Education and Training Workforce: Schools

Submission by
The Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA)
to
The Productivity Commission

INTRODUCTION

About ISCA

The Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA) is the peak national body covering the independent schools sector. It comprises the eight State and Territory Associations of Independent Schools. Through these Associations, ISCA represents a sector with 1,090 schools and around 550,000 students, accounting for nearly 16 per cent of Australian school enrolments. ISCA's major role is to bring the unique needs of independent schools to the attention of the Commonwealth Government and to represent the sector on national issues.

Independent schools are a diverse group of non-government schools serving a range of different communities. Many independent schools provide a religious or values-based education. Others promote a particular educational philosophy or interpretation of mainstream education. Independent schools include:

- Schools affiliated with larger and smaller Christian denominations for example, Anglican, Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Lutheran, Uniting Church, Seventh Day Adventist and Presbyterian schools
- Non-denominational Christian schools
- Islamic schools
- Jewish schools
- Montessori schools
- Rudolf Steiner schools
- Schools constituted under specific Acts of Parliament, such as grammar schools in some states
- Community schools
- Indigenous community schools
- Schools that specialise in meeting the needs of students with disabilities
- Schools that cater for students at severe educational risk due to a range of social/ emotional/ behavioural and other risk factors.

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Independent schools are not-for-profit institutions founded by religious or other groups in the community and are registered with the relevant state or territory education authority. Most independent schools are set up and governed independently on an individual school basis. However, some independent schools with common aims and educational philosophies are governed and administered as systems, for example the Lutheran system. Systemic schools account for 17 per cent of schools in the independent sector.

Independent Catholic schools are a significant part of the sector, accounting for 10 per cent of the independent sector's enrolments. These schools have been included in the figures above.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- **Independent schools employ about 16 per cent of all teachers in Australian schools. The enrolment share of students, and therefore the need for teachers, in non-government schools is predicted to continue to grow. Independent schools could require an extra 12,000 teachers by 2020 depending on enrolment growth.**

- **Independent schools need to be able to recruit high quality teachers and leaders appropriate to their communities from a range of backgrounds and experiences.**

- **The autonomy of independent schools enables them to respond flexibly, effectively and creatively to meet the staff workforce needs of their school community.**

- **National standards set the framework for the attraction and retention of quality teachers and leaders.**

- **Flexibility of pathways is another strategy to attract high quality and high achieving students to teacher training courses, and preparing high quality teachers is required to enable schools to meet their future staffing needs.**

- **Ongoing professional learning enables school communities to attract, support and retain quality teachers, leaders, governors and support staff.**

- **Greatly increased government regulation and reporting has had significant implications for staffing in independent schools**.

- **The increasing complexity and time demands of teaching means that some tasks that may have been previously undertaken by teachers are now done by non-teaching staff.**

The Independent Schools Council of Australia (ISCA) is pleased to have this opportunity to make a submission in response to the Productivity Commission's Commissioned Study, Education and Training Workforce: Schools. This submission addresses a range of issues directly related to those raised in the Commission's Schools Workforce Issues Paper, and other issues that are of particular concern to the independent schools sector.

This submission should be read in association with the background information on the sector provided in the Appendix.

AUTONOMOUS NATURE OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

There is a wide range of diversity in the independent school sector; school diversity encompasses size, geographic location, composition, history and educational focus. Independent schools also enrol students from a diverse range of regions, religions and social backgrounds.

Independent schools are located in all areas of Australia including the remotest locations, enrolling students from all backgrounds and catering for the wide range of special educational needs students may require to achieve their education goals.

Many independent schools are faith-based schools with the sector encompassing the full spectrum of faiths across the Australian community including not only the well-known Anglican, Uniting Church and Catholic schools, but also Lutheran, Baptist, Seventh Day Adventist, Islamic, Greek Orthodox, Christian and Jewish schools.

Some independent schools offer an education that emphasises a particular educational philosophy, such as Steiner or Montessori, or offer a specific curriculum, such as the International Baccalaureate.

Unlike other sectors, the majority of independent schools operate autonomously. These schools do not rely on central bureaucracies or bodies, and are separately accountable to their parent and school communities. Most independent schools are set up and governed on an individual school basis. However, some schools with common aims and educational philosophies are governed and administered as systems.

The autonomous governance arrangements of independent schools is the single most important factor that underpins the sector's diversity, and greatly enhances the range of schooling choice for Australian families.

While almost all independent schools choose to become members of their State or Territory Association of Independent Schools (AIS), the AIS does not act as a 'system authority' for the sector.

AISs provide a range of services to member schools. In addition to representing the views of the independent school sector at state and territory level, they administer funding provided by the Australian Government on a range of targeted programs, as well as providing professional learning opportunities, advice and information. Many AISs also offer industrial relations services.

The autonomy of independent schools enables them to respond flexibly, effectively and creatively as professional educational organisations to meet the needs of their school community and to develop, innovate and improve the school to enhance outcomes for students.

The benefits of school autonomy are now being recognised both nationally and internationally. Cross-country analysis of the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results suggests that the prevalence of schools' autonomy to define and elaborate their curricula and assessments relates positively to the performance of school systems, even after accounting for national income[1]. In Australia, there was a small positive association between school autonomy in allocating resources and student performance.[2]

The Australian Government has recognised the benefits of school autonomy reflected in its election commitment to the Empowering Local Schools reform. The Australian Labor Party Campaign media release states that:

"Under the Empowering Local Schools reform, participating schools will have greater responsibility over school budgets, selecting and employing teachers and staff and identifying funding priorities. This will drive improvements in students' achievements and enable schools to better meet the needs of students.

Principals will have the authority to use site managers, business managers and administration staff to handle the operation of the school, freeing up more time for teachers and principals to focus on teaching and learning. They will also be able to hire specialist teachers and support officers for areas of need identified by their school community.

While some government schools already have autonomy, most lack the authority to make key decisions that affect student outcomes and, across the country, attempts to increase local school decision-making in government sector schools have been infrequent and patchy.

A key element of this reform is empowering local school communities to make decisions about what is best for their schools and their students rather than a centralised system run by state bureaucracies dictating staffing mix and resource allocations."[3]

Not only has the Australian Government acknowledged the benefits of school autonomy, but the Western Australian state government has also implemented a policy to offer schools the option of independent status with almost 100 government schools becoming Independent Public Schools from 2011.

Independent school enrolments continue to increase because many parents and community groups find that self-governing schools are more accountable to their immediate communities than is possible for schools that are part of large centralised systems. The steady growth of the independent sector is evidence of the public confidence in the accountability of independent schools through the mix of contribution to education policies, legislative compliance and self-regulation.

- ### Employment/governance arrangements for staff in independent schools

Many independent schools have governance and management arrangements which delegate the day to day responsibilities of the school's education program and staffing to the school's management team, and longer term planning and supervision to Boards of governance. These arrangements mean that school governors and educational management teams are accountable directly to their parent and school communities.

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[1] PISA 2009 Results: What makes a school successful - Resources Policies and Practices OECD
[2] Challenges for Australian Education: Results from PISA 2009, ACER
[3] Prime Minister Campaign Media Release 2 August 2010

Given that independent schools report to and are responsible to their community, an emphasis on fostering a sense of belonging, and listening and responding to the community in order to meet the needs of the community is at the very core of independent schools. Independent schools build this social capital within their own communities through the development of networks among families and organizations within the local and international communities, and through the values that underpin the formal curriculum.

Many schools have a particular ethos and set of values which staff are expected to share. Each independent school or system is an employer, and has staffing policies and guidelines that reflect the school's particular focus and mission. This often means that **schools are able to reinforce their school ethos by employing teachers who share the same philosophy, while at the same time bringing in new skills and fresh approaches.**

- ***Accountability and regulation***

With comprehensive governance and regulatory mechanisms with regard to school staff already in place, the independent schools sector would argue that any consideration of future **accountability requirements should be balanced by a commitment to the innovation and diversity that characterises independent education.**

Accountability reporting should be designed, co-ordinated and rationalised so as to minimise the administrative burdens placed on schools. This is particularly relevant in a federal system of government with different layers of accountability requirements, and is especially important for non-systemic schools and small school systems which do not have the support of large bureaucracies.

TEACHERS

- ***Overview of the Teacher workforce in the Independent Sector***

Independent schools in Australia employ approximately 75,000 staff members in total, of which 47,000 are full time or part time teachers. This equates to approximately 40,000 full time equivalent teachers. **Independent schools employ the full time equivalent of about 15,500 primary teachers and around 25,000 secondary teachers.** This equates to about 16 per cent of all teachers in Australian schools.

Table 1: Teachers in the independent sector by gender and level (FTE), 2010

	Primary	%	Secondary	%
Male	3,568	23%	11,115	45%
Female	11,956	77%	13,695	55%
Total	15,523	100%	24,810	100%

Source: ABS *Schools Australia*

Educating over half a million students, the teachers within independent schools practice their profession in a diverse range of environments and settings. From the high profile, older, more established schools to the smaller and newer schools, located across metropolitan, regional and remote regions; each school is different and promotes its own teaching approaches.

Research conducted by ISCA in 2007 showed that 'good teachers' was resoundingly the most important factor influencing parents' decision making in choosing an independent school education for their children. The research confirmed that parents see teachers as pivotal in the development of their children's academic, moral and life skills. **Ensuring that there is a future supply of high quality teachers, whether experienced or newly graduated, is of central importance to independent schools.**

In support of providing a rounded education, teachers in independent schools often have responsibilities that extend beyond delivery of the school's classroom curriculum to also include participation and supervision of extra-curricular activities. Extra-curricular responsibilities, which may include social, cultural, academic and sporting groups, clubs, and activates, often take place outside of 'normal school hours'; such as before and after school, evenings, on weekends, and during school holidays. It is usually the case that schools include teacher extra-curricular requirements in their industrial agreements.

The Staff in Australia's Schools Survey (SiAS) was commissioned by the Australian Government in 2006 with the intention of providing detailed information of the teacher workforce at that time in order to assist with future planning. The report was published in 2007.[4]

While not all results in SiAS 2007 are disaggregated by sector, those that are indicate that the profile of the independent schools workforce (as measured in the survey) is broadly in alignment with government and Catholic sectors.

The findings of SiAS 2007 indicated that 84% of secondary teachers in independent schools were either 'Very Satisfied' or 'Satisfied' with their job. SiAS 2007 did not report on primary teachers' job satisfaction by sector.

- *Student/teacher ratios*

Generally, student to teaching staff ratios have decreased across all states and territories, school levels and sectors in the last four decades.

Several factors contributed to an increasing demand for teachers. These included expanded curriculum offerings, commitments to achieving smaller class sizes, especially in primary schools, and raising the minimum leaving age by state and territory governments, and the trend for greater numbers of students to participate in school education beyond the minimum leaving age.

