGR) from schools would impact both government and Independent schools and undermines the future needs of every student in Australia,” Mr Catt said. “A policy direction in conflict with Gonski’s vision of philanthropy in education being supported to grow as an important element of our system.”

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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