



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDEPENDENT SCHOOL ENROLMENTS CONTINUE TO SURGE AS FAMILIES PRIORITISE CHOICE AND QUALITY

The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) enrolment data confirms that Independent schools remain the fastest-growing school sector in Australia, with enrolments increasing by 3.9% in 2024.

This continued high growth highlights that despite economic pressures, more families are choosing Independent schools than ever before.

Independent Schools Australia (ISA) Chief Executive Officer, Graham Catt, said the growth shows why Independent schools are an essential part of Australia's education system, supporting students from a wide range of backgrounds.

"These enrolment figures show that families are prepared to make significant sacrifices to provide their children with the education they believe is best for them," Mr Catt said.

"With cost-of-living pressures at an all-time high, families are prioritising investment in their children's futures. They believe this investment is also a critical role for governments, and that their choice of school should be supported - not undermined."

The latest enrolment data release comes as some politicians and groups push for funding cuts to Independent schools, misleadingly labelling them as 'overfunded.'

"The facts tell a different story. On average, Independent school students receive nearly \$10,000 less per student in government funding than public school students," he said.

"Those who talk about and hint at cutting funding to Independent schools are targeting everyday families who already make sacrifices to pay school fees. That means higher fees, fewer opportunities, and more pressure on parents. Families deserve better."

Independent schools serve a wide range of school communities and supports students from all backgrounds, including:

- 60% of Independent school families are from low- to middle-income backgrounds
- 21,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students
- 172,000 students with disability
- More than 18,900 students in Special Assistance Schools

"Independent schools educate students of all backgrounds, and we must ensure they continue to have access to fair funding," Mr. Catt said.

"Every family should have the right to choose the best education for their child - without being penalised for it. With a federal election fast approaching we are calling on all political parties to support family choice and commit to fair funding for Independent school students."

SCHOOL ENROLMENTS AT A GLANCE

Sector	2024 FTE	2023 FTE	Growth 2023-24	Enrolment share 2024
Independent	691,883	666,154	3.9%	16.8%
Catholic	820,061	806,181	1.7%	19.9%
Government	2,614,508	2,609,296	0.2%	63.4%
Australia	4,126,452	4,081,631	1.1%	100.0%

The ABS data includes Independent Catholic schools with 'Catholic.' When including independent Catholic schools, the Independent sector has 1,230 schools, almost 745,000 (744,993) FTE students (sector share of 18.1%) and more than 104,200 (104,237.3) FTE staff.

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL ENROLMENTS BY STATE AND TERRITORY 2023-2024

	2024 FTE	2023 FTE	Growth 2023-24	Enrolment share 2024
NSW	203,071	195,356	3.9%	16.2%
Vic	172,670	165,780	4.2%	16.4%
Qld	152,635	147,039	3.8%	17.3%
SA	55,022	53,691	2.5%	19.5%
WA	79,337	75,779	4.7%	17.3%
Tas	11,317	11,094	2.0%	14.1%
NT	5,978	5,898	1.4%	15.0%
ACT	11,852	11,517	2.9%	15.4%
Australia	691,883	666,154	3.9%	16.8%

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