Table 2: Student/ teacher ratios, 1973 – 2010

Year	Government		Non-Government			
			Catholic		Independent	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
1973	25.1	16.2	29.6	22.2	17.1	14.2
1980	20.2	12.2	23.9	16.6	17.3	13.3
1990	17.9	12.0	21.1	14.0	16.9	12.2
2000	17.1	12.6	19.1	13.4	15.7	11.4
2010	15.4	12.3	17.6	12.8	14.9	10.5

Source: ABS *Schools Australia*

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[4] McKenzie, P., Kos, J., Walker, M., & Hong, J. *Staff in Australia's Schools 2007*. ACER

In the independent sector student/teacher ratios have been reduced from 17.3 for primary students and 13.3 for secondary students in 1980 to 14.9 for primary students and 10.5 for secondary students in 2010.

While Table 2 above shows that reductions in student/teachers ratios have been greater in the government and Catholic sectors, the table also indicates that this is partly due to the far higher starting ratios in those sectors. It is also worth noting that, in 2010, ratios remain lower in the independent sector than in either the government or Catholic sector.

Historically, for independent schools, decreasing and maintaining student to teaching staff ratios has been a key component of a school's expenditure.

The increasing costs of schooling reflect wage increases for teaching and support staff, the increasing investment in schools demanded by curriculum and technological change, lower student-to-teacher ratios and higher general staffing levels.

The Average Government School Recurrent Costs (AGSRC) Index which is based on government school expense data is an indirect measure used to calculate the increases in schooling costs.

Government funding to independent schools, which is indexed according to movements in AGSRC, represents only a proportion of income for most independent schools. For the majority of independent schools, the bulk of their income is raised from fees and other private sources.

Figure 1 below, which compares the growth of AGSRC to CPI and Average Weekly Earnings, demonstrates the greater rate of increase in the cost of schooling than for many other services in the community.

Figure 1: AGSRC, CPI and Average Weekly Earnings, 1999 - 2008
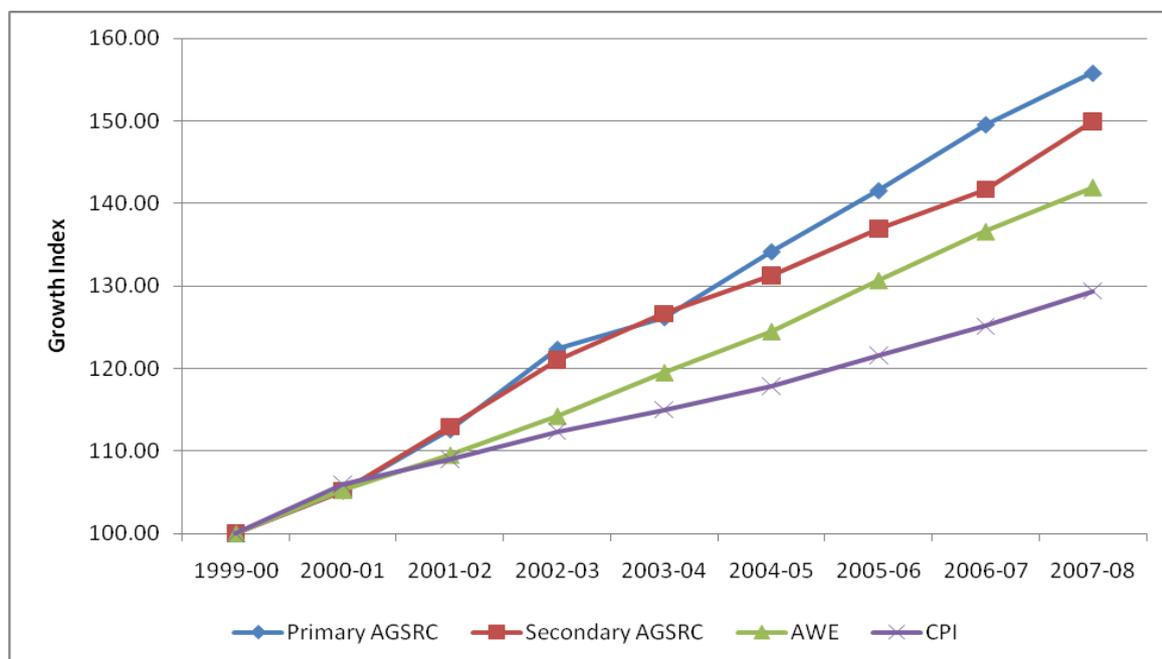
Source: DEEWR & ABS

It is, and will continue to be, a significant challenge for independent schools to ensure affordability of fees for the school community while also taking these upward cost pressures into account.

While the number of school teachers relative to students increased in recent times, an ageing teaching workforce with many teachers nearing retirement has implications for how effectively the demand for school teachers can be met in the future.

- ***Growth of enrolments in the independent sector***

As the *Schools Workforce Issues Paper* notes, **the enrolment share of students in non-government schools has been growing steadily over the last thirty years and as a result of this growth a greater proportion of the schools' workforce is employed in non-government schools**[5]. The *Issues Paper* also notes that **this trend is expected to continue in the foreseeable future**[6]. Further background information on the growth of enrolments in independent schools can be found in the Appendix below.

Over the period 1985 to 2010 enrolments in Australian schools grew by around 480,710 students. Of these enrolments, 289,520 or 60 per cent were in independent schools.

Data would indicate that much of the growth in the independent sector has been met through increasing the size of existing independent schools, with existing schools increasing the number of year levels offered, and the size of enrolment intakes across year levels. This is a reflection of the considerable lead time and outlay required to establish a new independent school. There is evidence of unmet demand in many areas of the independent sector with independent schools in many areas having lengthy waiting lists.

However, for the independent sector it is important not just to look at the historical trends in school enrolments, but also to examine projected enrolment change. Table 4 below shows projected enrolment change across all sectors by primary/secondary for the period 2010 – 2020. The projections in this table are sourced from DEEWR enrolment projections and ABS Schools Australia current 2010 data. These projections show the historical trend of the independent sector's increasing share of enrolments continuing. Of particular note is the growth in secondary school enrolments which is highest in both percentage share and absolute numbers.

- ***Enrolment growth implications***

Based on DEEWR projections, by 2020 Australia will need a further 2,000 schools to accommodate more than 700,000 additional enrolments.

Table 3 shows enrolment growth in independent schools is projected to continue to outpace government and Catholic school growth over the next ten years. These projections indicate that independent schools will need to accommodate an additional 150,000 students which equates to an additional 310 schools in the sector.

Future funding arrangements will need to consider not only the historical but also the projected enrolment growth patterns across the schooling sectors.

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[5] Pages 5 & 6
[6] Page 5

Table 3: Projected enrolment change in all schools, 2010 - 2020

	2010	2020	Change (no.)	Equivalent no. of new schools*
Government Schools				
Primary	1,389,263	1,754,541	365,278	1,081
Secondary	893,094	942,649	49,555	147
Total	2,282,357	2,697,190	414,833	1,227
Catholic Schools				
Primary	390,532	492,573	102,041	244
Secondary	322,757	367,737	44,980	108
Total	713,289	860,310	147,021	352
Independent Schools				
Primary	230,532	302,722	72,190	149
Secondary	260,701	338,548	77,847	161
Total	491,233	641,270	150,037	311
All Schools				
Primary	2,010,327	2,549,836	539,509	1,474
Secondary	1,476,552	1,648,934	172,382	415
Total	3,486,879	4,198,770	711,891	1,890

Source: DEEWR Projections and ABS *Schools Australia*
*Based on average school size by sector for 2010 derived from ABS data.

Table 4 below provides an indication of the impact of these enrolment projections for the independent sector including an estimate of the number of new schools that would be required to accommodate these additional enrolments.

Table 4: Projected enrolment change in independent schools, 2010 - 2020

	2010	2020	Change in student numbers	Equivalent number of new schools*
Primary	230,532	302,722	72,190	149
Secondary	260,701	338,548	77,847	161
Total	491,233	641,270	150,037	311

Source: DEEWR Projections and ABS *Schools Australia* 2010
*In 2010 the average size of an independent school was approximately 483 students

These projected enrolment figures have significant implications for the Australian Government and state and territory governments, education systems and providers. Not only will there be significant recurrent costs in educating this increase in enrolments, there will also need to be significant investment in capital infrastructure and human resources.

Critical to the capacity for the independent sector to meet parental demand for an independent education for their children will be the capacity of government funding arrangements to support the maintenance and growth of independent schools.

- ***Independent sector growth has implications for teacher workforce***

These projected student enrolments over the coming decade provide a rough estimate of projected teacher demand requirements in the independent sector by levels of schooling.

On the basis of the projected growth of enrolments in primary schools in the independent sector of approximately 72,000 students, and assuming that the independent primary school student/teacher ratio of 14.9 is to remain at 2010 levels, **schools in the independent sector will require a further 4,845 primary teachers.**

Similarly, **the projected growth of enrolments** in secondary schools in the independent sector of approximately 78,000 students, assuming that the independent secondary school student/teacher ratio of 10.5 will remain at 2010 levels, **will mean that schools in the sector will require a further 7,400 secondary teachers.**

The extra teachers required in the independent sector, at both primary and secondary level, in order to accommodate the projected extra enrolments **is around 12,260 in total. This will increase the number of full time equivalent teachers in independent schools from over 40,000 currently to approximately 52,500 in 2020.**

Table 5: Projected additional teachers required in independent schools, 2010 - 2020

	Student/Teacher Ratio	Projected Additional Student Enrolments	Projected Additional Teachers Required
Primary	14.9	72,190	4,845
Secondary	10.5	77,847	7,414
Total		150,037	12,259

Source: DEEWR Projections and ABS *Schools Australia*, 2010

- ***Credentials of teachers in the sector***

Teachers within the independent schools sector are required to meet the same level of credentials as teachers in the Catholic and government sectors, with certain requirements to be met before they can teach. The arrangements vary between states and territories but these requirements include appropriate qualifications, registration with the relevant authority, agreeing to abide by a Code of Ethics, and proficiency in the English language.

Most states and territories have some provision allowing schools to employ teachers without formal teaching qualifications for certain subjects such as trades, music, art and chaplaincy. Also, most states and territories conduct criminal background checks before registering a teacher and some have, or are developing, professional standards which all teachers working within the jurisdiction will need to meet.

Beyond meeting these requirements, the sector seeks to facilitate and maintain high levels of teacher quality. The quality of teaching within a school affects student learning and results, and the school's reputation.

- *Sector diversity means a diversity of teachers are required*

As noted above, independent schools are usually established and developed through community groups in order to meet particular local schooling needs. Most often these communities have their basis in a particular religious or faith tradition. Other school communities are formed around a common education philosophy or to meet the social or learning needs of students.

The inherent diversity of the independent sector is reflected in the attitudes schools have in relation to teacher employment issues. **Schools need to recruit teachers appropriate to their communities from a range of backgrounds and experiences** in order to meet the needs of their existing and growing enrolments.

