



MEDIA RELEASE

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SCHOOL FUNDING AGREEMENT REMAINS THE MAIN GAME FOLLOWING BUDGET

Independent Schools Australia says that there is little news for school education in tonight's Budget, as States, territories and the Australian Government continue to negotiate funding and the next national schools agreement.

ISA Chief Executive Officer Graham Catt stressed the need to ensure the Government support all students, in all schools and all sectors, including the 1,216 Independent schools that offer families the diversity in education that more and more are choosing for their children.

"Every school should be fully and fairly funded, and we look forward to working with the Government to ensure better outcomes for all Australian children and choice for parents," Mr Catt said. "All schools in all sectors will need resources to enable them to deliver on the Government's ambitions and agenda for education reform."

Enrolments in Independent schools rose by 3.9 per cent in 2023, faster than the population growth of 2.4 per cent. This is also faster than the Catholic sector's 1.4 per cent growth, and the government sector's 0.3 per cent growth.

Mr Catt welcomed the Government's \$2.4 billion in programs to support Indigenous Australians, including \$29.1 million over four years to First Nations early childhood and education peak bodies to advise the Government on issues including a new national First Nations Education Policy and First Nations Teacher Strategy.

"We urge the Government to support the Indigenous Boarding Grants Program in the Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook. This will be critical to prevent school closures and adverse impacts on highly disadvantaged and vulnerable students," Mr Catt said.

The grants were extended in last year's Budget but were intended to be replaced by a longer-term, sustainable solution. However, the outcomes of a Boarding Design Review announced in last year's Budget are unknown, leaving schools and students in limbo.

Mr Catt welcomed the Commonwealth Prac Payment, which will provide much needed financial support to student teachers across all school sectors during their mandatory workplace placements.

"This is a proactive step to help ease cost-of-living pressures on our future educators," Mr Catt said. "Teaching is one of the most vital professions in our society, and it is essential that we attract and retain our teacher workforce into the future."

ISA is the national peak body representing 1,216 Independent schools with close to 720,000 enrolled students, accounting for approximately 17 per cent of Australian school enrolments and a workforce of 122,000 people. Independent schools are diverse, serving a range of different communities across Australia. Independent schools educate over 19,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, including 2,335 boarding students.

For more information – www.isa.edu.au

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ISA Media Contact: Gemma Daley, M 0418 148 821, E Gemma.Daley@isa.edu.au