



MEDIA RELEASE

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TASMANIA TAKES CENTRE STAGE IN NATIONAL SCHOOL CHOICE COUNTS CAMPAIGN

Independent Schools Australia (ISA) has brought its School Choice Counts campaign to Tasmania, highlighting the diverse role that Independent schools play in providing quality education to students from all backgrounds—including those facing significant challenges.

Today's event at Indie School Launceston marks the Tasmanian leg of the national campaign, which represents over 716,000 students nationally, including 11,093 students in 34 Tasmanian Independent schools and a family, teacher, and supporter community of 2.5 million voters nationwide.

ISA CEO Graham Catt said the campaign was driven by feedback from educators and families who want to see fair and stable support for all students, particularly those who need it most.

"This election, we are standing up for the students, parents, and school communities who rely on Independent schools, not just for education, but for critical support services, pastoral care, and specialised learning environments," Mr. Catt said.

"Independent schools in Tasmania serve a diverse range of students—including students with disability, Indigenous students, and those in Special Assistance Schools like Indie School Launceston, which provides vital support for young people facing significant life challenges."

"But instead of recognising the essential role these schools play, misleading rhetoric and political attacks are vilifying Independent schools and the students who attend them. When Independent school families are targeted, it's not just those at high-fee schools who are affected, it's vulnerable students, students with disability, and families who rely on these schools for tailored support."

"These students deserve stable, predictable funding to ensure they get the education and support they need. No school and no child should be left behind because of political agendas."

Executive Director of Independent Schools Tasmania (IST), Tony Crehan said that in Tasmania the median Independent school fee is \$3,390, and that over the period of 2018 to

2023 Independent school enrolments grew by 18.2% compared to 4.9% growth in the Catholic sector and a -4.7% decline in Government school enrolments.

“Independent schools in Tasmania provide diverse and high-quality education options that cater to the needs of students and families. The demand for Independent education is growing, and it’s critical that government policy continues to support parental choice and ensure sustainable funding for all schools,” Mr Crehan said.

“More and more Tasmanian families are choosing Independent schools because they offer the right fit for their children, and they deserve to have that choice protected. In fact, nationwide, we educate more than 140,000 students in regional and remote areas.”

With today’s campaign focus on special assistance schools, Nic Page, Executive Principal of Indie Schools Tasmania, emphasised the importance of providing quality education for some of Australia’s most vulnerable students.

“Independent schools educate more than 15,500 students in Special Assistance Schools who have faced significant life challenges, 157,000 students with disability and 19,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students nationally,” Mr. Page said.

“These aren’t just numbers on a spreadsheet—these are real children, with real families, who rely on the support and tailored education that Independent schools provide.”

“To ensure these students thrive, we advocate for fair and adequate funding for schools serving vulnerable communities and a strong safety net that guarantees that these students and their schools get the resources they need.”

School Choice Counts - Our Five Key Policy Priorities

1. Protecting Family Choice

Independent schools empower families to choose an education that aligns with their values, beliefs, and child’s needs. Many families make significant sacrifices to make this choice—particularly as cost-of-living pressures grow.

- We call for stable, predictable federal funding that keeps school fees affordable.
- We urge all parties to rule out policies that could limit family choice.

2. Ending the Blame Game

Every Australian child deserves access to a high-quality education that meets their unique needs—regardless of the school sector they attend. We need to end the political division.

- A commitment to cross-sector collaboration to address shared challenges.
- A national campaign to promote understanding of how Australia’s education system works.

3. **Supporting Our Most Vulnerable Students**

Independent schools educate thousands of disadvantaged young Australians. To ensure these students thrive:

- We advocate for fair and adequate funding for schools serving vulnerable communities.
- We need a ‘safety net’ to ensure our most disadvantaged students and their schools receive the support they need.

4. **Investing in Cross-Sector Innovation**

Innovation in education benefits all students. To encourage sharing of approaches that support student outcomes and well-being, we propose:

- A \$50 million cross-sectoral innovation fund.
- Support for collaboration between Independent, government, and Catholic schools.

5. **Building Choice into the Future**

Demand for Independent schools is growing, with enrolments projected to rise by over 120,000 students in the next decade. Currently, families and school communities contribute 90% of all capital funding. To meet this demand:

- Increased funding for the Capital Grants Program to help schools expand.
- Adjusted regional loadings to support rural and remote schools.

Mr. Catt emphasised that education policy which negatively impacts Independent schools would hurt vulnerable students the most.

“Politicians who advocate for policies to hurt Independent schools financially are not just targeting children, they are targeting vulnerable students who rely on the support Independent schools provide,” he said.

“We want every child, whether in a public, Catholic, or Independent school, to have access to a great education. But what we won’t stand for is politicians making it harder for families who choose Independent schools.”

“This election, politicians must decide whether they stand with families or against them. We will fight for school choice. And we won’t let Independent school families be ignored.”

“Our parents are watching.”

Visit – <https://schoolchoicecounts.isa.edu.au/> to see the full suite of policies and learn more.

About Independent Schools Australia

Independent Schools Australia (ISA) represents the national interests of the Independent school sector. ISA works closely with member associations to advocate for choice, diversity,

and fair funding—ensuring that all Australian families have access to high-quality education that meets their children’s needs.

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