Teachers employed in an independent community school for Indigenous students in remote areas, or a special schools for students with disabilities, or a school providing boarding facilities to rural and remote students, or a school committed to alternative learning environments all require a particular set of skills and knowledge in order to assist students to meet their educational goals.

The expectation is that teachers will not only concentrate on teaching their subject but also on the development of individual students. They are also encouraged to contribute to the broader life of the school through pastoral care programmes, sporting commitments, tutor groups, cultural activities, outdoor education and other activities.

It is significant that, unlike other sectors, the responsibility for the selection and employment conditions of teaching staff in independent schools rests with the school itself.

Some independent schools with common aims and educational philosophies are governed and administered as systems. Several of the groups within the sector, such as the Lutheran Education Australia (LEA), Christian Schools Australia (CSA), The Australian Association of Christian Schools (AACS) and Adventist Schools Australia, as well as schools providing a particular curriculum or educational philosophy such as Montessori, Steiner, and the International Baccalaureate, have well established relationships with tertiary education institutions, to qualify existing or pre-service teachers to meet the group's particular needs.

However, the vast majority of schools in the sector meet their teaching staff requirements by employing existing teachers from other schools and beginning teachers who have graduated from public universities.

A significant proportion (63 percent) of independent schools are combined primary/secondary schools. **Many independent schools have structures that are different from the traditional primary/secondary divide**, such as schools offering early childhood education and middle school provision, and those following educational philosophies such as Montessori and Steiner schools.

A number of universities offer a range of teacher education courses based on the identification of a comprehensive list of areas of specialisations, including Early Childhood or Junior Primary, Middle School, Primary and Secondary as well as Special Needs and Vocational Education. However, many teacher education institutions continue to structure their programs around a split between primary and secondary education training which goes back many decades. There is a case in the light of societal and educational developments over recent years, in areas such as improved understanding of brain development and its link to learning, to review the appropriateness of the traditional divide.

ISCA suggests that more **teacher education institutions should be encouraged to examine the merits of designing courses based on a recognition of the different phases of learning** and of the need for teachers to address appropriately the particular requirements of students in each learning phase.

- ***Teacher Accreditation and Standards***

With following principles in mind, ISCA is supportive of the decision of the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) to establish a national system for the accreditation of pre-service teacher education programs and MCEECDYA's other work of seeking national consistency in teacher registration and professional standards.

With reference to Accreditation, ISCA's Position Statement highlights the following:
- The independent sector supports cooperative approaches for registration and accreditation of teachers and for recognition of teacher qualifications.
- Registration and accreditation requirements should recognise differing pathways and qualifications for teachers.
- The accreditation of programs for the professional preparation of teachers needs to be consistent but not necessarily uniform across the states and territories.
- ISCA seeks to be involved in national approaches to improving teacher accreditation arrangements.

ISCA is supportive of the general approach taken to introduce both the *Accreditation of initial teacher education programs in Australia: Standards and Procedures* and the *National Professional Standards for Teachers*. In particular, ISCA is supportive of the high level of expectations in these Standards for selection criteria and entry requirements for pre-service teacher education programs, and at each career stage for qualified teachers.

Given the challenges presented by the ageing of the overall teacher workforce, and the specific challenges to independent schools of significant enrolment growth, ISCA welcomes these initiatives to attract, develop and maintain a high quality future supply of teachers to meet the projected demand.

While supportive of these initiatives, there is an awareness in the sector of potential implications that the introduction of these Standards may have on the work load of school staff, both teaching and administration. This is particularly so for recently established schools in the sector who not only employ a greater percentage of their staff as graduate teachers but are also potentially the least equipped schools to have the resources, both financial and human, to take graduates through the registration and accreditation process.

- ***Ongoing Professional Learning***

As an employing authority, independent schools have a strong interest in choosing wisely and looking after their staff. The teaching environment continues to grow in complexity with the increased use of information and communications technologies (ICT) within schools, the introduction of national and state based curriculum demands and changes such as NAPLAN and the Australian Curriculum, provision of more co-curricular activities, responding to students with special needs, increasingly complex reporting requirements, heightened measures to ensure the safety of students,

responding to students and families social and emotional needs, and many other activities and initiatives.

In such an environment, it is important that proactive measures are undertaken to support teachers in responding effectively to these changes. **Independent schools are aware that provision of ongoing professional learning enables their school community to attract, support and retain quality teachers.**

Being autonomous organisations, individual independent schools also cover the cost of providing teacher relief.

In relation to professional learning, ISCA holds the following principles:
- Ongoing professional learning is vital for teachers to be able to maintain their currency of information about teaching and learning as well as to improve levels of performance and student learning outcomes.
- Professional learning must recognise that individual state and territory requirements for teacher registration are different.
- Financial support from governments for professional learning to improve the quality of teaching is essential.
- Independent schools should be able to determine professional learning programs appropriate to their individual school requirements.

Schools and the state and territory Associations of Independent Schools (AISs) place strong emphasis on the value of induction programmes for new teachers and ongoing professional learning. Schools invest considerable time and resources in providing and releasing teachers for ongoing professional learning to ensure a quality education for students.

State and Territory AISs provide support for schools and teachers by organising professional learning programs across a variety of issues. Many AISs have established dedicated centres for teacher quality and excellence in order to run these programs.

- ***Flexibility is required to meet future staffing needs***

A degree of flexibility in attracting, sourcing and preparing teachers is required to enable schools to meet their future staffing needs. This may involve the development and use of innovative programs that are appropriate to the diverse backgrounds and needs of students, schools and prospective teachers.

It is important to ensure that appropriate pathways are offered to attract high quality and high achieving students into teacher training courses, at both undergraduate and graduate levels. High quality students must include those with a depth of subject knowledge that has been gained in a first degree other than education.

The **independent sector notes recent government initiatives**, such as Teach Next, **to attract talented people from outside teaching profession seeking career change** – for example from industry, business, arts and music fields.

The sector encourages attempts to bring qualified teachers who are not currently in the schools workforce back to the classroom. The sector is also aware that a qualified teacher is not necessarily a

quality teacher, especially in light of national policies in relation to Standards and registration requirements.

Flexibility may be required to enable schools to fill gaps in their workforce dues to the ageing workforce and retirements. Incentives to help schools identify, develop and provide innovative approaches to job design, such as in the area of job sharing arrangements may be one way for this issue to be addressed.

- ***Teacher Pay***

Teachers' salaries and conditions of employment vary from school to school. All States and Territories have awards, some independent schools have certified agreements and some schools negotiate pay and conditions for teachers on an individual basis.

The variation in salaries in independent schools can reflect the charitable ethos of the school or more out of school hour activities or supervision that teachers may be required to undertake.

As **independent schools are individually responsible for maintaining the financial resources to pay their teachers**, they must also make future planning provision to take into account matters such as long service leave. Long service leave liability, and the accounting planning required as a result, falls on individual schools not a system authority. Schools must therefore maintain financial reserves to service this liability.

As this is not the case in other sectors, these reserves have an unequal impact on the financial reporting details of independent schools.

There has been public debate in recent years of the role that performance or merit based pay may play in attracting people to the teacher workforce.

ISCA's Position Statement establishes the following principles on this issue:
- Performance based pay for teachers warrants consideration if it has a role to play in:
  - attracting and retaining high quality teachers
  - developing teacher leaders
  - enhancing student learning outcomes.
- ISCA would support a serious examination of a standards based approach to performance pay.
- Consideration of performance based pay must take account of the impact of any model on student learning.
- The complexity of teaching and other variables influencing student learning outcomes should be acknowledged.
- ISCA seeks to be engaged in the development of public policy on the issue of performance pay for teachers.
- ISCA does not support mandated requirements from governments for performance based pay schemes.

In May 2011 the Australian Government, in keeping with its 2010 pre-election commitment, announced new funding to start the delivery of Australia's first national system of pay bonuses for around 25,000 of our best teachers. The first bonuses will be based on performance in the 2013 school year and paid in early 2014. ISCA is working with the Australian Government on how this policy might be implemented in independent schools.

- **Teacher shortages**

The supply of teachers in independent schools is currently broadly in balance with the demand across Australia; however **teacher shortages across the whole schools sector continue to be an issue in some subject areas and in some geographic locations**.

Schools continue to have difficulty recruiting teachers in maths and science, particularly in the higher level courses, and also in higher level English such as the extended classes of Years 11 and 12. These shortages indicate the importance of recruiting teachers who are competent to teach at all levels of the subject within the school.

Other subject areas experiencing teacher shortages are economics, Languages Other Than English (LOTE), and technology. Higher salaries within the corporate sector are attracting technology teachers and staff.

A shortage of available teachers in particular subject areas or for particular levels of schooling may result in a greater instance of teachers teaching outside of their major area of study than schools would prefer.

The situation is exacerbated for schools in rural areas, and even more so for those in remote areas. **Schools can have greater difficulty attracting staff, and retention is always an issue**. Many teachers are unfamiliar with life in a rural or remote setting and are reluctant to take up such employment, or, following recruitment to such locations do not stay long. Living in Australia's remote areas is challenging, and the few opportunities for professional learning can create a sense of isolation. Fortunately, the increasing use of ICT for this purpose is reducing the problem.

Teachers in rural and remote areas face additional challenges accessing professional learning since relief teachers and casual relief teachers for short term situations are scarce. Schools in these areas tend to be smaller, with fewer staff, so covering staff absences from within is difficult, particularly for senior secondary levels. As a result, the norm is for teachers in these areas to leave after one year's service, although two to three years' service is not unusual.

- **Rural & remote**

The cost to schools located in regional and remote locations associated with retaining quality staff and providing them with professional learning opportunities is significant. The expense of recruiting quality long term and temporary staff, and providing them with high quality professional learning opportunities requires major financial and time resources.

A lack of applicants for positions means that quality staff may need to be brought in from outside of the local area. The financial costs associated with relocation, including transport, and sometimes accommodation, are significant.

Similarly, ensuring that staff have adequate access to professional learning means accessing opportunities in other locations which carries both time and financial cost factors. Regional schools estimate that around ten per cent of staff professional learning is able to be provided locally, therefore staff must travel to gain access to most professional learning opportunities. Current developments in the use of ICT delivery for professional learning by AISs will assist facilitate greater access in the future.

Naturally, opportunities for professional learning in remote and very remote areas are even fewer and costlier. Costs to rural and regional schools for travel, accommodation and replacement teachers are significant.

Teaching staff with knowledge of current curriculum and pedagogical approaches are vital to maintain and lift educational standards and raise student awareness of what school and post-school educational opportunities are available.

