



MEDIA RELEASE

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NEW DATA HIGHLIGHTS SURGING DEMAND FOR INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS ACROSS RYDE, EASTWOOD AND EPPING DESPITE COST-OF-LIVING PRESSURES

Families in North West Sydney double the state average for demand as waitlist times grow.

Independent Schools Australia (ISA) today launched new data at Northcross Christian School highlighting the growing demand for choice of schooling across the electorate.

Last year, enrolments at Independent schools [increased](#) by 6% in Bennelong, almost double the NSW state average of 3.1%. This shows that despite being impacted by cost-of-living pressures, more parents are taking advantage of the diversity these schools offer as they decide on the best educational outcome for their child.

Northcross Christian School Principal Catherine Horsburgh said the school received 200 kindergarten applications a year for 50 student places “We have a beautiful school that is providing a wonderful education for our students, but we can’t cater for the demand from the community. The families we can’t accommodate, who are seeking a similar schooling experience, will need to travel over 40 minutes to do so.”

“We were established over 40 years ago and are a beloved part of the community. Our students achieve well above average across NAPLAN results, and we want to continue providing faith-based education for our community, and we need the government’s support to do this.”

Currently 86% of capital income used to build and upgrade facilities to accommodate more students, comes from the parents and school communities at Independent schools.

Independent schools support significant numbers of **students with disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students**, as well as those with a language background other than English. Enrolment growth has been increasing at a higher rate than other sectors for many years.

“We have one of the most diverse and rapidly growing communities in the country, and ensuring we have excellent schools that provide quality educational outcomes for students is essential.” Principal Horsburgh said.

Former student who now sends her children to Northcross Christian School, Rachel Dixon said “I have such fond memories of my time here when I was a child and choosing a school that reflected my family’s values was essential to us.”

“For our family, like many in our community, we feel the pressures with the cost of living and make sacrifices to send our children to Northcross. For us, paying our school fees is as essential as health insurance. Our children have opportunities to learn and grow at Northcross and are supported in a way that really brings the best out of them which is all we could ever hope for as parents.”

CEO of Independent Schools Australia Graham Catt said, “We know that choice is important to parents across Australia, however within this North West Sydney region, there is limited choice for parents when it comes to options for their children’s education.”

“Northcross Christian School is in a thriving area of Sydney, and we support the right of parents throughout Australia to choose which school they send their children to, including if they are seeking a faith-based community and education.” Mr Catt said.

Mr Catt reiterated the importance of meeting the growing demands of the community. “In a growing city like Sydney where demand for affordable housing, secure employment and educational opportunities is rapidly rising, supporting established schools to meet the demands of their community will continue to be a top priority for us.

“We will continue working with the Australian Government to ensure that Independent Schools are supported to continue delivering strong outcomes for students and the communities in which they operate.” Mr Catt said.

Key Facts

- Demand for student growth for independent schools increased by 6% in Bennelong vs NSW state average of 3.1%
- Over the past 50 years, the Independent sector enrolment share has risen from 4 % to 18 %
- There are more than 110,000 students enrolled in 143 Independent special and special assistance schools across Australia which cater to students with disability and other needs
- 1 in 6 students are enrolled in an Independent school
- 83% of Independent schools have a religious affiliation
- 1 in 3 Independent schools are located outside capital cities

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About Independent Schools Australia

Independent Schools Australia represents the national interests of the independent school sector. We work closely with member associations to promote choice, diversity and partnership in education, and we advocate for ongoing and sustainable Australian Government support and fair funding.

* Special Assistance Schools serve young people who are disengaged from education and whose needs are not met by mainstream schools or education services

** Special schools aim to meet the needs of students with disability by providing support and adjustments away from mainstream classrooms.

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