SCHOOL LEADERS

- *Leaders in independent schools*

The typical independent school community is likely to include a broader range of leadership positions than may be found in other sectors. **The autonomous nature of independent schools means that each individual school is responsible for staffing, financing and providing services that in other sectors may be provided by a central system authority.**

On this basis, independent schools will often need to employ leaders in identified positions such as those with a specific focus on financial administration, building management, and legal and/or other regulatory compliance.

Additionally, significant leadership positions in independent schools, such as the principal, curriculum director, and lead teacher, are likely to be accountable for a wider range of responsibilities, and as such require a different skill set, as similarly named positions in other sectors.

The required skill set is likely to be determined by the unique character and nature of each school and, as with all positions in the education sector, will develop and change over time necessitating ongoing revision and professional learning on the part of the leader.

- *Relationship between autonomy of independent schools and leadership in sector*

The greatest asset of independent schools in Australia has been their relative degree of autonomy as individual organisations. **Autonomy of independent schools has significant implications for the role and responsibilities of the principal.**

Autonomy tends to increase the range of accountabilities of school boards, principals and staff. This is because the accountabilities of independent schools do not begin and end with national and state educational authorities, but also include high levels of accountability to fee-paying parents and students, and affiliated organisations and founders.

Hence, **the greater the autonomy of a school, the more its principal, board and staff bear responsibilities to meet the priorities of the school community, and to develop and improve the school**.

Autonomy enables schools to respond flexibly as professional educational organisations to changed circumstances. This in turn enables independent schools communities to develop, innovate and improve the school through staffing appointments, curricular and co-curricular offerings, capital development plans, and allocation of school resources, in order to meet the needs of their school community and directly enhance outcomes for students.

Most governing bodies implement a model of leadership that clearly differentiates between governance and management, whereby the management, business and operational aspects of the school are the responsibility of the principal.

The principal oversees the educational programs and developments in the school (and in the broader educational community) and must keep board members informed of these issues. This is achieved through clearly defined delegations, giving the principal autonomy in the appointment of school staff, the enrolment of students and the development of curriculum and co-curricular program.

The governing body is responsible for all financial matters, strategic planning and long-term directions and these responsibilities are undertaken in partnership with the school principal. The school's governing body generally appoints the school principal and in some cases, other senior staff members.

The line between governance and management essentially denotes a separation between policy and administration. The board deals with policy issues and the principal runs the school on a day-to-day basis. The authority reserved to the board and the management powers delegated to the principal are generally well documented so that all parties are clear as to their responsibilities.

Although the principal usually occupies a unique position in a managerial sense, in order to achieve good governance practices the principal often has managerial roles, responsibility and accountability similar to those of the Chief Executive Officer of a commercial undertaking.

Independent schools are able to appoint their own staff. **Typically, a school principal has the authority to advertise for and select staff, and negotiate employment conditions.** This autonomy ensures that the principal can make his or her own decisions about staff appointments, and know that prospective staff are freely choosing a school and are motivated to work successfully within it. **The principal is however, bound by jurisdictional legislation relating to qualifications of staff.**

- *Future planning for leaders*

In the same way that the diversity of schools in the independent sector has implications for the diversity of teachers required by schools in the sector, so too are there implications for the future planning for leaders of independent schools. **Independent school communities need to recruit, train and mentor leaders who are appropriate to their communities, from a range of backgrounds and experiences, with the particular skill set that each school community may require.**

Some systems within the sector have particular requirements, in additional to educational and leadership qualifications and experience, for principals to meet. Recognising that the ongoing success and growth of their schools relies on well qualified, effective, flexible and creative leaders, some systems, for example Lutheran Education Australia, have developed leadership programs for current and prospective leaders, which includes both formal and informal elements to further develop the personal and professional capabilities of principals and other senior school staff. These elements may include mentoring, personal portfolios and other reflective tools, formal postgraduate study, and personal learning opportunities in areas such as finance, leadership and educational administration.

Many schools within the sector are also able to access learning opportunities and support that may be offered by their state or territory AIS. For example, **a number of AISs have established dedicated centres**, such as the AISNSW Leadership Centre and the ISQ Centre for Educational Leadership and

Innovation, **which offer an extensive range of professional learning opportunities for the training, development and extension of prospective and existing school leaders**.

The independent sector also welcomes government initiatives to train, develop and mentor leaders, such as 'Leading Curriculum Change', 'Leading Australia's Schools', the National Professional Standard for Principals, and The School Leadership Development Strategies Clearinghouse, offered by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership.

- *Leadership through independent school boards*

Boards of governors or committees of management are the key decision-making bodies for most independent schools and are responsible for issues such as the provision of education within the school, current and future development, and staffing. While most independent schools are managed by their own board of governors or management committee, some independent schools with common aims and educational philosophies are governed within small approved systems[7].

Self-management is not only the key to ensuring independent schools are responsive to their communities, it is the primary means by which independent schools meet public standards of social and financial accountability. Like the members of a corporate board, **independent school governors are individually and collectively responsible for compliance with the legislation, regulation and mandatory reporting requirements that apply to schools**. Because independent schools are corporate entities or incorporated associations, governors are also responsible for making sure their school meets the same standards of business operation and reporting expected of other corporations.

The principal may or may not be a member of the board.

In 2008 ISCA published a survey[8] that explores the range of governance models with the sector and identified typical board challenges.

The survey results show that, across the sector:
- Independent schools have healthy governance arrangements in place. Schools are established under recognised legal arrangements, are guided by principles of governance, have policies in place to inform their deliberations, are supported by committees, have broad representation, and review their performance regularly.
- Board chairs and principals have a good understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities and are satisfied with the relationships in place. They are cognisant of the challenges facing them both now and in the future, and are keen to take action to address them.
- Membership of independent school governing bodies is determined either by election, nomination or, as is the case with nearly half of the governing bodies in this survey, by a mixture of both.
- Board members generally serve a fixed term on their school governing body, and commonly for a period of 3 years, but multiple terms of membership are also possible.
- Board members are volunteers in the school community; no school in the survey paid sitting fees to members of their school governing body.

The two biggest challenges currently being faced by schools are achieving the right skills mix on the governing body and succession plans for principal and chair.

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[7] Systemic schools account for 17% of schools in the independent sector.
[8] *Governance in Australian Independent Schools.* Independent Schools Council of Australia: Canberra, 2008

Some issues were expected to present a greater challenge in the future than is currently the case, such as managing the turnover of governing body members, difficulties in leadership recruitment, and attracting members to the governing body.

When given the opportunity to elaborate on the challenges for schools, principals and chairs reported that recruitment and retention of board members who are both well qualified and understand governance was difficult. This was often because of the increasing demands on people's time which affects their ability to contribute, the intensity of the commitment in new schools, multiple roles of board members on both the governing body and subcommittees.

Appropriate and targeted professional learning is therefore critical to provide governors with the skills they need. **Nearly all governing bodies provide some professional learning or resources to members of the school governing body.**

Many AISs have considerable expertise in governance matters and offered highly professional governance training to member schools. AISs can provide expert advice to boards and principals on different governance models for schools, reviewing governance arrangements and resolving governance issues, and are often able to provide professional learning opportunities.

A good example of this type of support for school boards is ISV's *Across the Board* on-line searchable resource which seeks to assist school boards to meet community expectations by quickly providing best practice information. Member schools' board members and principals have access to *Across the Board* and supporting advisory services and training packages. The material was produced by Dibbs Abbott Stillman Lawyers with input from SACS Consulting, Noel Waite of the Waite Group and Independent Schools Victoria board members and Secretariat.

OTHER MEMBERS OF SCHOOL WORKFORCE

- *Non-teaching and administration staff*

In addition to the almost 47,000 teachers employed in the sector, **independent schools also employ approximately 28,000 non-teaching staff.** Non-teaching staff may include educational or financial administrators, counsellors, psychologists and other health professionals, boarding staff, chaplains, maintenance and building staff, ICT support staff, and specialist curriculum support staff.

Table 6: Ratio of non-teaching staff to teachers, 2010

Sector	Teaching staff	Non-teaching staff	Total numbers	Ratio of teaching to non-teaching staff
Independent	46,999	27,898	74,897	1.7
Catholic	55,411	25,934	81,345	2.1
Government	183,725	89,966	273,691	2.0
TOTAL	286,135	143,798	429,933	2.0

Source: ABS *Schools Australia*

The lower ratio of non-teaching staff to teachers in the independent sector reflects the great diversity schools in the sector, particularly the 152 boarding schools and the non-teaching staff required to meet the day to day requirements of providing facilities in those schools.

The increasing complexity and time demands of teaching means that some tasks that may have been previously undertaken by teachers are now done by non-teaching staff.

The increasing employment of non-teaching staff also reflects the increased need for schools to provide pastoral care services in order to support students and families' social and emotional needs, and the increasing investment by schools demanded by curriculum and technological change which require provision of on-site ICT support.

Independent schools have a greater range of accountabilities than any other type of school in Australia due to the complex mix of their responsibilities to stakeholders, different levels of government, authorities, and their legal obligations as incorporated bodies. Independent schools are increasingly concerned about the effect of greatly increased government regulation and reporting that is now required as a condition of public funding.

ISCA's 2008 governance survey revealed that more than two-thirds of principals and chairs of school boards confirmed that reporting and compliance requirements, and the financial accountability of schools were significant challenges for schools and expected them to become more of a challenge in the future. Data collection was also expected to become more of a challenge for schools in the future.

Increased reporting and compliance requirements have a direct impact on school resources and autonomy. As independent schools are autonomous, reporting and compliance requirements can only be completed at the school level. Independent schools have no central system authority to undertake this work, nor generally can the cost be shared across a range of schools.

The greatly increased government regulation and reporting has had, among other issues, a significant implication for staffing in independent schools. As independent schools are autonomous organisations and do not rely on a central authority to meet regulation and reporting costs, individual schools are required to employ non-teaching staff to oversee and administer the school's responsibilities.

Table 7: FTE student and staff change, 1999 – 2010

Sector	Students	Teachers	Non-Teaching
Independent	148,050 (43.0%)	14,066 (53.5%)	9,789 (100.6%)
Catholic	77,785 (12.2%)	8,416 (21.6%)	7,116 (70.0%)
Government	32,796 (1.5%)	13,214 (8.8%)	21,783 (55.7%)

Source: ABS *Schools Australia*

Employing non-teaching staff to meet increasing government regulation and reporting is a significant reason why there has been over 100% growth in non-teaching staff employed in independent schools since 1999. This growth has far exceeded the growth in student enrolments and teachers employed in the sector.

Table 7 also shows that growth in employment of non-teaching staff has also been greater in the independent sector than in either the government or Catholic sectors.

The staff necessary to administer increasing government reporting requirements often required to have specialised skills and expertise. Attracting, skilling and retaining such support staff can often be a challenge for schools.

- *Parental involvement/volunteers*

As with all schools around Australia, **school communities in the independent sector rely on a wide network** of extended families, parents, alumni, friends, the local community, religious community and so on **to be involved in a range of activities and support that enable the school to operate effectively and efficiently**.

Activities in which volunteers may be involved include: the canteen, the uniform/book shop, working bees, fundraising, in-class support (listening to reading etc), parents associations, camps and excursions, the library, membership on the school board and/or associated committees, school community activities and events such as fairs, markets, picnics, fetes, and concerts.

For some schools family volunteering has a specific place embedded within the school's educational philosophy.

Many parents, families and community members want to be involved as a sign of their commitment to the school community.

Those people who provide support in this way are highly valued by independent school communities.

As with other organisations, the regulatory environment of volunteers' work is similar to that for paid employees with regard to OHS, insurance, Working with Children requirements and such like.

As with other community groups and organisations that rely on community involvement and volunteering, independent schools expect challenges in meeting their needs in the future. A combination of issues such as an aging population, time poor families and more people working are likely to mean that attracting and retaining a volunteer workforce is increasingly difficult. The result is that work that may have previously been done by volunteers increasingly needs to be a paid position. This adds to the already strong upwards pressure on the cost of schooling.

OTHER KEY ISSUES FOR THE SECTOR

The *Schools Workforce Issues Paper* identifies the potential significant impact that recent national policy and reform initiatives could have on the schools workforce[9].

The independent sector agrees that many national policy initiatives will have a direct impact on the future schools workforce, particularly in regard to the attraction, retention, and performance management of quality teachers.

Processes for implementing policy initiatives have not often been conducive to ensuring adequate consultation, reasonable timeframes or necessary flexibility.

The three Smarter Schools National Partnerships provide an example of where funding for all three sectors in each state and territory was provided by the Australian Government to the states and territories. In order to access funding under these National Partnerships the independent sector had to work with the education authority in their state and territory. This model of funding is not considered by the independent sector to have been an efficient or effective approach to delivering funding to independent schools for a range of reasons.

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[9] Page 11

These reasons primarily involve bureaucratic processes and lack of autonomy and flexibility in decision making for the sector because:

- Implementing the partnerships involved an additional overlay of both Federal and State bureaucracy resulting in significant additional costs in terms of time, funding and delays to implementation;
- Systemic approaches to funding and initiatives undertaken did not recognise the needs or context of independent schools and were consequently not readily transferrable to independent schools;
- The bureaucratic processes meant that agreements were still being negotiated and no funding had been provided to independent schools more than a year after the initiative had been announced; and
- The identification of schools and the allocation of funding were frequently inconsistent, inequitable and lacking justification in terms of the funding provided across schools.

These recent prominent programs illustrate the benefits of direct government funding to the independent sector compared to cumbersome and less effective indirect approaches.

Decisions concerning the implementation of policies made at a national level are often determined without the input of representatives from the independent sector, despite those implementation decisions having a direct impact on school communities, school leaders, and teachers in the sector.

The non-government school sector does not have specific representation on the Standing Council for School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC) or on its advisory officials' committee, the Australian Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs Senior Officials Committee (AEEYSOC).

The independent sector considers the current arrangement, where the sector lacks specific representation at this level and has no access to policy papers, is not conducive to maximising the efficiency and effectiveness of the schools workforce.

CONCLUSION

ISCA welcomes the opportunity to make this Submission to the Productivity Commission's Education and Training Workforce: Schools Commissioned Study.

School communities in the independent sector place great value on their workforce. It is primarily through their workforce that independent schools are able to provide opportunities for students to meet their and their family's educational goals.

The strong learning outcomes achieved in independent schools, including those operating at lower resource levels, rely on quality teaching, strong engagement of family and the school community in education, extra-curricular activities, a high value placed on education, and the autonomy of the school.

The independent sector faces a number of key challenges in near future such as the continuing growth of the sector, an aging workforce, an increasingly complex regulatory environment, ongoing curriculum demands and changes, increasing costs of education, and attracting and retaining quality leaders, teachers, governors, and volunteers, especially in regional and remote locations.

Schools in the independent sector seek to work with governments, educational bodies and school communities to address these challenges.

Bill Daniels
Executive Director
ISCA

Canberra
19 August 2011

APPENDIX

Statistical information about the size and diversity of the independent sector

Independent schools reflect the diversity of the wider Australian community, covering a range of religious affiliations and educational philosophies and serving the needs of individuals or groups such as students with disabilities and indigenous students.

- *Affiliations of independent schools*

Independent schools are usually established and developed through community groups to meet particular local schooling needs. Eighty five per cent of all independent schools have a religious affiliation.

Table 8: Affiliations of independent schools, 2010

Affiliation	Schools	Student FTE	%
Anglican	156	137,812	25.2%
Non-Denominational	188	72,100	13.2%
Christian Schools	136	53,757	9.8%
Catholic	64	50,702	9.3%
Uniting Church in Australia	43	49,289	9.0%
Lutheran	85	36,549	6.7%
Inter-Denominational	29	20,725	3.8%
Islamic	32	20,198	3.7%
Baptist	42	17,803	3.3%
Seventh Day Adventist	47	11,043	2.0%
Presbyterian	14	9,844	1.8%
Jewish	20	9,004	1.6%
Steiner School	42	7,515	1.4%
Pentecostal	16	6,838	1.3%
Assemblies of God	10	5,596	1.0%
Greek Orthodox	8	3,894	0.7%
Montessori School	39	3,955	0.7%
Brethren	8	4,025	0.7%
Other Catholic	8	3,469	0.6%
Other Orthodox	6	2,129	0.4%
Other Religious Affiliation*	11	5,033	0.9%
Other**	83	14,607	2.7%

*Other Religious includes Churches of Christ, Ananda Marga, Hare Krishna and Society of Friends
**Other includes special schools, international schools, indigenous schools, and community schools.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), **in 2010 there were 491,233 students being educated in 1017 independent schools across Australia in which around 47,000 teachers and**

almost 28,000 non-teaching staff were employed. ABS data does not categorise independent Catholic schools as independent, although these schools are part of the sector. When included, there were 1090 schools and over half a million students, about 16 per cent of all enrolments, in the independent sector.

- *Teachers employed in independent schools*

Independent schools employ 16% of all teachers in Australian schools.

Table 9: Teachers employed in independent schools, 2010

Total number (full-time and part-time)	46,999
FTE (full-time equivalent)	40,333

Source: ABS *Schools Australia*

- *Enrolments in independent schools*

The independent school sector is the fourth largest school education provider in Australia and at secondary level is the second largest provider of schooling services.[10]

ABS data shows that **the independent schools sector's share of total Australian school enrolments grew from 4 per cent in 1970 to over 14 per cent in 2010**[11]. Full time enrolments have increased from around 114,000 in 1970 to over 491,000 in 2010.

The sector's contribution to senior secondary schooling is now very significant, with **almost 19 per cent of all senior students** in Australia attending independent schools. **11.5 per cent of primary students attend independent schools**.

Table 10: Enrolments in independent schools, 2010

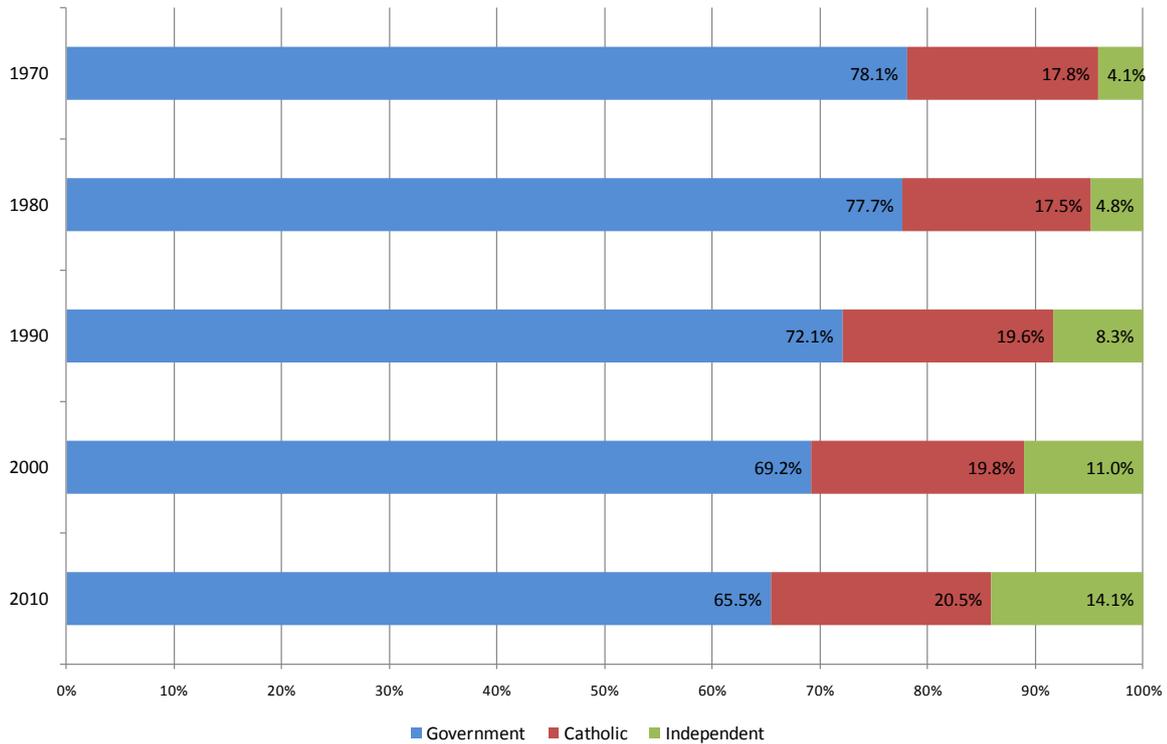|	Male	Female	Total
Primary	115,868	114,664	230,532
Secondary	129,544	131,157	260,701
Total	245,412	245,821	491,233

Source: ABS *Schools Australia*

Government and Catholic sector enrolments in 2010 stood at 65.5 per cent and 20.4 per cent respectively. Statistics show that the Catholic school enrolment share has risen over 2.5 per cent since 1970, while government school enrolments have declined steadily over this period by over 12.5 per cent.

The rise in enrolments clearly demonstrates the strong support of Australian parents for independent schools and indicates the growing importance of the independent sector as a provider of education to the community as a whole.

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[10] ABS *Schools, Australia* 2010 and Non-Government School Census 2010 – independent sector figures include independent Catholic enrolments
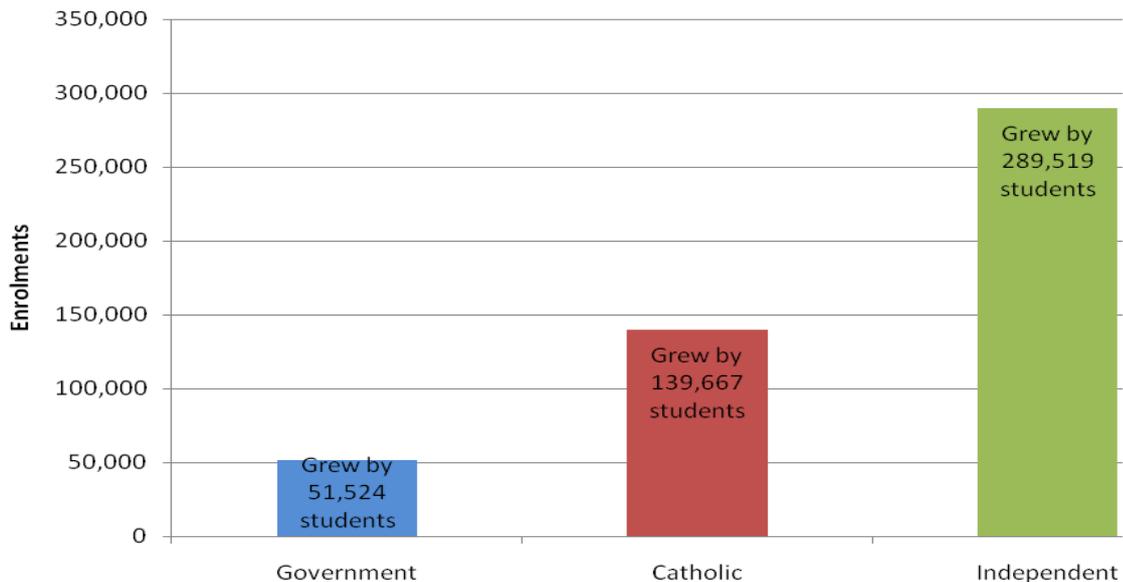[11] ABS data excludes independent Catholic enrolments

Chart 1: Enrolment share change by sector, 1970 – 2010

Year	Government	Catholic	Independent
1970	78.1%	17.8%	4.1%
1980	77.7%	17.5%	4.8%
1990	72.1%	19.6%	8.3%
2000	69.2%	19.8%	11.0%
2010	65.5%	20.5%	14.1%

■ Government   ■ Catholic   ■ Independent

Source: DEEWR and ABS *Schools Australia*

The steady growth in enrolments in independent schools has continued irrespective of the political persuasions of governments, funding arrangements or economic conditions over the period, and confirms that a large and growing number of Australian families want increased choice in schooling options.

Chart 2: Enrolment change by sector 1985 - 2010

Government: Grew by 51,524 students
Catholic: Grew by 139,667 students
Independent: Grew by 289,519 students

Source: ABS *Schools Australia*

Analysis of the growth in enrolments by sector shows that the independent schools sector has grown both at a higher rate and in terms of absolute numbers. Over the period 1985 to 2010 enrolments in Australian schools grew by around 480,710 students. Of these enrolments, 289,520 or 60 per cent were in independent schools

Currently in many areas of Australia there is unmet demand for places in independent schools, with many independent schools having extensive waiting lists.

Examination of the growth in enrolments in independent schools over several decades shows that these increased enrolments have been achieved for the most part by increasing the size of existing independent schools rather than the costly undertaking of establishing new independent schools. As the large number of schools with extensive waiting lists would indicate, many schools have now reached their optimal operational size and have no further capacity for expansion.

Chart 3: Enrolment growth by sector 1995 - 2010
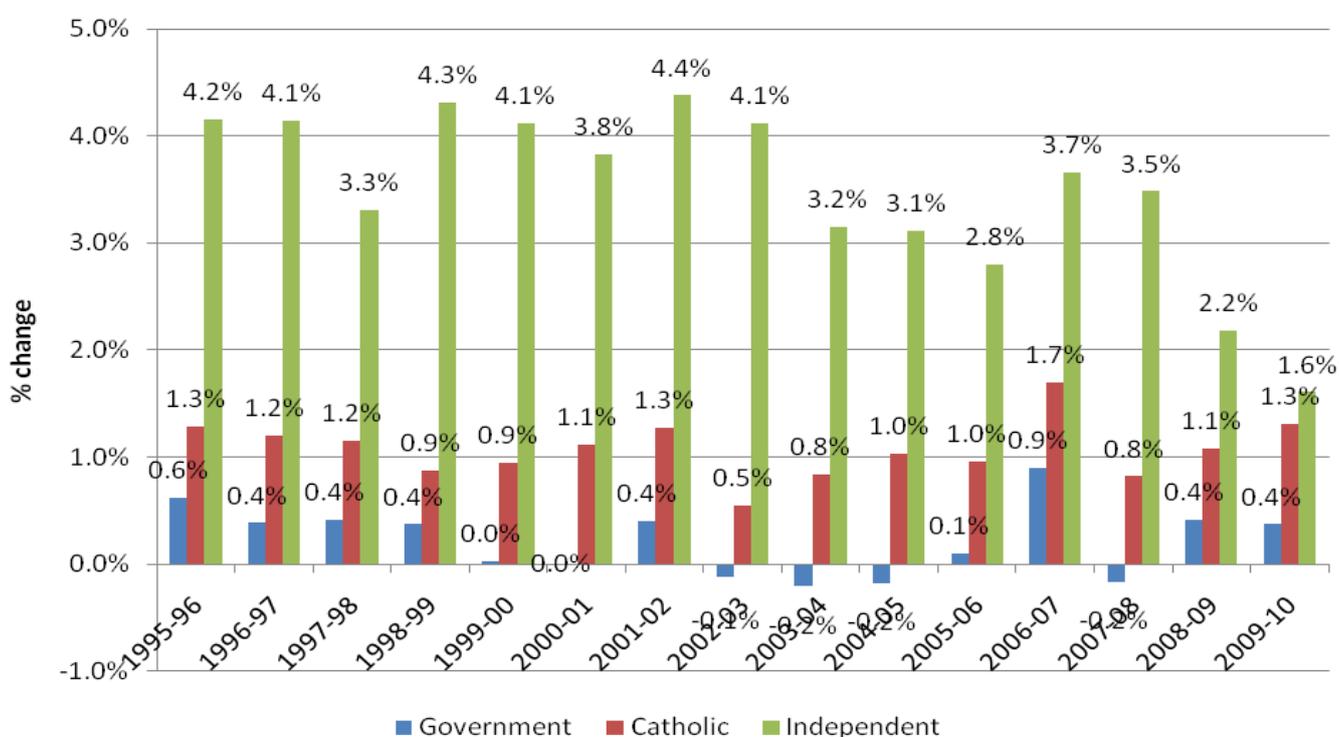
Source: ABS *Schools Australia*

The current unmet demand for independent education, together with the projected enrolment growth and need for unprecedented numbers of new schools, means that significant resources will need to be directed to new independent schools.

Utilising DEEWR's enrolment projections and ABS data, enrolment growth in independent schools will continue to outpace government and Catholic school growth over the next ten years. These projections indicate that independent schools will need to accommodate an additional 150,037 students which equates to an additional 310 schools in the sector.

- *Number of independent schools*

Table 11: Number of independent schools, 2010

Number of schools		
Primary	248	24%
Secondary	72	7%
Combined	640	63%
Special	57	6%
Total	1,017	100%

Source: ABS *Schools Australia*

Overall, **54 per cent of enrolments in independent schools are secondary students and 46 per cent are primary students**. However, a number of independent schools offer middle school programs, which provide schooling to meet the specific developmental needs of early adolescence.

A particular feature of independent schools is the common provision of primary and secondary schooling, with 63 per cent of all independent schools offering both levels of education.

Table 12: School type, 2010

School Type, 2010	
Boys schools	6%
Girls schools	8%
Coeducational schools	87%

Source: DEEWR Non-Government Schools Census 2010

Co-educational schooling is most common in the sector, with **76 per cent of students in the sector attending co-educational schools in 2010**. Single-gender schools, however, remain a notable feature of the sector with 6 per cent of schools being boys-only schools and 8 per cent of schools being girls-only schools. Single gender schools are a valued source of expertise on gender-specific learning styles.

- *School size*

There is a wide range of school sizes in the sector with the average size being about 483 students. This compares with an average of 338 students at government schools. At one extreme, the sector contains some of Australia's largest schools – 13 schools have more than 2000 students – while at the other extreme, 13 per cent of schools have less than 50 students. Table 6 below provides a breakdown of school size within the sector.

Table 13: Independent school size, 2010

Size of school by enrolments	No.	%
Less than 50	141	13%
50 to 199	282	26%
200 to 999	477	44%
1000 to 1999	174	16%
2000+	13	1%
Total	1,087	100%

Source: DEEWR Non-Government Schools Census 2010

- *Geographic location of independent schools*

Independent schools service communities in diverse locations across Australia – 70 per cent are in metropolitan areas, 27 per cent are in provincial areas and three per cent are in remote locations.

Table 7 below shows the proportion of schools by location in Australia compared to the spread of the Australian population as a whole.

Table 14: Geographic location of independent schools, 2010

Geographic Location	Independent schools	Australian population
Metropolitan/Major cities	70%	69%
Provincial/Regional	27%	29%
Remote	3%	2%

Source: MCEETYA *Geographic Location Database and* ABS *Regional Population Growth Australia, 2008-09*

Map 1 below shows the location of non-government schools in remote and very remote areas of Australia. It is important to note that, in a number of remote locations, non-government schools are the sole providers of school education to remote communities.

Map 2: Independent and Catholic Schools and Campuses in Remote and Very Remote Australia 2006
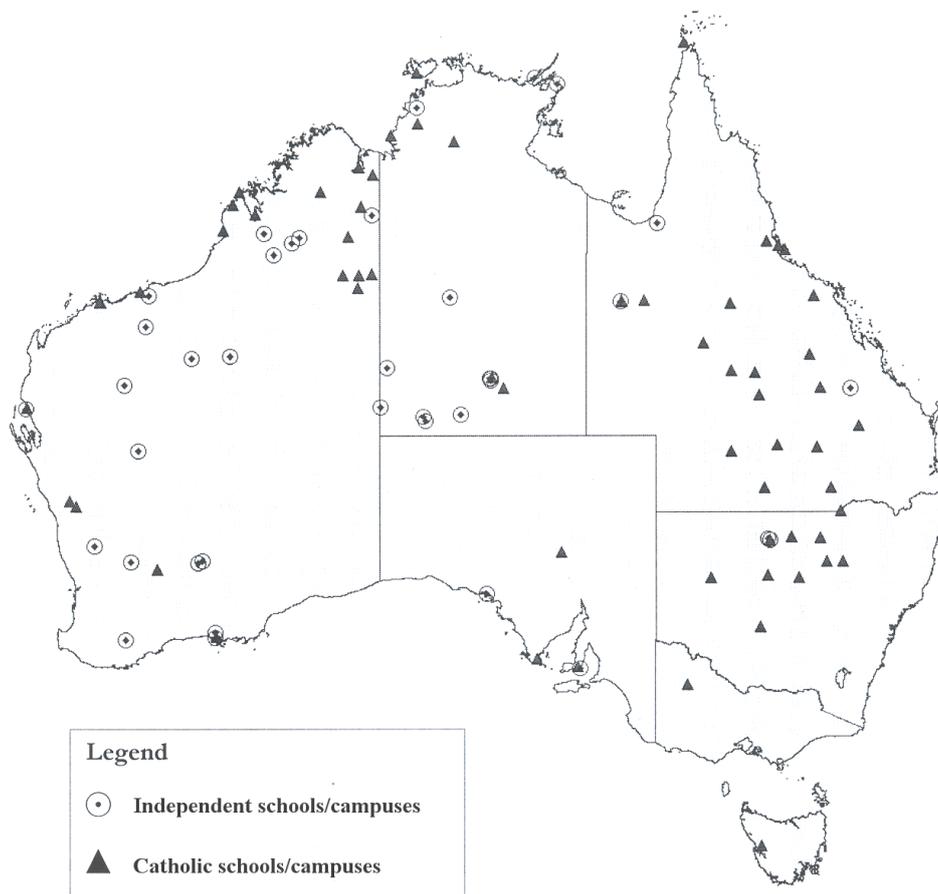
Source: *The Sectoral Trends of Australian Schooling Volume 1*, NCEC Australian Catholic Statistics Working Group, 2008

- ***Diversity in the independent sector***

Independent schools serve a broad range of students, reflecting the diversity of Australian society. Independent school enrolments include students from a variety of regions, religions, social backgrounds and socio-economic circumstances. This includes students experiencing a range of

educational disadvantage including students with disabilities, rural and remote students, indigenous students, students from a language background other than English and students with social, emotional and behavioural issues. Independent schools are also the major providers of boarding schools in Australia.

Table 15: Sector diversity

Indigenous students	**9,315**
Independent schools with 50%+ indigenous enrolment	36
Students with disabilities	12,172
Special schools	57
Overseas students	8,378
Boarding students	16,829
Boarding schools	152

Source: DEEWR Non-Government Schools Census 2010.

- *Indigenous students*

There is substantial commitment and innovation towards meeting the specific educational needs of Indigenous students across a range of settings and types of independent schools. Some students are within local independent schools, others attend schools that provide special programmes for Indigenous students, some students attend boarding schools, while others attend Indigenous schools or Indigenous community schools that cater exclusively for Indigenous students. Some schools provide boarding scholarships.

The independent sector as a whole includes indigenous enrolments of 9,315[12]. Many of these students are in rural or remote areas. This represents 5.4 per cent of the Indigenous student population.

The number of indigenous enrolments in the independent sector is increasing, with the number of enrolments increasing by 160 per cent since 1995.

Indigenous student enrolments are spread broadly across the sector with many independent schools having one or two indigenous students. **720 independent schools have indigenous students enrolled.** These schools include those independent schools that provide scholarships to indigenous students from remote areas to access to a high quality education.

Other schools including urban and regional boarding schools and indigenous community schools located in remote areas have larger numbers of indigenous students. Many of these schools have limited capacity to raise private income and are often provided with additional support by other schools within the independent sector and through independent schools generally through their AIS.

The independent sector has 36 schools with an indigenous enrolment of more than 50 per cent. 29 of these schools have an indigenous enrolment of more than 85 per cent.

The majority of Indigenous students in the sector are located in Queensland (33 per cent), New South Wales (21 per cent), Western Australian (18 per cent), and the Northern Territory (16 per cent).
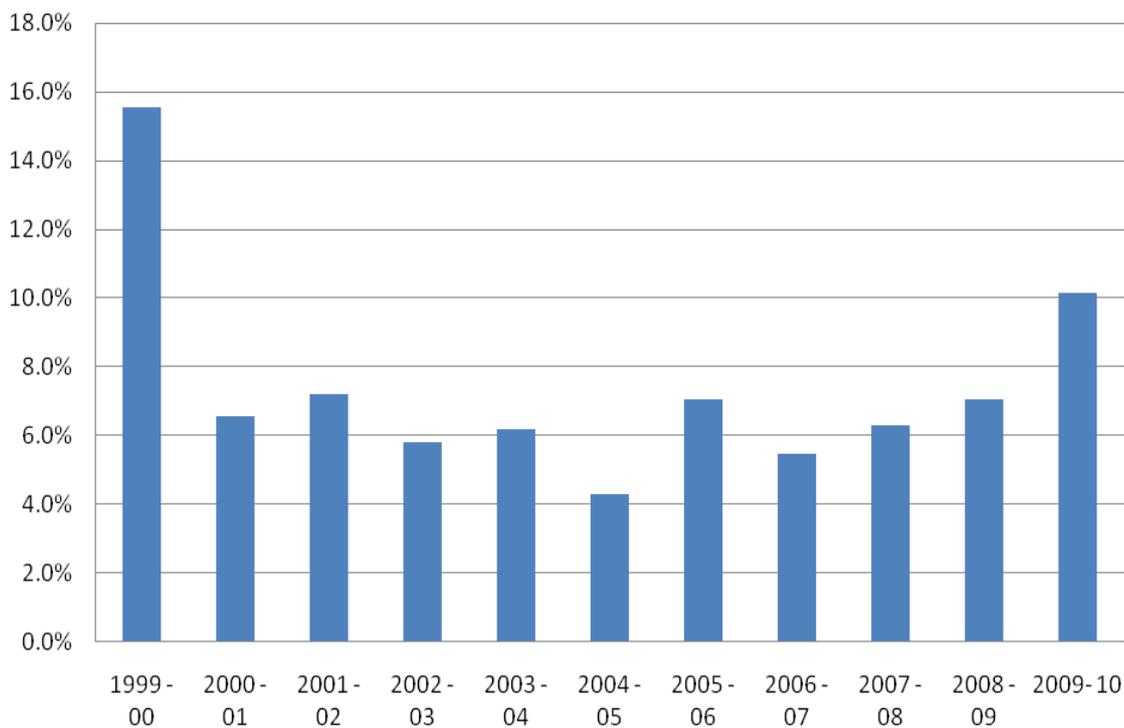
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[12] DEEWR Non-Government School Census 2010 - includes independent Catholic enrolments

In Western Australia, Indigenous liaison officers have been employed to provide direct support to Indigenous students from rural and remote regions of Western Australia who are boarding at independent schools in Perth. The *Future Footprints* project aims to facilitate the transition to school for these students and to adjust to life away from home. The overarching goal is to improve the educational outcomes for Indigenous students and as a result, enhance their opportunities after school.

- **Student with Disabilities, special schools and schools established specifically to assist disadvantaged and/or disengaged students**

The role of the independent school sector in providing for students with disabilities has increased dramatically in recent years.

Chart 4: Growth in enrolments of Students with Disabilities in independent schools, 1999-2010

In 2010, almost 12,200 students with disabilities were enrolled in independent schools, an enrolment increase of 89 per cent since 1999. About 79 per cent of these students were enrolled in mainstream schools and around 21 per cent enrolled in special schools which provide alternative educational settings for students with high-level needs.[13] **There are 57 special schools which provide alternative educational settings for students with high-level needs in the independent sector.**

Factors influencing the increased enrolments are:
- The changing trend in all sectors, to students with disabilities being educated in mainstream schools
- The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* gave parents a choice as to where their children would be educated

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[13] DEEWR Non-Government School Census 2010 – includes independent Catholic enrolments

- There was recognition that students with disabilities be offered the same educational opportunities as other students

The growth in enrolments of students with disabilities has been greatest in mainstream schools, which now account for some 79 per cent of students with disabilities in independent schools, including those with high to very high support needs.

As an example of this growth, in 1992, the year the *Disability Discrimination Act* was enacted, students with disabilities enrolled in independent special schools in New South Wales outnumbered those in mainstream classes at regular independent schools in New South Wales by 2 to 1. By 2010, this situation had been reversed with more than twice as many students with disabilities enrolled in regular schools compared to those enrolled in special schools.

However, it is also the case that in other states, such as Victoria, **there has been significant growth in the number of students enrolled in independent special schools** due to the number of independent special schools that have opened in the last 10 years.

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and associated Disability Standards for Education 2005 require schools to accept enrolments of all students irrespective of the nature of their disability, without commensurate funding to support them. **Lack of adequate government support for students with disabilities in independent schools is a major constraint for schools seeking to enrol these students.** The independent sector believes that students with disabilities must be appropriately and equitably resourced by governments regardless of the type of school they attend.

Special schools in the independent sector cater for students with disabilities and special assistance schools primarily cater for students with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Special schools provide alternative educational settings for students with high-level needs. These schools may cater for students with disabilities such as autism, as well as students who are at risk of disengaging from school, who are struggling in a mainstream environment or who have behavioural issues. These schools provide parents and students with an alternative choice from a mainstream school to a school that more effectively meets the needs of particular students. Many mainstream independent schools also incorporate a unit to cater for students with special needs.

The independent sector also caters for students with severe social, emotional and behavioural issues through its Special Assistance Schools. These schools serve young people who have disengaged from education and whose needs are not met by mainstream education. They are often referred from community services, juvenile justice and other schools both government and non-government. Special Assistance Schools have developed specially adapted programs and structures designed to re-engage students in education and prepare them for further training and employment.

- *Overseas Students*

Independent schools enrol around half of the overseas students studying in Australian schools.

There are over 8,000 overseas students enrolled in nearly 400 independent schools nationally. Of these students 14% are primary and 86% are secondary. In order to be permitted to enrol full fee paying overseas students on student visas independent schools must be registered on the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students.

These schools, in addition to their standard academic program often organise and run particular programs that employ specialise staff to meet the academic, social/cultural and pastoral care/wellbeing needs of overseas students.

Many schools provide preparatory or bridging course for overseas students which provide access to school facilities prior to commencing their mainstream course. These courses focus on developing academic and social English and study skills to help students reach the required level of English proficiency.

Schools also provide overseas students with programs of English language support such as English as a Second Language (ESL) which are specifically tailored for their needs, to support students with their subject specific language development throughout their mainstream course enrolment.

Many independent schools offer boarding facilities or programs to provide overseas student with assistance organising living arrangements with 'homestay' families.

- ***Boarding schools***

The independent schools sector is the major provider of boarding school facilities for Australian families, with some 152 boarding schools and about 17,000 students. These schools provide access to educational opportunities to many regional and remote families and a significant social service commitment to numerous communities.

Boarding staff aim to create a friendly and pleasant atmosphere in which the student can live happily and develop the necessary social and community skills to be a successful member of society. Employing suitably qualified, live in staff and maintaining a stable staff is an ongoing challenge.

Boarding House staff are chosen for their ability to recognise and assist with the special problems and challenges which face young people boarding a long way from home. They are also familiar with the special needs of former School of the Air students, and young people who sometimes are more comfortable with adults than with people their own age. Provision of quality facilities and support staff is costly but is seen as a service to enable rural and remote families to access educational opportunities.

- ***Students with a Language Background Other Than English***

Independent schools are also enrolling increasing numbers of students from a language background other than English. **Since 2006, the number of students in independent schools eligible for assistance under the Australian Government's English as a Second Language New Arrivals Program has increased by 43 per cent.**

Targeted funding has been critical in supporting independent schools to offer a choice of education to parents of students from a language background other than English including newly arrived students.

Targeted and needs-based funding needs to increase to ensure that students from a language background other than English, not disadvantaged because their parents have chosen an independent school

As autonomous, independent entities, most independent schools cannot rely on support from a systemic school authority to provide additional resources to meet the needs of increasing numbers of students from a language background other than English who need special support.

- **_Low socio-economic students_**

**Independent schools draw their enrolments from the full spectrum of socio-economic status**.

Recent research indicates that while the reasons may be complex and interconnected, socio-economic status continues to play a significant part in the kinds of educational outcomes of students. Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds often experience educational disadvantage, are under-represented among high achievers and overrepresented among low achievers.[14]

The research suggests that students from low socioeconomic backgrounds have particular needs and may require additional support in order to achieve the same educational outcomes as other groups of students.

The _Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians_ which was developed by Education Ministers in collaboration with the government, independent and Catholic school sectors specifically recognises the support that low socioeconomic students require in order to achieve better educational outcomes.

There is sometimes a perception that independent schools only educate students from wealthy families. In fact, the socio-economic profile of individual schools varies greatly across the sector, with some schools drawing students from quite diverse backgrounds while at other schools there may be a greater concentration of students from low SES or higher SES backgrounds.

**Chart 5: Independent schools by SES score, 2010**
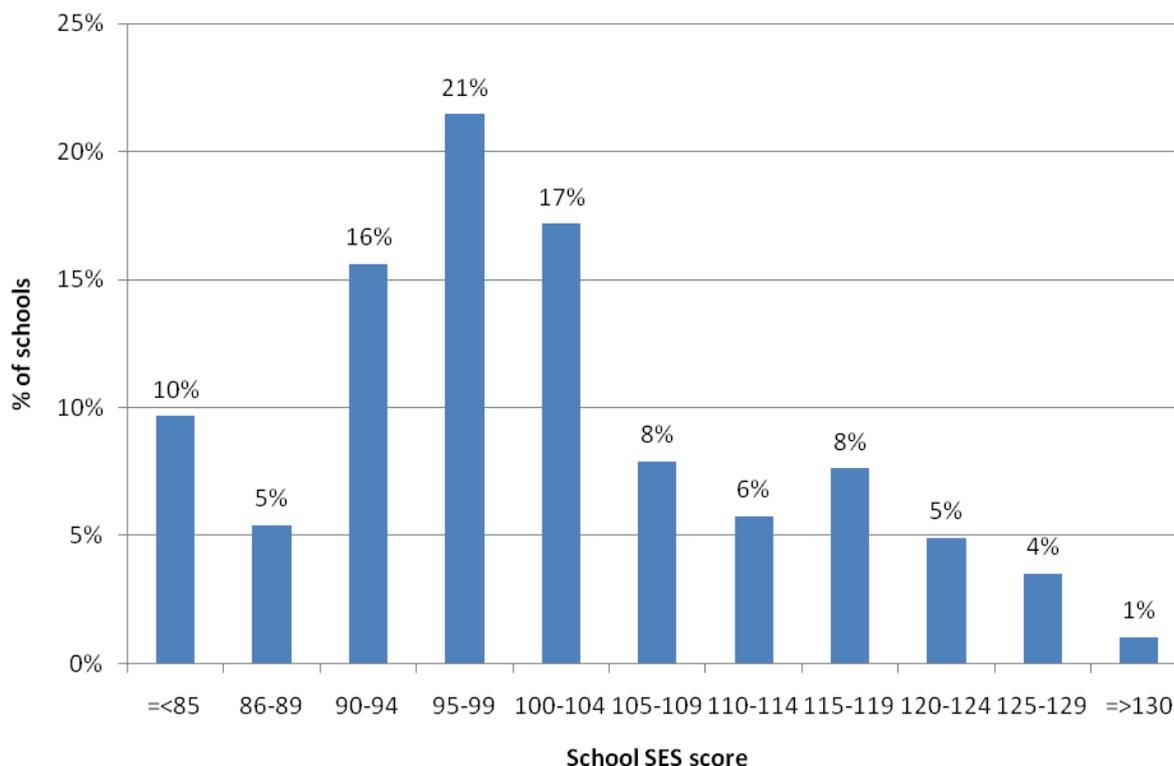
Source: Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee, Budget Estimates, Answer to Question on Notice EW0074_11

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[14] _Review of Recent Literature on Low Socio-economic Status and Learning_. NSW Department of Education and Training, 2005. Report by Erebus International

Independent schools attract students from all income groups, as can be demonstrated from Chart 5 above which shows the distribution of independent schools by SES score range. The majority of independent schools are located in middle to low SES scores. Trends in enrolments also indicate that the fastest growing segment of the sector is in low fee schools, providing access to independent schools for lower income families.

Chart 6: New schools in the independent sector by SES, 2000 – 2010
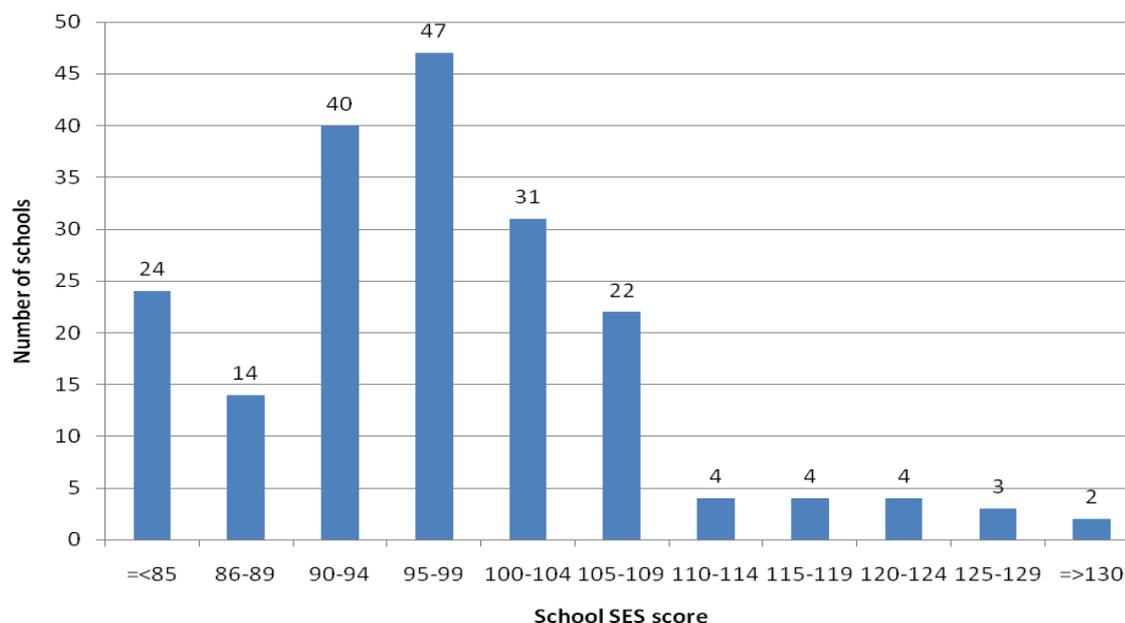
Source: DEEWR

Analysis of enrolment growth patterns in the independent sector shows that enrolment growth has occurred predominantly in schools drawing students from a lower socio-economic profile. Analysis of the SES scores of the 195 new schools[15] which opened during the eleven year period 2000 to 2010 shows that 70 per cent have an SES score of 100 or less. Most of these new schools aim to operate with low fees, and their establishment has contributed to the increasing diversity of the sector.

Table 16: School students by family income – Australia, 2006

Family Income	Independent	% of Sector	Catholic	% of Sector	Government	% of Sector	Total	% of Sector
< $25,999	20,178	6.1%	31,828	6.1%	183,544	11.2%	235,550	9.4%
$26,000 - $33,799	19,808	5.9%	35,039	6.8%	200,698	12.2%	255,545	10.3%
$33,800 - $62,399	63,787	19.1%	121,082	23.4%	492,787	30.0%	677,656	27.2%
$62,400 - $88,399	53,529	16.1%	109,599	21.1%	325,416	19.8%	488,544	19.6%
$88,400 - $103,999	31,149	9.4%	59,419	11.5%	140,676	8.6%	231,244	9.3%
$104,000+	144,671	43.4%	161,412	31.1%	298,249	18.2%	604,332	24.2%
Total	333,122	100.0%	518,379	100.0%	1,641,370	100.0%	2,492,871	100.0%

Note: Excludes other territories, educational institution attended not stated and income not applicable.
Source: ABS Census of Population and Housing 2006

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15 This figure does not include schools for which an SES score was not available.

ABS data on family income also provides an insight into the SES profile of all school sectors. Table 9 above shows school students by family income by sector.

While the independent sector has a higher level of higher SES families as would be expected, it is clear that the independent sector also has the majority of its enrolments across the other income bands demonstrating a pattern broadly consistent with the other sectors.

Most independent schools provide scholarships, part-scholarships and fee relief for disadvantaged students to give them the opportunity to access a quality education of their choice. These include students from low socio-economic backgrounds or those who may be disadvantaged for other reasons. For many independent schools servicing remote communities, the capacity of parents and the local community to raise private income for schooling is minimal. These schools rely almost entirely on support from government and philanthropic support.

Students from low socio-economic backgrounds need to be taught effectively and supported appropriately in order for them to reach their educational potential. In order to provide the support required and meet the particular needs of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds there is a growing requirement for staff, both teaching and non-teaching who have particular skills and training.

The *National Partnership Agreement on Low Socio-Economic Status School Communities* agreement between the Commonwealth and the states and territories provides facilitation funding to support a range of within school and broader reforms to address the complex and interconnected challenges facing low socio-economic students.

Many of the reforms that the National Partnership seeks to implement such as incentives to attract high quality teachers and principals, principal flexibility over staffing, management arrangements and school budgets, flexible school operational arrangements, provision of innovative and tailored learning opportunities; school accountability; and partnerships with parents, other schools, businesses and communities, are initiatives that mirror features and emphases that have been the hallmark of schools in the independent sector for many years.

Unlike other Commonwealth Government initiatives, funding for this National Partnerships were not provided to states and sectors, but were channelled through state and territory governments. This model of funding is not considered by the independent sector to have been an efficient or effective approach to delivering funding to independent schools for a range of reasons. These primarily involve bureaucratic processes and lack of autonomy and flexibility in decision making for the sector.